

## Appendix 6 Statement of Reasons

### 1.0 Purpose of the Milton Park Local Development Order

1.1 The Milton Park Local Development Order (LDO) was first established in 2012. Milton Park is ideally suited to an LDO. It is an established and dynamic business park, with well-defined development parameters but with scope for intensification. Parts of the site have been included in the Science Vale UK Enterprise Zone and Didcot Accelerator Enterprise Zone. It is a key employment area in the district.

1.2 Since it was made in 2012, the LDO has very successfully facilitated the regeneration of the business park, including 14 new or refurbished buildings representing over 50,000 sq m of new, modern, employment generating floorspace. The Park is home to over 250 businesses from start ups to major global players. These span a range of sectors but have a focus on science and technology.

1.3 The LDO has provided a framework which has given confidence to prospective investors in the Park and has led to a steady stream of investment in the Park's building and infrastructure.

1.4 A significant public consultation was undertaken by MEPC in 2018, involving local stakeholders, regarding the long-term future of the business park. This culminated in the 2040 Vision (the Vision). The Vale of White Horse District Council (the Local Planning Authority/the Council) was one of a number of parties consulted. The Vision Plan *'sets out the trajectory for Milton Park to continue and surpass its role as a global destination for science and technology research and development that draws on the leading academic institutions, global research companies, and a highly active and supportive community of entrepreneurs'*<sup>1</sup>. The Vision Masterplan *'sets out a carefully considered incremental provision of flexible and adaptable office/lab and industrial/lab space over the next 25 years'*<sup>2</sup>.

1.5 The 2040 Vision for the Park anticipates that by 2040 Milton Park will be an innovation District with over 20,000 employees. It proposes the addition of neighbourhoods of amenities to support the growing working community and local communities around it. Through embedding a pro-active approach to consideration of social, environmental and economic challenges it proposes to have the potential to build a more resilient district as a model for sustainable growth.

1.6 The Vision has identified that there is an opportunity for further growth within the LDO area, through further regeneration initiatives.

1.7 A new LDO has been made to:

- Continue the positive planning framework to help deliver the Council's adopted spatial strategy, addressing planning issues in a holistic rather than piecemeal way;
- Continue to encourage the efficient use of the previously developed land;

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<sup>1</sup> Milton Park 2040 Vision Masterplan Report July 2019, Pg, 12

<sup>2</sup> Milton Park 2040 Vision Masterplan Report' July 2019, Pg 12  
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- Update the simplified planning framework in line with changes in legislation and national policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, and amendments to the Use Classes Order<sup>3</sup>;
- Respond to the amendment to the Milton Conservation Area<sup>4</sup>;
- Reflect the amendments to the Enterprise Zone areas;
- Extend the LDO period in line with the Joint Local Plan 2041 period.

1.8 The objective of the new Milton Park LDO is to continue to enable a vibrant business area, promoting employment generating uses at the business park to maximise the success of the Enterprise Zones in line with the adopted spatial strategy.

## **2.0 The Principle of Development**

### *Vale of the White Horse Local Plan 2031*

2.1 The relevant parts of the adopted Development Plan to the Milton Park LDO area comprise of:

- The Vale of The White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 Strategic Sites and Policies (LPP1); and
- The Vale of The White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites (LPP2); and
- Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy

2.2. The majority of the strategic policies for the District are set out within LPP1 which identifies the Spatial Strategy for the Vale, including for economic development and jobs.

2.3 LPP1 sets out the Spatial Strategy and Strategic Policies to ensure the delivery of sustainable development<sup>5</sup>. The Plan identifies that the District includes the majority of the Science Vale area which is an internationally significant location for innovation and science-based research and business. Milton Park is one of two Enterprise Zone sites (the other being Harwell Campus) which the plan recognises as expanding and will provide for a significant number of new jobs. Notwithstanding this, the Local Plan acknowledges that one of the key challenges and opportunities facing the District (and therefore Milton Park) is the need to support economic prosperity within the District.

2.4 The Spatial Strategy aims to make provision for growth of around 23,000 new jobs and 218 hectares of new employment land up to 2031 in accordance with the latest Employment Land Review. One of the three main strands of the Spatial Strategy is to focus sustainable growth within the Science Vale Area<sup>6</sup>.

2.5 Core Policy (CP) 1 identifies support for proposals which accord with the Local Plan 2031.

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<sup>3</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020

<sup>4</sup> Milton Conservation Area Appraisal, Adopted December 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Pg 13 The Vale of The White Horse Local Plan Part 1: 2031

<sup>6</sup> Pg 36 The Vale of The White Horse Local Plan Part 1: 2031  
December, 2024

2.6 CP6 identifies Milton Park will contribute 28 hectares towards the delivery of the total 218 hectares of future employment land. This includes sites which are covered by the LDO and those which are not within the area of the local plan allocation 2011 (this occupies a slightly smaller area). The supporting text to CP6 recognises that within the Vale, employment provision is led by the Science Vale<sup>7</sup>, and in particular, the Enterprise Zone sites at Milton Park and Harwell Campus. Milton Park is recognised as a large science park and a major regional and national hub for knowledge-intensive industries. Within the Science Vale area, the employment provision accounts for 15,850 projected jobs, approximately 70% of the planned total for the District<sup>8</sup>. It is clear that Milton Park has a significant role to play in delivering employment within the District.

2.7 Milton Park is identified by LPP1 as being located within the 'South East Vale Sub- Area'. Within this Area, CP15 identifies that 208 hectares of the total employment land for the District will be provided for business and employment growth in accordance with CP6 (above). CP15 identifies Milton Park as being a 'strategic employment site' to be safeguarded (in line with Policy CP29) for employment use to meet the objectively assessed employment needs of the District.

2.8 The Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 1 – Core Strategy ("The Strategy") provides the planning strategies and policies for the development that will be needed for the supply of minerals and management of waste in Oxfordshire as a whole until 2031. A site known as 'Oxford Wood' a recycling/ transfer facility lies partly within Milton Park and is identified as being safeguarded by Policy W11 of The Strategy. Policy W11 seeks to prevent development that would directly or indirectly prevent or prejudice the use of a site safeguarded for waste management, unless the proposal meets one of the policy exceptions.

2.9 In this case, the LDO proposals are considered to meet all of the exception criteria for the following reasons:

1. The site is allocated for employment use by Core Policy 6 of the Vale of the White Horse Local Plan Part 1;
2. Oxford Wood has relocated to larger premises in Abingdon and therefore equivalent waste management capacity has been appropriately and sustainably provided elsewhere;
3. As Oxford Wood has relocated, it can be demonstrated that the site is no longer required for waste management; and
4. The LDO does not preclude the Milton Park site being used for waste management purposes.

2.10 It has also been confirmed with the OCC Minerals and Waste Team that the draft LDO does not conflict with Policy W11 and the site at Milton Park is proposed to be removed from the list of safeguarded waste sites. This will be confirmed in their next Annual Monitoring Report which the Minerals and Waste Local Plan identifies is how the list of safeguarded sites will be updated.

2.11 In summary, the principle of economic development at Milton Park for employment uses, which deliver new jobs is an appropriate use of the land within the LDO area and is supported by the Development Plan.

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<sup>7</sup> Pg 50, Paragraph 4.25 The Vale of The White Horse Local Plan Part 1: 2031

<sup>8</sup> Pg 50, Paragraph 4.27 The Vale of The White Horse Local plan Part 1: 2031  
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2.12 Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that all material considerations are taken into account in planning decisions. The NPPF is a material consideration.

2.13 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF identifies that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development.

2.14 Paragraph 8 identifies that to achieve sustainable development there are three objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways, these comprise an economic, social and environmental objective. The economic objectives support proposals which *'help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and co-ordinating the provision of infrastructure'*;

2.15 In appropriate circumstances the NPPF supports the use of Local Development Orders (LDO's) to grant planning permission. Paragraph 51 specifically states ***'Local planning authorities are encouraged to use Local Development Orders to set the planning framework for particular areas or categories of development where the impacts would be acceptable, and in particular where this would promote economic, social or environmental gains for the area'***.

2.16 In this regard, the NPPF (Paragraph 81) seeks to encourage planning policies which help ***'create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt'***. It sets out that ***'significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity noting that the approach should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future'***. The NPPF recognises ***'This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation'*** noting a desire to make the UK a leader in sectors including artificial intelligence<sup>9</sup>. The NPPF also recognises a need for planning policies to be 'flexible' to accommodate needs not in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices and enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances<sup>10</sup>.

2.17 Paragraph 83 acknowledges the importance of planning policies recognising and addressing the locational requirements of different sectors including making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data driven, creative or high technology industries at a variety of scales and in suitable accessible locations. Milton Park is a very accessible location close to the strategic highway network (the A34) and mainline railway services.

2.18 Paragraph 120 also promotes the effective use of land including previously developed or 'brownfield land'. Milton Park is almost entirely comprised of brownfield land with its origins being an army storage site. Since the closure of RAF Milton in 1963 it has gone through significant redevelopment and regeneration to get to its current form where it now operates (as recognised by the Local Plan) as one of the most successful locations for business in the Science Vale and nationally. The proposed growth through this revised LDO will continue to build on opportunities to make an even more effective use of

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<sup>9</sup> NPPF, Footnote 42

<sup>10</sup> NPPF, Paragraph 82 (d)  
December, 2024

previously developed land within the site through good design and appropriate increased densities.

2.19 Paragraphs 126, 128 and 129 encourage well designed places, with good design being a key aspect of sustainable development, creating better places in which to work and helping to make development acceptable to communities. It also encourages the use of clear design visions and expectations to provide applicants with as much certainty as possible about what would be accepted. Design Guides, including those which are on a site specific scale (such as that proposed as part of the Milton Park LDO) are cited by the NPPF as a positive way of providing clarity on design expectations.

2.20 Paragraph 130 seeks that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of an area not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development, they should also be sympathetic to the local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while being mindful not to prevent or discourage appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).

2.21 In summary, the Milton Park LDO is in accordance with national policy as it will help to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy within the District and provide more certainty and attractive conditions for businesses to invest in the area. It also promotes good design through the Design Guidance, and promotes environmental improvements, including requirements for biodiversity net gain.

### **3.0 Planning History**

3.1 Since the adoption of the LDO in 2012, by 2022 there have been over 70 pre-development notifications determined through the LDO with the vast majority of these being approved.

3.2 In this period, there had only been a limited number of developments proposed (6) which had come through the standard planning application route. The majority of these related to supporting infrastructure rather than employment development, with the exception of a detailed application for a restaurant at Milton Gate (known as MP8) as the development fell outside of the parameters of the LDO (2012).

### **4.0 The Scope of the LDO**

4.1 The LDO aligns with the timeframe of the emerging Joint Local Plan<sup>11</sup> period, which runs to 2041.

4.2 The new LDO will continue to have the objective of simplifying planning control to give greater flexibility for businesses to develop new premises and facilities or adapt existing premises, whilst maintaining a successful and diverse mix of employment generating uses.

4.3 The new LDO will be invaluable in assisting MEPC Milton Park to continue to be a premier location for business in the UK and therefore helping the

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<sup>11</sup> South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan  
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Science Vale UK Enterprise Zone to be one of the most successful in the country.

4.4 Performance of the LDO will continue to be monitored by the Council to ensure that it is achieving this objective.

4.5 While the purpose of the LDO is to simplify planning control, development is only permitted where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is in accordance with the permitted uses and development parameters set out in the Order. Development proposals falling outside of these parameters will be subject to standard planning controls.

## **5.0 Pre-development notification**

5.1 A system of pre-development notification is included within the LDO. Notice of all development proposals will be given to the Local Planning Authority in writing to allow confirmation that the proposal is within the scope of the Order and its requirements or that a separate planning permission is required.

5.2 As part of its commitment to the Science Vale UK Enterprise Zone, the Local Planning Authority has adopted a fast-track procedure for the determination of planning applications for development within the Enterprise Zone areas.

## **6.0 LDO Area and LDO Plans**

6.1 The LDO area is the area subject to this Order as defined on LDO Plan 1 (Appendix 1). This area is approximately 90 hectares in total.

6.2 The LDO area is unchanged from the original area established in 2012.

6.3 Zones identified within the LDO area relate to areas of differing development constraint (LDO Plan 2: Land Use). Specific development parameters and planning conditions apply to each of these zones.

6.4 Development beyond the LDO area is excluded from the Order and is subject to standard planning controls.

6.5 The LDO includes the following parameter plans:

- LDO Plan 1: LDO Area and Enterprise Zone Plan
- LDO Plan 2: Land Use Plan
- LDO Plan 3: Building Height Parameters Plan.

## **7.0 LDO Conditions**

7.1 Development permitted by the LDO is subject to the prescribed conditions attached to the Order (Appendix 3).

7.2 Some of these conditions require the approval of further details, and some of which require approval prior to commencement of development, as set out in Appendix 3.

7.3 Details reserved by condition must be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing using the standard application form and process.

## **8.0 Design Guidance**

8.1 The LDO is supported by a detailed Design Guide (Appendix 2), to help ensure that the LDO delivers high-quality, well-designed and sustainable development in accordance with local and national policy objectives.

8.2 Condition 1 requires that a statement is submitted to the Local Planning Authority (with the exception of minor operational developments) to explain how the proposal responds to this guidance.

## **9.0 Tree Management Framework**

9.1 The LDO is also supported by a Tree Management Framework (Appendix 4). The purpose of the guidance is to provide a clear framework for managing the existing and future tree cover at Milton Park within the LDO. Primarily its objective is to maintain the existing extent and quality of tree cover, and, where opportunities arise, to extend and enhance it. Condition 15 requires that all development activities in the LDO comply with the tree protection measures set out in the Tree Management Framework.

## **10.0 Overview of Permitted Development and Development Constraints**

10.1 The LDO will allow the development and redevelopment of land within the LDO area to continue, subject to the specific parameters and limitations set out in the Order. There is a cap on total floorspace permitted by the LDO within the LDO area (390,000 sq m). This is the maximum quantum of development that has been assessed for its impact.

10.2 Some expansion of the existing business park is permitted by the LDO in recognition of the Enterprise Zone areas beyond the existing development envelope. Development in these areas (identified as MP5 and MP9 in the 2012 LDO and on LDO Plan 2 of this LDO) is subject to specific development parameters and conditions.

10.3 MP5 (Zone A), an area of undeveloped land south of the main railway line and adjacent to the Milton Interchange, is included in the Enterprise Zone and therefore is included in the LDO area.

10.4 MP9 (Zone C) is also previously undeveloped land that is included in the Enterprise Zone and within the LDO area.

10.5 Development in this area, continues to be subject to conditions attached to the Order to safeguard the archaeological interest within the setting of the neighbouring scheduled monument (SAM OX250) ensuring that development does not have significant effects on the historic environment. A strategic landscape area has been implemented under the original LDO to facilitate development permitted in this area.

10.6 The new LDO area has been assessed for its ecological value. Moor Ditch,

identified on the LDO plans, is an ecologically important feature. A development exclusion buffer of 10 metres from the banks of the watercourse will ensure that this area is protected.

10.7 A condition of the LDO (Condition 2) is that the ecological baseline is regularly reviewed and, where necessary, surveys are updated on behalf of the Local Planning Authority prior to development in the areas affected. Materially significant changes to the ecological baseline may require a review of the LDO.

10.8 The LDO permits demolition and change of use of existing premises within the LDO area, subject to specific limitations. It is not anticipated that the LDO will lead to a comprehensive redevelopment of the park, however, as there are many long leases of existing premises, and many modern, high-quality buildings are expected to remain through the lifetime of the Order. Rather, the LDO will allow incremental redevelopment of older properties, in response to market demand, within a simplified planning framework.

10.9 Impacts on the strategic and local highway network from development permitted by the Order have been assessed. A Transport Assessment has been carried out which identifies the strategy for mitigating the impacts identified on the highway. To mitigate the impacts identified, mitigation measures are secured through a S106 legal agreement together with the safeguarding of land for highway works within the LDO area. This is elaborated on further in Section 12 below which discusses the Transport Assessment.

10.10 Other minor operational development is also permitted by the LDO, to allow, for example, minor alterations to existing premises and renewable/low carbon technology without the need for a planning application, in addition to the provisions set out in Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order England 2015 (as amended) or its successor.

## **11.0 Overview of Permitted Uses**

11.1 The LDO sets out the uses that are permitted, provided the proposed development is within the defined development parameters.

11.2 It is designed to allow development within the offices, research & development, light industrial, general industrial and storage and distribution use classes, which reflect the predominant uses at the Park today, and promote future job growth in these sectors as well as supporting the Science Vale.

11.3 A subsidiary element of other employment generating uses is also permitted, recognising that there may be opportunities for job creation other than through the above traditional employment use classes. Car dealership (*sui generis*) and private healthcare uses are identified in the LDO as permitted uses subject to specific limitations in terms of floor space and location within the LDO area as they complement the main employment uses. The new LDO also provides some allowance for serviced accommodation but specifically does not permit dwellings (Use Class C3). This is to ensure that these uses do not significantly reduce the capacity for the traditional employment generating uses supported by the Local Plan or allow uses that are incompatible with the commercial environment.

11.4 Should there be a demand for private residential healthcare (Use Class C2)



it is considered to be appropriate in Zones B and C only, which are more sensitive locations on the boundary of the business park adjacent or close to existing residential areas.

11.5 The Order also allows for some “Other Uses” (defined by the Order) that will help support the sustainability and vitality of the business park, such as small-scale shops and recreation facilities. These are also subject to specific limitations, including a maximum overall total of 39,000 sq m (equivalent to 10% of the gross floor space permitted by the Order).

11.6 The LDO permits an increase in retail floor space, but with strict limitations to ensure that retail uses remain complementary to the employment generating uses, helping to sustain the business community, but do not compete with Didcot town centre. It also allows for the existing leisure floorspace (Use Class E(d) to be replaced and provided elsewhere within the LDO area<sup>12</sup>.

11.7 The existing mix of land uses at Milton Park in 2022 was approximately as follows (percentage of total existing floor space):

- B1 uses (offices, research and development, light industry) (now Use Class E(g)) – 65.8%
- B2 (general industry) – 2%
- B8 (storage and distribution) – 25.5%
- C1 (hotels) – 2.7%
- Other Use Classes including Sui Generis uses – 3.9 %

11.8 It is expected that, in response to market demand, the LDO will continue the trend since adoption of the first LDO of a transition to a greater proportion of research and development and office uses (Use Class E(g)) and, as indicated above, also has the potential to introduce a wider range of other uses (subject to specific limitations- see definitions in the LDO).

## **12.0 Development Assessment**

12.1 The LDO is underpinned by a suite of technical assessments and reports which assess the impacts of the proposed LDO parameters on the local area in the context of the Vale of White Horse adopted Spatial Strategy and the NPPF. The development of the LDO has been an iterative process which has responded to the findings and recommendations of the technical work undertaken and where appropriate amendments have been made to address adverse impacts. The following paragraphs provide a summary of the technical work, their conclusions and identifies how the LDO and the proposed conditions address the findings and recommendations of these assessments by reference to relevant local plan policies and the NPPF.

12.2 The purpose of the LDO is to simplify planning control and encourage economic growth, therefore, specific sustainability and design standards have not been prescribed. Sustainable design will continue to be an important consideration for the business park, and the Local Planning Authority will encourage innovation in design to achieve high standards in sustainability.

12.3 Sustainable development is a national and local priority and the

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<sup>12</sup> The only existing leisure floorspace at time of adoption of the Order is Building 16/17. December, 2024

development permitted by this Order is expected to have regard to best practice, which is likely to evolve during the lifetime of the LDO. As a minimum, development permitted by the Order will comply with the latest Building Control regulations, but should exceed these standards where possible and feasible. It is expected that there will be opportunities through this LDO to improve the overall sustainability of the business park. The design guidance provided with the Order includes design objectives that will, for example, seek to improve the accessibility and permeability of the business park.

12.4 Where practical and viable, all new buildings should seek to achieve or exceed BREEAM Excellent (Condition 16).

12.5 The LDO includes the requirement for a 10% net gain in biodiversity and other measures, including Design Guidance, to continue to promote sustainable development within the LDO area. See paragraphs 12.15 to 12.22 below for further explanation on the requirement for biodiversity net gain.

### Transport

12.6 A Transport Assessment (TA) has been undertaken by Systra which evaluates the *'transportation issues and requirements which are related to the LDO proposals. It provides an explanation of technical assessments which have been agreed with Oxfordshire County Council as the local highway authority and sets out details of physical measures and strategies which will be required to support the additional trip making that will result from the increase in floor area of the LDO from 370,000 to 390,000sqm'*.

12.7 Key to understanding the baseline for the assessment was consideration of the Milton Park Travel Plan and 2040 Vision documents which place significant emphasis on active travel modes and improving the potential for uptake of these modes. Milton Park is already well served by local public transport with attractive bus and rail connection based opportunities available site wide. The Milton Park Travel Plan has been a key component in understanding the travel requirements of on-site employees and through collaboration with local bus operators, MEPC has played a direct role in shaping the current services available.

12.8 Trip forecasting for the assessment used a combination of data from the Milton Park Travel Survey and the TRICS database. It considered time horizons across the lifespan of the proposed growth which are representative of one third, two thirds and 100% of the proposed LDO floor area. Traffic modelling was also undertaken using models developed by Systra on behalf of the local highway authority (Oxfordshire County Council [OCC]), and the Local Planning Authority. The base model was calibrated and validated using extensive traffic survey data collected by OCC in March 2020 (pre-lockdown).

12.9 The TA concluded that highway mitigation measures would be required to support the increased LDO floor area of 390,000 sqm and mitigate the impacts on the highway. These comprise the following measures which are secured through a S106 legal agreement with the Local Planning Authority and OCC (as highway authority):

- Walking and cycling infrastructure:
  - Cinder Track: Route from the south western extremity of the site to Steventon;
  - Kelaart Field Path: An extension of the recently incorporated Kelaart's Field Path north to Drayton Road.
- Public Transport financial contributions:
  - Extension of Milton Park Zone to Abingdon
- Highway infrastructure:
  - Incorporation of two-way link road between High Street and Western Avenue, accompanied by rationalisation of vehicle movements at the Park Drive / High Street priority junction;
  - Widening of the Park Drive / Western Avenue roundabout, increasing the effective flare length of the northern arm of the junction;
  - Formalisation of the Park Drive / Western Avenue roundabout to a 4-arm signalised junction;
  - Widening of effective flare length on the southern arm of the Sutton Courtenay Road / Park Drive / Milton Road roundabout.
- Five year review of the transport assessment and on-going monitoring of traffic flows through Milton Park.

12.10 Following the original assessment and detailed workshop discussions with OCC, (in agreement with OCC) a further assessment was undertaken which refines the modelled baseline to account for the shift in post-Covid travel patterns and hence revisits the conclusions in relation to the proposed mitigation strategy set out above. Data collected from VivacityLabs (collected for Milton Park in Partnership with Milton Park and OCC) was used to facilitate the baseline review which essentially sought to derive an appropriate discount factor applicable to the baseline. The study concluded that a substantial decline in car trips and furthermore, a diffusion in peak hour traffic, has occurred since the Covid outbreak. This included the AM peak which, in initial modelling exercises, had triggered the need for the two-way link and in turn, the need for the roundabout improvements. The conclusions of the review indicate that a reduction to the baseline is appropriate.

12.11 As a result of this it is determined that the highway mitigation package (bulleted above) is not required in the immediate term and that the S106 legal agreement instead secures a 'monitor and review' approach to provision of the highway mitigation. This includes periodic reviews of the TA (& Travel Plan), which specifically considers whether the need for the mitigation is triggered at that time. Should the need for the mitigation never be triggered, the mitigation would not be required. Land within the LDO area is safeguarded through the legal agreement for the mitigation to ensure that it can come forward when/ if required.

12.12 In respect of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure within the LDO area the TA concludes that the established network is adequate and supportive of active travel trips between buildings, amenities and bus stops. However, the LDO provides the opportunity to re-consider pedestrian and cycling accessibility throughout the site. The Design Guidance (Appendix 2) therefore requires consideration is given to key desire lines for pedestrians.

12.13 The LDO will continue to be supported by a Travel Plan which will assist with continually seeking to maximise opportunities for uptake of sustainable modes, including public transport, walking, cycling and through increasing use of Electrical Vehicles (EVs) and reductions in the overall provision of parking in the LDO area.

12.14 The LDO proposals therefore accord with LPP1 policies CP33 and CP35 which seek to promote sustainable transport and accessibility and promote public transport, cycling and walking. The proposals also accord with LPP2 policies DP16 which seeks to ensure that acceptable off-site improvements to the highway infrastructure can be secured where required and DP17 which requires major developments to be supported by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan, the approach to which has been agreed with OCC, in association with the District Council and with the consultation of Highways England. Noting the existing and proposed mitigation, the impact of additional traffic from the proposed growth is likely to fall well short of the 'severe' threshold in Paragraph 111 of the NPPF but this will be monitored and managed throughout the LDO period.

### Biodiversity (and Ecology)

#### *Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)*

12.15 The Government announced that it would mandate net gains for biodiversity in the Environment Bill in 2019. An Impact Assessment on Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies was then published in late 2019. In November 2021, the Environment Bill achieved Royal Assent, meaning that BNG is now an Act of Parliament and became the Environment Act. While the Environment Act includes a requirement to achieve 10% net gain, this is not yet law and won't become so until the secondary legislation required for this to happen is in place. It is anticipated that this won't be until Winter 2023.

12.16 The NPPF sets out that planning should provide biodiversity net gains where possible (Paragraphs 170(d), 174(b) and 175(d)). Currently, it does not provide a figure or level at which BNG should be achieved. Similarly, LPP1 Policies CP45 and CP46 cite that net gain in biodiversity will be sought on development proposals but sets no specific level.

12.17 In light of the policy requirements for net gain and in anticipation that the requirement for BNG will likely become law in 2023 the LDO has sought to have foresight and make this a requirement of LDO proposals ahead of it becoming a legal requirement. The LDO as drafted (including its conditions) requires that LDO proposals provide 10% biodiversity net gain (or any otherwise adopted national or local standard which supersedes this). This is to be demonstrated through use of the Natural England Biodiversity Metric 3.1, or equivalent Natural England Biodiversity Metric that supersedes Metric 3.1. Once the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Schedule 7A and subordinate legislation comes into force and the requirement for 10% becomes mandatory the LDO may need to be reviewed and appropriate amendments made to reflect the legislation. This is within the Local Planning Authority's powers to do so as arbiter of the LDO.

#### *Biodiversity Strategy*

12.18 The Biodiversity Strategy prepared by Tyler Grange *'describes the guiding principles for future development under the LDO to provide the required certainty*  
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*that the impacts of the proposed development at the site can be mitigated, and that Milton Park LDO 2022 will deliver a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain’.*

12.19 The Strategy describes and evaluates the ecological features present within the likely ‘zone of influence’ of Milton Park LDO 2022, describes the ecological issues and opportunities that might arise as a result of development (with reference to local plan policy and legislation), sets out the principles of mitigation and enhancement to inform pre-development notifications and strategic landscaping, including requirements to achieve biodiversity net gain to ensure conformity with local policy and legislation and outlines constraints to management and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) for retained and newly created habitats together with monitoring requirements for the lifetime of the LDO.

12.20 The Strategy identifies features of ecological importance on the site that are protected by legislation and planning policy. It recognises that due to the nature of LDO any part of the site area could be put forward for re-development during the lifetime of the LDO and therefore potential ‘future plots’ are undefined. As such the nature and magnitude of potential impacts to identified important features is unknown. Additionally, a number of strategic infrastructure works are proposed during the lifetime of the LDO that are likely to mitigate (at least in part) the impacts of the development, though the nature of such works is yet to be determined.

12.21 The Strategy identifies that impacts affecting these ecologically important features, and their legal and policy protection, would be mitigated through a number of measures which will be controlled by condition or through the Design Guidance or Tree Management Framework. The LDO Conditions and Design Guidance have both been agreed with the County Ecologist. Where mitigation is controlled by condition, the condition numbers are included below. These include:

- A continued requirement for up to date biennial survey data to be collected. In addition, ‘extended’ phase 1 habitat surveys will be required for any given development plot. Where potential exists for protected species to be using the site more detailed surveys should be undertaken as appropriate (Conditions 2 and 3).
- A proposed 30m buffer from the southern edge of Kelaart’s Field accommodating 15m of landscaping and a further 15m no build zone. The grassland management regime of Kelaart’s Field will also be modified.
- Retention and enhancement of Moor Ditch and wider ditch corridor, retention of on-site waterbodies and stream corridors and hedgerows and trees. Any tree removal will require replacement on a like for like basis.
- A requirement for 10% net gain through additional habitat creation in accordance with the NPPF and Core Policy 46: Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity in the VoWH Local Plan. The net gain of 10%

is to be achieved through use of the Natural England Metric 3.1 (or a later version should this be superseded). This will be controlled by the LDO through the pre-development notification submission requirements which will require the submission of a Biodiversity Statement specifying the scope of required surveys (including protected species) and a brief outline of how the developer intends to achieve a minimum of 10% net gain on the plot. Condition 3 will then ensure that should the Biodiversity Statement identify a requirement for any surveys, these are undertaken before any development, while Condition 4 will ensure that prior to construction a plot specific Biodiversity Strategy is provided to demonstrate how the net gain will be achieved in accordance with the hierarchy set out.

12.22 In light of the above, the LDO accords with LPP1 policies CP45 and CP46 and the NPPF (Paragraph 174) which require that a net gain in biodiversity is sought and that development will contribute to, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity.

### Flood Risk and Drainage

12.23 A Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken to assess the potential flood risk constraints and sensitivities with respect to the continued use of Milton Park as a business park and to inform the proposed growth for the LDO. The FRA evaluates how flood risk would be managed now and over the lifetime of the development, accounting for climate change and with regard to the vulnerability of its users.

12.24 The majority of the LDO area lies within Flood Zone 1 (low probability). There are some small areas which are located within Flood Zone 3 (high probability). The extent of Flood Zone 3 appears to be limited to the channel of Moor Ditch or land immediately adjacent (which is not occupied by any building footprint) and a thin strip of land along Pembroke Lane on the north-western site boundary.

12.25 The assessment found that the Environment Agency hold no records of historic flooding within the LDO area. However, the the Council have records of flooding on Pembroke Lane and High Street, Milton, associated with Moor Ditch as well as flooding from Ginge Brook in Steventon and ponding on the Milton Interchange roundabout, close to the Wantage turn. The Council's SFRA<sup>13</sup> also indicates two incidents of foul water sewer flooding in the wider OX14 4 area. Additionally, while not documented in the SFRA, in consultation on the LDO, the Council has also cited knowledge of past flooding in some of the yard areas at Milton Park.

12.26 Given the nature of the LDO, the detailed design of future redevelopment or regeneration of parts of the site have not yet been designed. Therefore, the detailed design of any proposals for mitigating flood risk and provision of an appropriate surface water drainage scheme will need to be secured through conditions which have been agreed with the Council's drainage team (conditions 7 to 11).

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<sup>13</sup> The Vale of White Horse District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (June 2009) Sewer Flooding Map  
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12.27 While the vast majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is at very low risk of surface water flooding (the preferred location for development), a precautionary approach has been taken by the LDO in respect of the areas where historic flooding has been identified (both recorded and anecdotally). Conditions are therefore proposed (Conditions 11a, 11b, and 11c) which will ensure that when developing these areas (identified in the LDO Design Guidance<sup>14</sup> and LDO Plan 2 as ‘flood risk improvement areas’) proposals will make allowances for increasing capacity/attenuation to reduce local flood risks. Proposals for surface water drainage and flood risk reduction would appropriately dovetail to ensure there is no increased flood risk to the site or its surroundings.

12.28 A condition is also proposed (Condition 10) to maximise opportunities for de-culverting watercourses which will contribute towards improving drainage and flood management.

12.29 In summary, the LDO proposals, through the FRA and the application of the LDO conditions and Design Guidance, accord with LPP1 CP42 and the NPPF (Paragraph 159) which seek to direct development to areas with a low probability of flooding, ensure that new development addresses effective management of all sources of flood risk and ensures that development does not increase the development of flooding elsewhere. Further, in accordance with CP42 appropriate strategies for drainage incorporating sustainable urban drainage systems will be provided.

### Landscape and Visual Impact

12.30 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken to help inform and shape the preparation and importantly the parameters of the new LDO in respect of landscape and design. The assessment provides an evaluation of the existing landscape characteristics, features, the way the landscape is experienced and the value of the landscape and visual resources in and around the site, and the key effects to be analysed. The assessment, which is based on a combination of desk based research and field survey work, utilises the existing development within the LDO area as the baseline for its assessments.

12.31 Significant discussion has been had with the Council’s Landscape Officer regarding the proposed height parameters of the LDO and the impacts of these on the landscape. These discussions and the visualisations prepared to aid these have directly informed and shaped the final LDO parameters proposed. The assessments have included a review of the appropriateness of including or excluding plant from the height parameters and the provision of mitigation in the form of strategic landscape planting on the LDO area boundaries. A number of refinements and safeguards have also arisen as a result of this iterative process to ensure that the future impact of Milton Park on nearby sensitive landscape, visual and heritage assets is to an acceptable level when any harm is balanced with the benefits of the LDO. The outcomes of this are reflected in the LDO parameters table.

12.32 The LVIA concludes that *‘the overall magnitude of change in terms of landscape impact ranges from relatively low for receptors to the south of the Park to Medium or High for the Park itself and for the local landscape character area, including Kelaarts Field’*. Some of these impacts would be viewed as positive achieving improvements to the overall setting and environment to the Park

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<sup>14</sup> Milton Park LDO Design Guidance, Pg 21.  
December, 2024

replacing old, inefficient buildings which are no longer useful for current market requirements with new modern, sustainable buildings to suit new needs. The LDO also brings about more emphasis on blue and green infrastructure and biodiversity net gain. Other impacts may be seen to cause some harm such as increased building heights and the perception of increased development.

12.33 The overall significance of impacts on the local landscape are considered by the LVIA to vary between moderate to minor and up to major in the most sensitive locations. In such locations mitigation screen planting is proposed to reduce the impacts (over time) to acceptable levels.

12.34 In visual terms, the LVIA considers the most sensitive receptors to be the residents of Milton and Sutton Courtenay villages, users of public footpaths and cycleways to or passing through the Park, users of Kelaart's Field and people within the Park itself. The LVIA identifies that through the process of fine-tuning the proposed height parameters, proposed landscape mitigation and aspects such as building layout and massing, where there are significant visual impacts identified these can be reduced to levels which will, over time, become acceptable.

12.35 The LVIA recommends the following mitigation measures which have been reflected in the LDO to minimise landscape and visual impact. The measures will be implemented and secured through a combination of parameters, conditions and the Design Guidance as explained below.

- Adjacent to Kelaart's Field and to Milton Conservation Area (CA) a carefully graduated approach to development is proposed to reduce building heights near to the boundaries. The closest areas to the CA have a building height parameter of 9m which then extends up to 12m and in some places 14m before extending to 18.5m. Areas where roof plant must be included within the height parameter have also been identified.
- A set back from the LDO area boundary to include a landscape buffer of 10m or 15m (depending on sensitivity of the location) and at Kelaart's Field, a further 15m area of 'no development' limited to low level structures, and landscaping. This is secured in the LDO through the identification of a Landscape Zone of between 10m and 15m on LDO Plans 2 and 3 and a 30m 'No Build Zone' at Kelaart's Field. Parameters 8 and 9 (Table A) provide further detail on the requirements of the Landscape Zone. The submission, approval and implementation of appropriate landscaping for the Landscape Zone and wider plot is secured by Conditions 13 and 14.
- Advanced planting where practical to achieve effective screening when developments come forward. Due to the nature of an LDO, much of the strategic planting will come forward as and when plots are redeveloped. However, in some areas where it can come forward in advance (such as at Kelaart's Field) LDO Plans 2 and 3 identify an 'Advanced Strategic Planting' zone which must be provided ahead of any development within the LDO Area. This is secured by LDO Condition 12.
- Supplementary planting along Moor Ditch where possible to enhance screening and biodiversity. As above this will be secured by the Landscape Zone on a plot by plot basis overtime
- A variety in building forms, projections and set-backs, that should create a



variable, not monotonous, built edge in views from the north. This is secured through the finely tuned LDO parameters and the Design Guidance.

- On northern facades, cladding should vary using complementary sustainable finishes in neutral tones to reduce prominence in views. Buildings set on or below the treeline should adopt darker muted colours to elevations facing views from the north. Where buildings break the existing treeline upper floors should use lighter, non reflective finishes. The Design Guidance reflects these recommendations on cladding. Further Condition 1b requires that buildings which are classed as 'Tall Buildings' submit a materials schedule to the Local Authority for approval before development commences.

12.36 In light of the LVIA and the iterative fine tuning process undertaken to inform the LDO and the proposed Parameters, Conditions and Design Guidance, the proposed LDO accords with LPP1 Core Policy 44 which seeks that key features which contribute to the nature and quality of the landscape are protected from harmful development and where possible enhanced, in particular important landscape settings of settlements, areas or features of cultural and historic value, important views and visually sensitive skylines. Furthermore, measures have been proposed as part of the LDO which help to integrate development into the landscape character as required by Core Policies 44 and 37. The proposal therefore also accords with Section 15 of the NPPF which seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment.

### Heritage

12.37 A Heritage Assessment (HA) has been undertaken, which assesses the potential impacts of the proposed LDO on visible heritage assets. The HA identifies the following assets as those which have the potential to be affected by the development which could come forward under the LDO:

- The Milton Conservation Area (as enlarged in December 2016)
- Several Listed buildings and non-designated historic buildings
- Several non-designated wartime buildings still present within Milton Park
- The non-designated historic landscape to the north of Milton Park; and
- Sutton Courtenay Settlement Site Scheduled Monument (SM OX250).

12.38 In accordance with the NPPF (which extends from Primary legislation Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990) the HA identifies the significance of each heritage asset likely to be affected by the LDO development, including consideration of their settings, and considers whether any impacts on or harm to their significance arises.

12.39 The HA identifies that Milton Park (and its predecessors) have formed part of the setting of the above heritage assets since the First World War, when the Army's Didcot Ordnance Depot and the RAF's Milton Stores Depot were created. Notwithstanding the LDO 2012 permitting buildings of up to 9m and 12m in height right up to the northern park boundary the assessment considers that nowhere do the existing buildings dominate any heritage assets and any that do intrude only do so due to poor choices of materials or intermittent, 'gappy' boundary planting on the northern boundary on Moor Ditch.

12.40 The proposed LDO has followed an iterative and joined up process. In this  
December, 2024

respect, the visualisations prepared for the LVIA and the recommendations of the LVIA have informed and been developed in tandem with the HA and its recommendations. This way of working has provided the opportunity to make refinements to and include safeguards within the LDO parameters to ensure that development which could come forward through this LDO will have no greater impact on heritage assets than the existing development at Milton Park (the baseline for the Heritage Assessment). Many of the safeguards which protect heritage assets are therefore the same as those which ensure an acceptable impact on the landscape.

12.41 The safeguards within the LDO which will assist with protecting heritage assets include the following:

- The reduction in the height parameter on the eastern side of Milton High Street from 16m to 12m and introduction of a green building line set back buffer of 10-15m, increasing to 30m at the Park's north eastern corner. This allows the strengthening of existing woodland along Moor Ditch into a continuous buffer. These measures will safeguard the southern approach to Milton Conservation Area.
- Use of appropriate colours for proposed cladding on buildings closest to the northern boundary, i.e. dark colours below the treeline and neutral or light and non reflective above the treeline to protect and enhance views within and from Sutton Courtenay Settlement Site Scheduled Monument (SM OX250) and generally from the historic landscape.

12.42 The HA concludes that with these safeguards in place *'Overall, there will be no views affecting heritage assets where buildings on the Park will be visible where no buildings are currently visible'* and due to the designed-in safeguards the potential impact of the LDO on the heritage significance of the Milton Conservation Area, nearby listed buildings and local interest buildings and the historic landscape will be substantially similar to the existing situation, with any harm (if there is any) being short term and towards the lower end of 'less than substantial harm'.

12.43 The HA identifies that the only potential for impacts that could be classed as 'substantial' harm relates to the potential for loss of the few remaining wartime buildings on Milton Park which are non-designated assets. The few surviving RAF sheds are much altered and have minimal heritage value. They are most likely to continue to be replaced by more useful structures that make better use of the available land within the Park. Substantial harm would arise from their demolition, but this loss must be balanced having regard to their minimal heritage value and the benefits of their replacement.

12.44 The LDO provides no specific protection for the non-designated former RAF Offices (Park House). This building and the general area are being considered for significant regeneration under the LDO, including a potential new connection to the High Street to improve accessibility. Loss would represent substantial harm to a non-designated asset, albeit a relatively important one. If the building is to be lost, that loss must be balanced having regard to the heritage value of the building and the benefits of its replacement and the overall regeneration benefits.

#### Amenity (Noise, lighting, air quality and contamination)

## *Noise*

12.45 A Noise Assessment has been prepared to inform the development parameters. The assessment outlines and considers the potential impact of noise associated with the proposed growth for the LDO.

12.46 A series of noise surveys have been completed as part of the assessment to determine the existing ambient acoustic climate and verify the potential for adverse impact upon identified nearby noise sensitive receptors. The three main sensitive receptors were identified as being the back of Bradstock's Way, Trenchard Avenue and Old Moor (all residential) were agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to the assessment. Both impacts from new sources of noise (such as M & E plant) and from additional road traffic flows and volumes were assessed.

12.47 The assessment concludes that provided the precautionary measures outlined in the assessment are implemented, which are limited to noise limits on new M&E equipment, there should be no significant adverse impact upon the existing and proposed receptors as a result of the new likely sources of noise being introduced to the LDO area. The assessment of the effect significance indicates "No observed Adverse Effect Level" is expected.

12.48 The LDO includes a condition (Condition 28) which will ensure that new development within the LDO area will meet with the noise limits prescribed by the Noise Assessment.

12.49 The LDO proposals therefore accord with LPP2 Development Policy (DP) 25 and the NPPF (Paragraph 185) which seek to ensure that where required an appropriate scheme of mitigation is implemented to protect the amenities and living conditions of neighbouring uses and environments.

## *Lighting*

12.50 An Artificial Lighting Assessment has been undertaken, which considers the potential for the proposed LDO to cause impacts at nearby sensitive receptors as a result of proposed artificial lighting. The assessment determines the baseline conditions at the site (through an onsite Lux Level Survey), assesses the suitability for the proposed end-use and assesses the potential impacts as a result of the proposed LDO. Lighting measurements were undertaken at eight locations across the proposed development site to establish the existing baseline against which future LDO proposals would be assessed. Observations were undertaken across the boundary of the existing industrial estate and new development site.

12.51 The assessment indicated that Lux Levels from the existing site fall below that specified within the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) guidance and recommends that proposed development within the LDO area should continue to maintain these current levels at locations adjacent to the site.

12.52 The assessment concludes that subject to meeting the LDO lighting parameters set out in the assessment and controlled by LDO Condition 6, any future development should control light impacts at sensitive locations to an acceptable level. LDO Condition 5 also restricts lighting levels on elevations facing Moor Ditch. The proposed LDO is therefore supported by LPP2 policies DP21, DP23 and DP24 and the NPPF (Paragraph 185) which seek to ensure

that lighting is appropriately designed and located and minimises impacts on the living conditions of neighbouring uses, the character of the area and biodiversity.

### *Air Quality*

12.53 A desk based review of published local authority air quality reports and nationally available background air quality information has been carried out to determine the suitability of the LDO area for the proposed increased growth. Impacts from the construction phase of development as a result of demolition, earthworks, construction and trackout activities as well as additional road vehicle exhaust emissions were assessed and modelled. The assessment highlighted the potential for air quality impacts as a result of the construction and operation of development.

12.54 The assessment concluded, assuming good practice dust control measures are implemented, the residual potential air quality impacts from dust generated by construction, earthworks and trackout activities was predicted to be 'not significant'. In relation to exhaust emissions the overall significance of potential impacts was also determined to be 'not significant' in accordance with EPUK and IAQM guidance. Based on these conclusions the LDO area is suitable for the proposed uses and therefore complies with the Local Plan Policies which includes DP23, DP24 and DP26 and Paragraphs 185 and 186 of the NPPF which seek to protect the amenities of neighbouring uses from adverse effects of dust and other emissions and ensure, where appropriate assessments and mitigation are secured.

12.55 While not required as a result of the Air Quality Assessment, the LDO includes a condition (Condition 27) which requires a scheme for the treatment of any dust or fumes arising from the use of any building proposed for B2 use is submitted before occupation of such sites. The reason for this being to protect the living conditions of local residents and in the interests of air quality.

### *Contamination*

12.56 A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment has been undertaken. The report assesses the potential environmental constraints and sensitivities with respect to the on-going use of the site as a business park and in order to inform the development of the LDO.

12.57 The assessment concludes the LDO area, as a whole, to have a low to moderate risk in terms of the potential for historical contamination to represent a risk to site users or other sensitive receptors while the site remains in its present use and configuration. Given the brownfield nature of the site there is potential for undiscovered areas of contamination to be present in un-investigated parts of the site. Therefore, in accordance with the recommendations of the report, Local Plan Policies CP43 (LPP1) and DP24 and DP27 (LPP2) and the NPPF (Paragraphs 183, 184 and 185) a condition (Condition 26a) is proposed in the LDO which requires individual site assessments to be submitted on all future development/re-development plots and if necessary remedial actions implemented at that stage to ensure the plot is suitable for the proposed use. Condition 26b covers the scenario where unexpected contamination is discovered during development.

## Utilities

12.58 The Utilities Report is a desktop exercise comprising of record information of existing utility network assets from the relevant utility supply companies and an outline strategy for how future development within the LDO area may be served. In view of the Council declaring a climate emergency in 2019 and its subsequent adoption of a Climate Emergency Programme, the report also takes account of and discusses the Council's goals for carbon neutrality and presents technologies which could be considered to reduce the carbon intensity of the final development.

12.59 Given the nature of the LDO as a simplified planning framework rather than detailed development proposal, the report recommends that when development plots within the LDO area come forward utilities applications are made to ascertain information on supply capacity. Furthermore, it is recommended that each development plot incorporates low and zero carbon technologies as identified by the report to achieve development strategy targets and reduce impact on the existing utility network. LDO Condition 17 will secure the submission of an Energy Strategy and separate Sustainability Strategy which set out details of the approach to energy efficiency and renewable energy strategies to deliver regulated energy use which achieves a 25% improvement over Building Regulations Part L 2013 Target Emission Rate. The Energy Strategy shall include a feasibility study into Low or Zero Carbon Technologies to assess those most appropriate to the development. Condition 16 will also seek to secure that all new development achieves BREEAM Excellent.

12.60 The LDO proposals therefore accord with LPP1 CP40 and CP43 and the NPPF (Paragraphs 154 and 155) which seek that new development takes a proactive approach to mitigating for and adapting to climate change and make effective use of natural resources where possible.

## Design

12.61 As discussed above, the suite of technical work undertaken has led to a series of recommendations and requirements many of which will be secured through the LDO Plans, Parameters and Conditions. Many of these will also have implications on the design and layout of development plots as they come forward.

12.62 The Design Guidance (which forms part of the LDO) aims to reflect and draw together the design implications and provide a framework of high level guidance which ensures high quality design both on a development plot and parkwide scale.

12.63 The context to the Design Guidance is provided by the opportunity to maintain and enhance the high quality business environment for current and future tenants, while respecting neighbouring communities including the villages of Milton and Sutton Courtenay, and keeping pace with the changing markets for science and technology in the UK environments. The Design Guidance will ensure that development proposals consider the interaction of buildings, landscape, open space, function and form.

12.64 The LDO therefore accords with LPP1 Core Policy 37 which seeks that all proposals for new development will be of high quality including that it responds positively to the site and surroundings; creates a distinctive sense of place, provides clear and permeable street networks; is well connected to provide safe

and convenient ease of movement by all; incorporates links to green infrastructure and landscape to enhance biodiversity; is flexible to changing requirements of occupants and other circumstances; is visually attractive and the scale, density, grain, massing, type, details and materials, are appropriate for the site and surrounding area and secures a high quality public realm which addresses the needs of all in society; and is sustainable and resilient to climate change. The LDO proposals also accord with Section 12 of the NPPF which seeks the creation of well-designed places and supports the provision of design guides to provide maximum clarity about design expectations and provide a framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality of design.

### **13.0 Environmental Impact Assessment**

13.1 This LDO has been screened in compliance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Development permitted by the Order includes Schedule 2 development but is not considered by the Local Planning Authority to result in significant environmental impacts.

13.2 Screening of the LDO has been on the basis of a maximum of 390,000 sqm gross floor space, and the other development parameters. This maximum floor space figure has been identified as the potential maximum scale of development within the LDO area, and has been used for the technical assessments. Development proposals that would exceed these parameters will be subject to a planning application, including further technical assessments and EIA screening.

13.3 Notwithstanding the above, the Local Planning Authority is adopting a precautionary approach, so the ecological baseline conditions will be the subject of a biennial review. Any changes recorded in relation to these conditions which could have material implications for the development as permitted by the LDO and its potential environmental impact will be subject to review by the Local Planning Authority having regard to the power of the Local Planning Authority to revoke or modify or amend the LDO (recognising that such a review may necessitate the instigation of screening and scoping procedures and the submission of an environmental statement). If materially significant changes in the ecological baseline are identified, no further development will be permitted under the Order, in the areas affected, until the required surveys have been undertaken on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, and any consequential modifications or amendments to the Order have been completed.

### **14.0 Compliance With Other Legislation**

14.1 Development is permitted by this Order only if it is within the defined range of permitted uses and development parameters attributable to the relevant plot and meets the requirements of the relevant Conditions. The LDO does not supersede the requirement for development to comply with all other relevant UK and international legislation, for example building control or environmental permits.

### **15.0 Timescales and monitoring**

15.1 The Council resolved to make the Milton Park LDO on 15 February 2023, and it came into effect on 20 December 2024. It is designed to be effective for a period of 17 years, to align with the Local Plan period (2041) and reflect the typical December, 2024

timescale of business leases and give greater confidence and certainty for potential investors.

15.2 The development parameters, permitted uses and Design Guidance should be reviewed at least every 5 years by the Local Planning Authority from adoption of the Order to ensure that objective of the LDO is being achieved. The reviews will be done in partnership with local stakeholders and identify whether any of the technical studies need to be refreshed because of changes in material considerations.

15.3 If amendments are proposed following this review by reference to any material change in relevant circumstances or by reference to other material planning considerations, they will be subject to further consultation in compliance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (or its successor).