



OXFORD TECHNOLOGY PARK **THE COMPELLING CASE - PART 2**



OCTOBER 2012

FORWARD

¹ This document updates *Oxford Technology Park: The Compelling Case*, published in December 2009, which proposed the allocation of 6.5 hectares (16 acres) of land at Langford Lane, Kidlington, to create approximately 23,200 sq m (250,000 sq ft) of B1(b) research and development space, delivering approximately 1,250 jobs. A second phase, on the adjoining field, adds a further 1.7 hectares.

² With the publication of Cherwell's Proposed Submission Local Plan in August 2012, which acknowledges the needs based case for the technology park, we believe the timing is now right to move from the sub-regional and strategic considerations presented in 2009 to the 'place making' and local. Our aim in this document is now to reinforce the evidence base in support of the technology park, but also provide local stakeholders with a clear view on what our development proposals will entail and broadly what they will look like.

³ Our intention remains the same: to promote Oxford Technology Park through Cherwell District Council's emerging Local Plan, only submitting a planning application in the event that we receive sufficient support from key stakeholders. We are hopeful that there will be sufficient support to justify a planning application in Q2 2013.

⁴ We would welcome your feedback.

⁵ Should you require any further information, please contact Richard Cutler at the address below.

Bloombridge LLP
The Manor House
Downton
Wiltshire
SP5 3PU

T: +44(0) 1725 511574
M: +44(0) 7771 968227
E: richard@bloombridge.eu

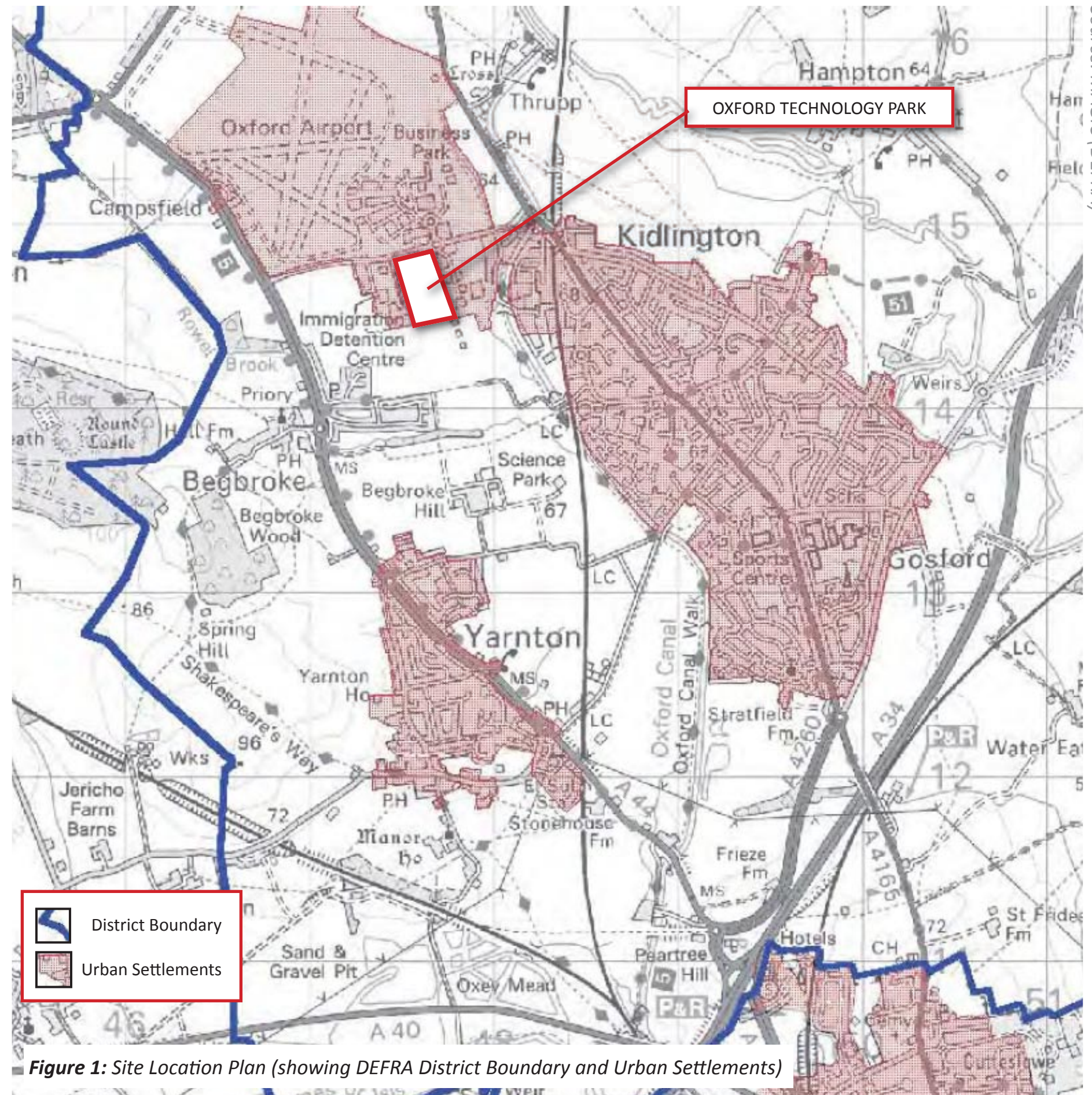


Figure 1: Site Location Plan (showing DEFRA District Boundary and Urban Settlements)

Source: MAGIC (DEFRA)

KEY ISSUES

1. There is no employment land left in Kidlington. Historically, demand in Kidlington has been strong, but the associated growth and economic benefits have now stopped owing to the lack of allocated land to retain expanding local employers and accommodate inward investment.
2. Oxford Technology Park, at Langford Lane, is ideally located to attract high value-add, knowledge economy jobs; not least from Oxford.
3. There is therefore a need for a localised Green Belt review, in the area of Langford Lane, which is low impact and ought not to be contentious. This review should be undertaken and confirmed as part of the Proposed Submission Local Plan and not deferred to a subsequent development plan document (DPD).
4. Kidlington and Bicester should form part of the same strategy for wealth creation and economic growth in Cherwell. Their relationship is synergistic in relation to the Oxford cluster and Kidlington, in particular, has the potential to seed growth for Bicester.
5. There is no reason (further) to delay the progression of Oxford Technology Park through the policy process. The 8.2 hectares (20 acres) of Green Belt land south of the entrance to London Oxford Airport should be allocated for the immediate development of B1(b) R&D space.

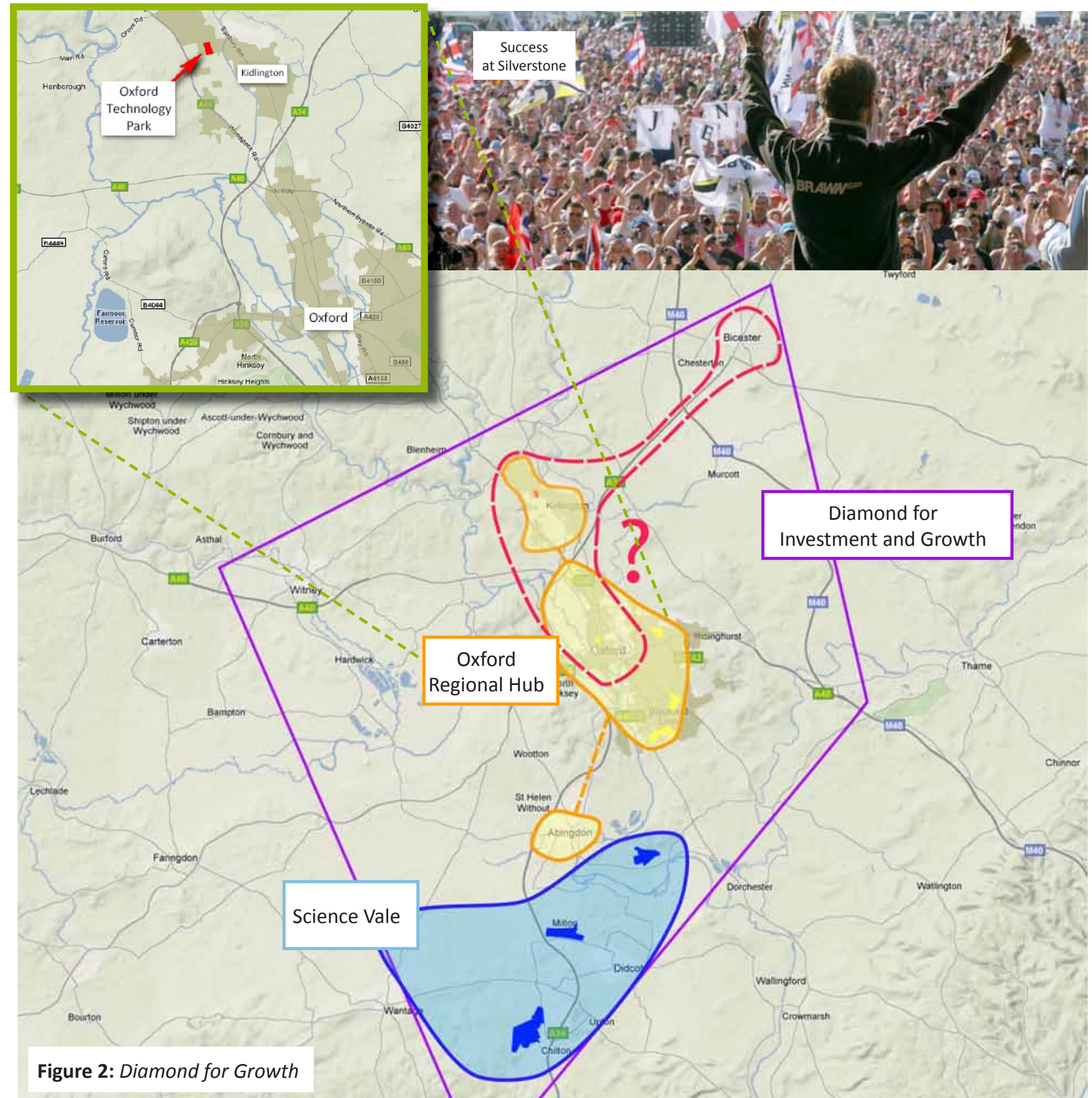


Figure 2: Diamond for Growth



CLIENT:

- HILL STREET HOLDINGS
- BLOOMBRIDGE

TEAM:

- SPACESTRATEGY
- PETER BRETT ASSOCIATES
- BAYNHAM MEIKLE PARTNERSHIP
- MACGREGOR SMITH

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Macgregor • Smith
Landscape Architecture



1.0 INTRODUCTION

¹ This report updates Part 1 of our compelling case for the allocation of Oxford Technology Park, published in December 2009. Part 1 set out the strategic case for development and should be read as an introduction to this document, Part 2.

² Significant progress has been made. We are grateful for the constructive feedback we have received from Cherwell District Council and Kidlington Parish Council. There appears to be an acceptance of the basic case for development, with the key points of difference now comprising:

1. The timing of the allocation of the technology park.

We believe the employment land supply position and economic potential of Kidlington (notably around Langford Lane) merits an immediate release of land for development. There is currently no employment land available. There is therefore no reason to wait for a small scale, localised Green Belt review. On the contrary, the National Planning Policy Framework is clear on the importance of growth and the need to use the planning system to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy “by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation” (NPPF: paragraph 7)

2. The Parish Council’s preference for including residential in the mix of uses.

We do not believe Langford Lane is currently a good location for residential, especially given the airport (and its flight paths). This is perhaps something that could be reviewed over time, for example with the ‘greening’ of Langford Lane, a general improvement in the sense of place in this area, and possibly the release of the Campsfield Detention Centre for development.

Hence, we feel residential is an issue that is best addressed at a later stage of the plan preparation process, possibly as part of the Housing & Sites Development Plan Document, but more likely the next Local Plan.

3. Further evidence requirements in relation to the Sustainability Appraisal. There are no major constraints with regard to the usual environmental issues, such as flood risk, water supply, landscape, ecology and archaeology, but we appreciate that we need to build the evidence base as we work towards a planning application. Various studies have been commissioned and these will be shared with the District Council.

³ In addition to the above, we are excited and pleased to see the evolution of the Bicester Master Plan. This has the potential to transform Bicester and it represents a bold and positive piece of spatial planning.

⁴ We have always argued that “Kidlington should be pursued by Cherwell alongside Bicester – not as an either/or” (Part 1, page 18) as the economic assets around Kidlington act as ‘stepping stones’ or stages for growth and innovation spinning out of central Oxford. For example, **Stage 1** growth (the ‘eureka moment’ and business formation) is most likely to happen in one of Oxford’s academic or research and development facilities, including Begbroke Science Park, **Stage 2** (‘first growth’) needs to happen close to central Oxford, for example Kidlington, and **Stage 3** (‘mass production’), which will be demanding in terms of land take (and so unlikely to be acceptable in the Oxford Green Belt or in a location that would impact on the city’s historic core) is the natural potential of Bicester.

⁵ In Part 1 (paragraph 30), we also referred to these three stages as: MANAGED GROWTH, in Oxford, MANAGED POTENTIAL, in Kidlington, and GROWING POTENTIAL, in Bicester.

⁶ We would add that, in time, as Bicester generates a critical mass of innovative capabilities (backed either by new education assets or the R&D functions of a major corporate), the town will attract **Stage 1** and **Stage 2** growth. But, in the next five years, Kidlington is much better placed to capture entrepreneurial activity; and, with the Bicester Master Plan, the linkages and flow of benefits between these two settlements, and Oxford, is both natural and highly synergistic.

⁷ With such significant progress in the strategic and spatial arguments, this document, comprising Part 2 of our compelling case for Oxford Technology Park, concentrates on the design, place making potential and ‘soundness’ of our vision for Langford Lane. It is hoped that this will bring confidence to the decision we are asking the District Council and/or the EIP Inspector to make: ie that 8.2 hectares (20 acres) of land at Langford Lane, Kidlington, should be allocated in the draft Local Plan for the immediate development of Oxford Technology Park.

2.0 SEEDING 'GROWTH POINTS' FOR THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

⁸ The so called 'new economy' has created a surge in new, young, high-growth, highly innovative firms. It wasn't long ago that Apple, Cisco and Google didn't even exist – now each one has a market value of over \$100 billion. Skype, Facebook and Twitter have generated billions of dollars and reached a global scale more quickly and with less capital than any company before.

⁹ The most innovative firms are growing many times as fast, both in terms of employment and gross value add, than those that fail to innovate. The impact this change is having on our economic landscape is unprecedented. Today, many more of our jobs are dependent on these new, young and dynamic businesses. Either we engage, or this increasingly 'footloose, light touch' set of industries (not least in terms of the carbon footprint) will locate in other countries around the World.

¹⁰ Here in Britain, just six per cent of UK businesses are high-growth but they generated over half of the net employment growth between 2005 and 2008 (*Measuring Business Growth* at www.nesta.org.uk). This has huge policy implications both locally and nationally.

¹¹ To build a new dynamism in our economy – to create the growth, jobs and opportunities Britain needs – we must back the big businesses of tomorrow, not just the big businesses of today.

¹² The fact is that we are not as good as some of our competitors in turning great ideas on the drawing board into prototypes in a laboratory and actual goods and services people can buy.

¹³ The Government wants to see bridges built between universities and businesses, bringing the two together – not just through 'in-housing' research but spreading knowledge to connected businesses (large and small, new and old); potentialising new technologies; making businesses aware of funding streams; and providing access to skills and equipment.

¹⁴ There is a clear and, in fact, long-established evidence base in support of a new approach to sustainable economic growth in Cherwell; as summarised in our own Compelling Case (Part 1) published in December 2009. The emerging Local Plan must grasp the opportunities available in the southern part of the district.

What is needed?

¹⁵ The Oxford commercial property market is constrained by supply in all sectors. This has maintained demand, even in these challenging economic times. Speculative development does not satisfy the requirements of the pioneering occupiers identified above - particularly those

in the high tech and research markets that have progressed, or are looking to progress, beyond the start-up stage (**Stage 1**; where, often, shared premises are acceptable) . Equally, attempting conversion and fitting out of speculatively built office or industrial premises has not proved attractive or cost effective as the operating environments of a particular business are very particular and need to be fully integrated with the space strategy from the outset. In short, technology occupiers moving beyond the start up phase to **Stage 2** demand bespoke buildings for their bespoke requirements; and, as a response to business growth, they often need these buildings in a hurry.

¹⁶ The specific needs of the high tech/bio-tech industries and research establishments are, by their very nature, an amalgamation of research/production/sales/storage and, therefore, their premises need to satisfy all of these demands - specialist buildings for specialists! Thus, pre-let or pre-sold premises built on a bespoke basis, often to exacting technical requirements, are an essential component of the employment space/land offer.



¹⁷ In contrast, these markets have flourished in Cambridge, where there are nearly 20 purpose built science-based research and production parks, supplying commercial and academic research space and inviting take up from commercial enterprises and incoming foreign investors and companies. This has become known as the 'Cambridge Phenomenon' (SQW, 1985).

Our request...

¹⁸ Oxford Technology Park (OTP) is a site that is ideally suited to accommodate bespoke requirements for high tech premises – buildings that specifically mix research and production laboratories/offices/ancillary storage and production space, particularly in the market niche for 'Stage 2' businesses. In turn, **Stage 3**, loosely speaking 'mass production', is ideally located to more established, large scale industrial and distribution locations such as Bicester (or the Thames Valley). Ultimately, of course, the business life-cycle effect will ensure that the spread of Stage 1, 2 and 3 companies equalizes over time such that the **Stage 3** locations start generating their own **Stage 1** activities.

¹⁹ In meeting the current need for bespoke accommodation, OTP will provide an exemplar 'grow on' (Stage 2) development with the real possibility of subsequent local ripple benefits in terms of job and wealth creation, and indeed place making.

²⁰ Cherwell should allocate Oxford Technology Park for immediate development to capture high-skill, high value employment. To support this assertion, we will show, in the remaining pages of this document, how development immediately adjacent to the airport creates the potential for a regionally critical asset; meets existing exceptional needs; and supports excellent spatial planning with very few impacts (including traffic).

CONCEPT

²¹ In *Oxford Technology Park: The Compelling Case (Part 1)*, we set out the specific spatial needs of a Technology Park – a place to support high tech and bio-tech businesses; academic spin-out and ICT companies. This key sector is identified by the government and enterprise as generating high value employment and high GDP

These needs include:-

Location

²² Accessibility to both the originating area of research and to national and international markets, including Oxford.

²³ In this instance, access to international markets is likely to be provided by the London Oxford Airport in the medium term (through a hub airport, such as Frankfurt) or Birmingham International and Heathrow, as well as through the pre-existing transport infrastructure.

Speed

²⁴ The knowledge economy tends to generate urgent and immediate needs - if these cannot be satisfied then it is likely that these high value companies will simply re-locate. Initial success in attracting this key sector is likely to secure ongoing centripetal growth. A successful technology park requires that bespoke units can be provided on demand.

Flexibility & Certainty

²⁵ The knowledge economy, by its very nature, often generates an entirely new (or very specific) form of demand for property. It is therefore important that the Local Plan allocation (and planning permission) is sufficiently flexible to accommodate a wide range and size of buildings. Investors are then provided with certainty and confidence through a tightly defined master plan, design code and estate management structure.

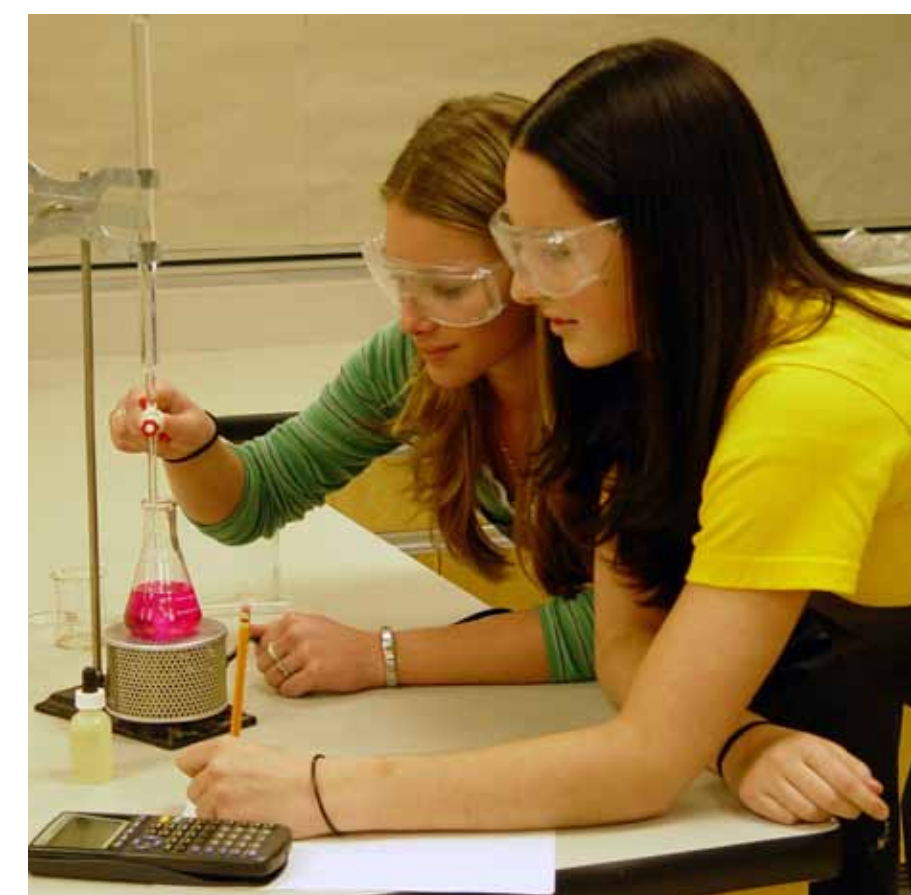
Costs

²⁶ To provide a viable accommodation solution, the costs of specialisation often need to be factored into each building's design at the outset. The viability of an enterprise - and its decision to locate in a particular area - can be more easily satisfied through creating bespoke accommodation as opposed to retro-fitting existing space; as the add-on costs for alterations and operating inefficiencies can be prohibitive.

Labour

²⁷ Enterprises of this nature need to be able to attract and retain a well-trained and motivated work-force.

²⁸ Location is key, but 'character' is also critical to the delivery of successful technology parks - by this we mean an exciting place with a sense of arrival and a strong sense of community. In this, we are mindful that the majority of the people working in the 'Oxford Cluster' can work anywhere in the world - creating the right sort of place is important (see Figure 3).





Support Services

²⁹ Spin-out companies need close access to functional expertise and support facilities. Some of these can be provided in the immediate vicinity, others are currently located in Oxford.

Infrastructure

³⁰ Power, telecommunications and good transport access are essential.

³¹ As an established commercial location, Langford Lane is serviced with all mains services of water, drainage, high voltage power and a natural gas supply. The OTP site is accessed from within a 30mph zone which, along with suitable entrance splays and a filter lane for access from the west, will provide a safe access and egress from the site.

Government Support

³² A broad based, local partnership structure and government support are usually very helpful to the development of successful clusters. Innovation, as evidenced in the 'Cambridge Phenomenon', is often a somewhat haphazard and difficult to plan for process. A ready supply and choice of employment land is important, as is occasional intervention and leadership from governmental bodies (especially in relation to inward investment enquiries).



Figure 4: Site Location

EXPERIENCE

Hill Street Holdings

³³ Hill Street Holdings (“HSH”) originates from 1999 when Angus Bates set up a development group focusing on industrial and commercial development and providing bespoke commercial accommodation in all sectors.

³⁴ As principle of the company, Angus Bates has had responsibility for development and letting of commercial and high tech space totalling approximately 1.8 million square feet across over forty separate transactions. HSH spends much research time understanding and investigating the local and regional markets as well as understanding the particular occupational requirements of businesses in each sector.

³⁵ HSH group of companies is a direct developer and acts as a facilitator for many types of property occupier for development of principally bespoke high tech, R&D, production and offices in a multitude of formats according to different needs.

³⁶ HSH has a long track record of investing in sites in the Oxford area. In 2005 it bought the Dairy Crest site and developed an office campus, Oxford Office Village, of circa 40,000 square feet alongside a Mercedes main dealership facility. Prior to this, in 2003, HSH had already purchased the freehold of the Oxford Technology Park site, believing that there is a distinct gap in the Oxford market, based on experience in and around Cambridge, for volume production and R&D space. That belief has been borne out in the continued lack of availability in the Oxford market. Our research has reinforced the belief that Oxford has long suffered from the stifling effect of this lack of availability and genuine variety of commercial choice.

³⁷ HSH continues to demonstrate commitment to the high tech sector and the knowledge economy overall. Oxford Technology Park will be an exciting and much needed fillip in the market, providing a volume of the type of space that is not currently available in the Oxford market.

Sigma Aldrich, Homefield Enterprise Park, Cambridge

By way of example, Sigma Aldrich were attracted to Homefield Enterprise Park, outside Cambridge, developed by HSH. Sigma Aldrich is a leading life science and high tech company operating in 40 countries and has over 7,600 employees. It shows how the effective development of a bespoke solution attracted an incoming international business.

³⁸ Sigma Genosys, part of Sigma Aldrich, wanted to expand and improve their synthetic DNA production facility serving research establishments all over the UK and Europe. Like almost every other bio-tech occupier they have very specific and special accommodation requirements.

They required a bespoke bio-tech production and warehouse facility to suit their very unusual requirements. The building was constructed tailored to their needs, including fit-out, extensive fume extract systems, climate control systems and elements of office fit-out and furnishings. The building, with high office content extends to 1,990sqm (21,420 sqft).

Bloombridge

³⁹ Bloombridge was set up in July 2009 by two former Directors of Arlington Securities (now Goodman).

⁴⁰ Bruce Usher has over 20 years experience in the UK property market, much of it developing and letting some of the UK’s largest high tech and employment sites in the UK (for example Slough Trading Estate, IQ Winnersh, Oxford Business Park and Hatfield Business Park). Whilst at Slough Estates, Bruce spent several months researching the factors that influence occupational demand, both in terms of location, building specification and price which included research in the USA interviewing some of the largest high tech businesses as well as architects, project managers and real estate advisers in the high tech and bio-tech sectors. Much of this research was used to improve the design and functionality of high tech buildings, specifically with the intention of moving towards a ‘generic modular building’ that could drive down construction time and costs and be

used for a multitude of business activities.

⁴¹ As development director at Arlington (now Goodman) Bruce was responsible for all UK development and letting activity across the Business and Science Park Portfolio. Notable high tech transactions include O2, Ipsen, Lonza, Eisai, Call Sciences, Anite, Microsoft and Hewlett Packard.

⁴² Richard Cutler joined Arlington at the same time as Bruce, in 2003; holding the position of Director of Strategy, Acquisitions & Planning. He achieved planning permission or allocations for some of the largest employment-led development projects in the UK; including Oxford’s Northern Gateway at Peartree. He was actively involved in the Harwell Science & Innovation Campus and Colworth Park (one of Unilever’s five global centres of excellence), and he commissioned and lead a major research project on UK Science Parks undertaken in 2007 by Turnberry Consulting. Richard is a Chartered Town Planning and Chartered Surveyor and holds an MBA from the University of Cambridge.

⁴³ Bloombridge recently achieved planning permission for 4 million sq ft of technology, business and leisure space at Silverstone Circuit (August 2012) and in July 2011 provided the economic, market and delivery advice that accompanied the planning application for the McLaren Applied Technology Centre in Woking.

SUMMARY

⁴⁴ We can conclude from looking at the general needs, experience and the examples above that technology parks are developments of a specific character.

⁴⁵ Further, that it is through creating a particular sense of place that the sector is successful – even to the extent that ‘spatial presence’ will attract international companies to invest. This is particularly important as spin-out companies take their initial commercial steps; hopefully into a managed environment where like-minded businesses offer synergistic benefits, thereby aiding embeddedness.

Specific needs are:-

- *Close to Oxford with access to infrastructure.*
- *Providing a right-sized intimate campus environment, where bespoke buildings can be delivered in a timely, flexible and cost effective manner.*
- *Providing good access to local, regional and international markets and labour.*
- *Offering ‘spatial presence’ – such that development will ‘seed’ growth the knowledge economy in Cherwell.*

⁴⁶ Oxford Technology Park is located in the Langford Lane business area in Kidlington. This area has demonstrated outstanding success and growth and offers excellent credentials as an accessible and sustainable location, making it the obvious choice for high tech expansion in conjunction with Begbroke Science Park.

⁴⁷ The promoters of Oxford Technology Park have a wealth of experience and are known in the market for building bespoke and fully fitted high tech research and manufacturing buildings in Cambridge, Oxford and elsewhere.

⁴⁸ The Oxford Technology Park site will easily integrate into the existing market where there is demonstrable demand for high tech space which cannot currently be satisfied.



3.0 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

⁴⁹ Whilst we are not suggesting that Kidlington should take substantial growth, it should be allowed to fulfil its potential as a location for ‘smart growth’, in the northern part of the Central Oxfordshire Diamond for Growth, closely related to the world-class status of Oxford (which is defined in the RSS as the Regional Hub – see Figure 2). We have already set this out in detail in *Oxford Technology Park: The Compelling Case (Part 1)*, published in December 2009.

⁵⁰ It is becoming clear that, as the UK economy slowly emerges from recession, the strength and sustainability of recovery will be based in no small part upon growth in the knowledge-based sector, with its emphasis on high-end, value-added science, technology, research and production. In essence, the expansion of the bioscience, pharmaceutical and ICT industries are vital to the future health of the economy.

⁵¹ For example, Oxford Bioscience Network (“OBN”) Research (January 2011 – Jon Rees, CEO) reports that investment in UK life sciences companies in 2010 stood at \$457M compared to just \$281M in the previous year - a rise of 62%.

⁵² OBN, in their January 2011 update, also stated that:

“taken together with what we see on the ground – an upsurge of recruitment, and increases in R&D spending – we are seeing a new dawn for the maturing UK life sciences industry which will I believe generate significant opportunities for investors during 2011 [and beyond].”

⁵³ Oxford has been, and will continue to be, at the vanguard of technology discovery with its combination of internationally acclaimed universities; high end research and development facilities; excellence of communications and highly educated workforce.

⁵⁴ This ‘smart-growth’ has already started at Kidlington, where Begbroke Science Park has been a success; delivering on the original aim of providing research and laboratory space for academics and new start up businesses based on intellectual property and technology principally emanating from Oxford itself. The first phase is now fully subscribed with ‘serviced’ occupiers (which are almost exclusively University spin-outs).

⁵⁵ Construction of the second phase of Begbroke Science Park will see a total availability of 200,000 sq ft of mixed research and serviced accommodation (max. 30% commercial occupiers under the Planning Permission). We would describe this as “**Stage 1**” growth.

⁵⁶ Second and third stage growth has been less well catered for – i.e. the commercial, medium to large scale delivery of products and services founded on the original research. Companies embarking on this phase in their expansion typically demand 10/15,000 plus sq ft of hybrid accommodation, often involving a very particular combination of office, laboratory, production and storage space, as described earlier. This is exactly the building stock that we are aiming to provide at Oxford Technology Park, building on, and reinforcing, the success of Begbroke Science Park.

⁵⁷ It is our contention, however, that the current level of land and building supply in Kidlington has become woefully inadequate to satisfy even the short term needs of this sector. We include at Table 1 evidence prepared for us in 2010 by Colin Buchanan & Partners. This shows that B1 employment growth between 2006-8 was 32% (Kidlington), 6% (Bicester) and -16% (Banbury), so Kidlington experienced the strongest growth in these years, and this is supported by the employment land take-up figures in the Employment Land Review (ELR) 2012, which at page 1 states:

“The demand forecast (Table 7.16 of section 7) estimates that there will be demand for between 9.3 and 11.3 ha of additional B1 employment land in Kidlington in the period to 2026. The results of consultation with local property agents, landowners and key stakeholders indicate that the demand for offices in Kidlington appears to be more closely related to the demand drivers of the Central Oxfordshire market. This is backed up by an assessment of historic completions. Demand in the Central Oxfordshire market is mainly connected to Oxford University and is focused on higher value sectors such as technology, medical and science research. The growth of a cluster of high value companies around Kidlington could have the effect of boosting local economic development in the south of Cherwell and through a local multiplier effect this could help the growth of support industries and higher value companies further north in Bicester and Banbury. Traditionally these types of company have located to the south of Oxford due to constraints in the north such as Green Belt and floodplain and the greater availability of premises and clustering of high tech companies and business parks in the south”.

⁵⁸ We would make six further observations:

- *We have been unable to update the 2010 work by Colin Buchanan and believe the original data source for 2009, 10 and 11 is not yet available. We acknowledge that this would be a useful exercise.*
- *We note that the ELR (2006) emphasizes that employment in Bicester is dominated by B8 take up – 63% according to Table 8.1.*
- *B1 employment is generally considered to be higher value add than B8.*

TABLE 1: ANNUAL BUSINESS ENQUIRY DATA	TOTAL EMPLOYMENT			TOTAL B1 EMPLOYMENT			B1 SHARE OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT			GROWTH IN B1 EMPLOYMENT		
	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
KIDLINGTON	9,420	9,583	9,870	1,737	2,388	2,296	18%	25%	23%	37%	-4%	32%
BICESTER	11,570	12,017	12,174	1,418	1,365	1,498	12%	11%	12%	-4%	10%	6%
BANBURY	28,164	28,890	28,529	4,601	4,983	3,842	16%	17%	13%	-8%	-23%	-16%
Cherwell	65,591	67,377	67,102	11,055	12,033	11,207	17%	18%	17%	9%	-7%	1%
Oxford	99,966	103,593	107,833	18,524	19,427	18,315	19%	19%	17%	5%	6%	-1%
South Oxfordshire	51,927	54,964	53,116	15,518	15,800	15,828	30%	29%	30%	2%	0%	2%
Vale of White Horse	54,068	54,182	54,340	14,851	14,638	14,662	27%	27%	27%	-1%	0%	-1%
West Oxfordshire	37,877	38,905	38,930	7,696	8,294	7,781	20%	21%	20%	8%	-6%	1%
Oxfordshire	307,438	317,041	319,324	67,642	70,190	67,792	22%	22%	21%	4%	-3%	0%
South East	3,673,074	3,730,286	37,57,711	804,853	825,086	827,703	22%	22%	22%	3%	0%	3%
England	22,790,187	23,005,085	23,073,714	4,884,255	4,998,032	5,011,039	21%	22%	22%	2%	0%	2%

- *We suspect that the employment growth figures for Bicester are dominated by B8, which offers growth that is not consistent with the Strategic Objectives of the draft Local Plan at paragraph A.17.*
- *We would not be surprised if the employment growth figures for Kidlington have reduced dramatically since 2008 (in relative and absolute terms) because there has been no employment land available for the last 5 years (in contrast to best practice, which encourages a modest over supply in order to offer employers flexibility).*
- *We remain optimistic about the future of Bicester, especially with the Master Plan in place, but Kidlington, and in particular initiatives such as Oxford Technology Park, are an essential and urgent component in creating a new economy for Bicester.*

⁵⁹ We support the themes set out in paragraphs B.22 to B.31 of the draft Local Plan and commend the District Council for its positive approach to the knowledge economy, including the Bicester Master Plan. We would observe, however, that the themes need to be finessed slightly in order to respond to the evidence that we have presented elsewhere, in particular:

- *The fact that Kidlington has more B1 employment than Bicester (according to our Table 1, 53% more in 2008).*
- *The aggregated net additional demand referred to at paragraph B.25 hides substantial differences in demand and supply between settlements and across use classes. The ELRs confirm that Kidlington has had the highest take up of B1 employment, yet it ran out of employment land in 2006/7. There is a compelling case to allocate Oxford Technology Park in the Local Plan as a strategic site for immediate development. This should be listed at paragraph B.41 and also clarified at Policy Kidlington 1 on page 52 of the plan.*

⁶⁰ We would not expect any resultant changes to these

themes to diminish the vision for Bicester. On the contrary, we believe Bicester Gateway, for example, offers the best opportunity to change perceptions of Bicester and connect the settlement with the Oxford Regional Hub (by announcing high tech at the principal, southern entrance to the town).

⁶¹ Our position is reinforced by the findings of the “*Report On The Examination Into The Oxford Core Strategy Development Plan Document, 21st December 2010*”, where the Inspector found that;

“The RSS is supportive of Central Oxfordshire striving to be a world leader in education, science and technology by building upon the sub-region’s economic strengths (Policy CO1). Policies CO1 and CO2 and the supporting paragraphs, 22.1 to 22.11, highlight the sub-region’s world class economy and establish the role of the city and its importance to the sub-region and to the wider south east. Paragraph 22.5 of the RSS indicates that “Oxford itself will be allowed to grow physically and economically in order to accommodate its own needs, contribute to those in the wider region and help maintain its world class status” [Our emphasis].

⁶² Indeed, Kidlington itself is increasingly being recognised as a strategic North Oxford location, with the development of sites along Langford Lane and Langford Locks over the past decade firmly establishing the area as a viable commercial location.

⁶³ Going forward, the continued development of facilities at London Oxford Airport and the upgrading of the Chiltern Line to London will further enhance the reputation of Kidlington as a good location for business. The London Oxford Airport is immediately adjacent to the proposed Technology Park site and offers a distinct advantage in direct links to the European knowledge hubs including Geneva and Zurich.

⁶⁴ Cherwell’s recently published Economic Development Strategy 2011 - 16 (undertaken without the benefit of

the ELR, 2012) refers to Kidlington as a quality business location in Oxford’s Green Belt, having access to the City, but free from major flood risks and traffic congestion with competitively priced commercial and residential accommodation (para 3.30)

⁶⁵ Comparatively, Bicester has distribution, retail, and small scale low-value manufacturing. It is our opinion that Bicester has failed (to date) as a location for research as it is simply too far away from the knowledge hub to attract start-ups and spin-out businesses who need to be close to the centres of research and development.

⁶⁶ Our representations to the draft EDS made by SQW, and work by Ramidus (enclosed in Appendices A and B) substantiate these views.

⁶⁷ The fact that different places develop distinct roles that reflect their comparative advantages is actually the sign of a market working well. It is important that economic and spatial policies take this into account and make appropriate provision for growth in different locations.



⁶⁸ There is, right now, an absolute lack of any suitable or bespoke commercial high tech accommodation, or opportunity to construct any such facilities within Cherwell and in close proximity to the knowledge hub of Oxford. There are specific examples and requirements of major manufacturers with research requirements that are unable to be satisfied sufficiently close to Oxford (see [Appendix C](#)).

⁶⁹ In summary, the clear implications of our employment analysis is that Cherwell has an opportunity to 'seed' high tech development and capture a significant portion of the growth in this market-sector over the next 10-15yrs - building on the success of Begbroke, Langford Lane business area and the potential of the Airport as a regionally critical asset. This position is supported by Cherwell's ELR (February 2012) which concludes, at sub-section 8.2.1.1:

"The close proximity of Kidlington to central Oxford and the University therefore offers a unique opportunity for Cherwell to benefit from the international reputation of the University and the demand from high value companies to be located close to Oxford City Centre. The growth of a cluster of high value companies around Kidlington could have the effect of boosting local economic development in the south of Cherwell and through a local multiplier effect this could help the growth of support industries and higher value companies further north in Bicester and Banbury."

⁷⁰ We, therefore, reiterate the position we promoted in *Oxford Technology Park: The Compelling Case (Part 1)*, 2009.

"We consider that Cherwell's emerging Core Strategy should provide for Oxford Technology Park (A) Either in the form of a specific designation for B1(b) research & development accommodation; (B) Or, by ensuring that the Core Strategy is sufficiently specific about: the economic role and potential of Kidlington; and the need to provide an adequate supply of employment land in Kidlington for the plan period..."



4.0 GREEN BELT

⁷¹ Given the strategic role and important potential of Kidlington, the Local Plan is the stage where the merits of a modest, localised Green Belt review, or a site allocation in the Green Belt (i.e. for Oxford Technology Park), should be considered and determined. This is consistent with paragraph 2.7 of PPG2 (now paragraphs 83 to 85 of the NPPF) and, in addition, 22.18 and Policy SP5 of the RSS that sets out the strategic case for a review of the Oxford Green Belt, providing for “small scale local reviews.... pursued through the local development framework process”.

⁷² Our evidence in support of this view is set out in *Oxford Technology Park: The Compelling Case (Part 1)* – made available at that time to Officers of Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and the Parish Council.

⁷³ Comparatively, we are of the opinion that the sites being promoted within the Marston/Kidlington Gap would require a much more strategic review (see Figure 5). As such, we are not suggesting an open-ended Green Belt review, which would create a considerable degree of uncertainty along the whole length of the edge of the Marston/Kidlington Gap and, indeed, elsewhere within the Green Belt.

⁷⁴ We have shown through analysis and comparison that ‘smart growth’ is essential - both locally and regionally. It is, moreover, clear that Kidlington is very well placed to deliver the economic benefits of the Oxford cluster to the district of Cherwell. Yet there is no employment land available in Kidlington’s established employment area, Langford Lane. The evidence is therefore compelling. This, when combined with the fact that Kidlington is essential to the success of Bicester, provides the main elements of the exceptional circumstances case required to justify the release of Green Belt land, now, and allocation of Oxford Technology Park in the Local Plan.

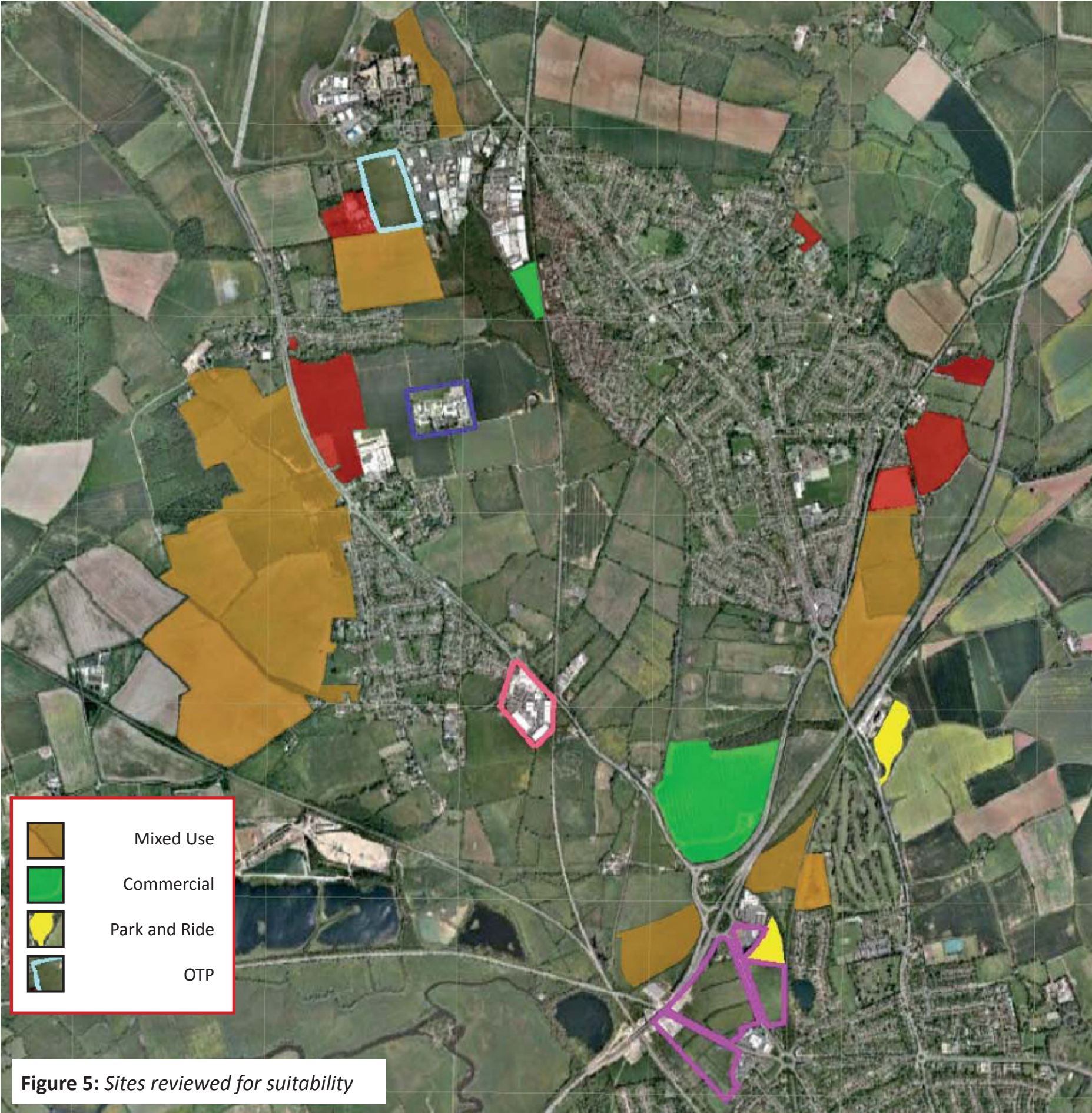


Figure 5: Sites reviewed for suitability

Source: LDF - Supplemental Consultation on Site Allocations Issues and Options: New and Amended Sites

⁷⁵ The consequences of not allocating Oxford Technology Park in the Local Plan are clearly summarised at sub-section 8.2.1.1 of the ELR:

"The opportunity cost to the district of not expanding the supply of office employment land in the south of Cherwell is that the district will potentially lose the positive economic benefits that higher value companies will bring if those companies seeking to locate in Cherwell are forced to look at alternative locations due to the lack of available land or premises. Office growth in the higher value sectors around Kidlington could also produce catalytic effects that could help the Eco-town strategy in Bicester and could thus become a Cherwell District Council aspiration. This strategy could be achieved through a staged approach, whereby the economic benefits gradually radiate out from Kidlington as the high tech cluster in Kidlington establishes itself and companies seek 'grow on' space and/or production facilities in Bicester and the surrounding area."

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

⁷⁶ We conclude that 'exceptional circumstances' exist and that Oxford Technology Park should be released from the Green Belt, now, for immediate development. For the avoidance of doubt, and in summary, the 'exceptional circumstances' are listed below:

Development in the National Interest

⁷⁷ The development of Oxford Technology Park would be in the national interest. This seems an obvious point given the very difficult economic times and the contribution that the knowledge economy is expected to make to the future of UK plc, but, leaving aside countless quotes over the last few years on the importance of the economy (from Ministers, industry leaders, economic partnerships, trade unions etc), our proposals are clearly in line with the economic role that the planning system is expected to perform: "contributing to building a strong, responsive and

competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation" (NPPF, paragraph 7, March 2012). Paragraph 20 of the NPPF goes on to state that "local authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century". The ELRs (2006 and 2012), combined with, say, paragraphs 4.2.7, 5.2.8, 5.2.13 and 5.2.14 of the Over Arup Report (2009) and the Regional Spatial Strategy (paragraph 22.9) could not be clearer on how the lack of employment land in Kidlington jars with the settlement's "considerable potential for employment development" (paragraph 5.8.4 of the Over Arup Report).

⁷⁸ Paragraph 83 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that "Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation of the Local Plan." So, the Local Plan is clearly the place where harm to the Green Belt should be weighed against the employment needs and economic benefits of a strategically important proposal like Oxford Technology Park.

⁷⁹ The alternative is to rely on the long-held policy of 'pragmatism' operated by Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell – in other words, not planning positively (as required by the NPPF and good planning practice) but relying, instead, on the 'very special circumstances' test (now paragraph 87 of the NPPF). An example of this pragmatic approach is the March 2002 decision to approve Begbroke Science Park where, on 27 March 2002, the Government Office for the South East wrote to Cherwell (ref: GOSE/103/3/CHER/48) stating in paragraph 5 that "the Secretary of State is satisfied that the issues raised do not relate to matters of more than local importance". So, pragmatism works, but we are fearful that the delays, costs and uncertainties caused by such pragmatism will either lead to lost economic opportunities (the ELRs demonstrate that there is unmet demand in Kidlington) or lost place making opportunities through a lack of co-ordination and planning. In short, we would encourage a plan-led approach; removing the Green Belt and applying a criteria based employment allocation for Oxford Technology Park

and its environs (requiring amendments to Section C.3 of the draft Local Plan).

⁸⁰ There are two further points. Firstly, we suspect that if 'very special circumstance' existed in 2002 for Begbroke Science Park (including more recently for the new access road onto the A44), they also exist now, by way of 'exceptional circumstance' for the allocation of Oxford Technology Park. Secondly, the unwillingness of the Secretary of State to call-in the 2002 application seems to demonstrate both the national interest point and, moreover, a desire to see Cherwell make Green Belt decisions on small scale local reviews.

⁸¹ We believe the national economic circumstances are now fundamentally different to those in 2002. Unlike 2002, which marked the mid-point in steady economic growth in UK GDP from 1992 to 2008, we remain in recession, with no expectation of growth in UK GDP for the foreseeable future. From the national perspective, we therefore conclude that there is a national interest case (especially given the wider context of the linkages to Bicester and the regional role of Central Oxfordshire), but we also feel it is right from a procedural point of view (ie the NPPF) for a small scale local review of the Green Belt to be undertaken during the Local Plan formulation process (and not left to later DPDs).

Development in the Regional Interest

⁸² The development of Oxford Technology Park would be in the regional economic interest. It is consistent with the RSS (and for that matter the Regional Economic Strategy) which, whilst having doubtful status in itself, nonetheless represents the culmination of many years work and a rigorous analysis of the (substantial) evidence at the RSS examination in public, consistent with the Oxfordshire Structure Plan.

⁸³ For example, Policy SP5 of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) refers to two "selective" reviews of Green Belt boundaries and then goes on to confirm that "smaller scale local reviews are likely to be required in other locations... and these should be pursued through the local development framework" (ie the Cherwell Local Plan).

Paragraph 4.21 of the RSS provides further clarification on this point. In short, both the NPPF and the RSS make it clear that the Local Plan process is where “small scale local reviews” of the Green Belt should be determined.

Development in the Interests of the Local Economy

⁸⁴ The development of Oxford Technology Park would be in the local economic interest, from a Cherwell-wide and Southern Cherwell perspective. There are a number of assets that drive the performance of the Cherwell economy, but the district’s relationship to Oxford is certainly the most important; as confirmed by the RSS, RES, the two ELRs and the Ove Arup Report. We feel this local interest point is further underscored by the Bicester Master Plan. This is an excellent example of positive planning, but to be successful the initiatives for Bicester need to be carefully linked to Kidlington’s ‘seed growth’ potential – ie together, in a purposeful, linked up way, not as an ‘either/or’ (see page 18 of our Compelling Case submission, December 2009). If Cherwell can attract Stage 1 and Stage 2 growth to Kidlington, growth in Bicester (especially Stage 3 growth) is made more likely and will be achieved earlier in the plan period.

⁸⁵ We seriously question the case for Bicester in the absence of action in part through positive planning in Kidlington; which represents a further aspect of the local interest exceptional circumstances case, given the importance of Bicester to the success of Cherwell and the policy structures that have already been put in place.

⁸⁶ We believe there are only a few areas of disagreement between us and the District Council. Since our involvement in the Oxford Technology Park project in 2003, the Council has expressed two reservations: to paraphrase (a) that growth in Kidlington should be constrained in order to help Bicester and (b) that only the structure plan or RSS could undertake a Green Belt review and failing that a planning application would need to be determined on the basis of ‘very special circumstance’. We believe both of these reservations are resolved by the independent economic evidence base now assembled by the Council and others. It

is plain and, in our opinion, beyond any doubt whatsoever that, for example, the ELRs (2006 and 2012) and the Ove Arup Report (2009) lead to the conclusion that there is an urgent economic need, now, that provides exceptional circumstances for the release of Oxford Technology Park from the Green Belt. This Compelling Case, Part 2 provides our own evidence from SQW, Ramidus and Colin Buchanan & Partners in support of this conclusion.

Very Limited Harm

⁸⁷ At Section 5 of this document we provide a spatial analysis that looks at the place making opportunities offered by Oxford Technology Park, especially in relation to boundaries, adjacencies and the entrance to London Oxford Airport. It is possible to conclude that, because Oxford Technology Park is surrounded on three sides by development (categorized as ‘urban settlement’ – see Figure 1 above), and because we are not intending to develop further south than the current built up area, there will be very limited harm to the Green Belt. Moreover, we feel any harm is clearly outweighed by the economic benefits. Our ecological, landscape, flood relief and transport assessments to date have not identified any impacts of significance.

Defensible Green Belt Boundary

⁸⁸ Lastly, given that Oxford Technology Park is surrounded on three sides by development, and is not within a major Green Belt gap, we believe that the proposed small scale local review will produce a defensible, permanent Green Belt boundary that will stand the test of time (as required by paragraph 85 of the NPPF).



5.0 IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN PLACE-MAKING.

⁸⁹ Having looked at the ‘economic need’ and Green Belt issues, we now look at the proposed spatial arrangement. We have already said that ‘spatial presence’ is important to the successful ‘seeding’ of the knowledge economy.

⁹⁰ Using the Objectives of Urban Design from (By Design, 2000) we can look at the space strategy generated when OTP becomes a technology park.

OBJECTIVES OF URBAN DESIGN (By Design, 2000)
Character <ul style="list-style-type: none">How can we respond to and reinforce locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture?
Continuity & Enclosure <ul style="list-style-type: none">Is the site likely to provide a place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguishable ?
Quality of the Public Realm <ul style="list-style-type: none">Can attractive and successful outdoor areas be generated on this site?Will development enhance the townscape and public realm?
Ease of Movement <ul style="list-style-type: none">If developed, will this be a place that is easy to get to and move through?Will it promote compact development with good accessibility to local facilities that improves accessibility and decreases the need to travel?
Legibility <ul style="list-style-type: none">Is development likely to generate a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand?

Adaptability

- Will adaptability be improved through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions?

Diversity

- Do the proposals enhance diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs?
- Will it improve the satisfaction of people with their neighbourhoods? as places to live and work; and will it encourage 'ownership'?
- Will it improve the landscape, ecological quality and character of open spaces?

Character

⁹¹ Character is about the positive features of a place and how they are used in a way that creates a special identity. We have already set out how we expect a technology park ‘growth point’ to be a ‘hot house with a strong sense of community’. This has been partially achieved at Begbroke Science Park (albeit Begbroke is an isolated development and contributes little to the Character of Kidlington). Whereas, the multiplication of this sector in the area will start to form a strong reputation for knowledge industry based development in Cherwell

⁹² OTP has the potential to create a strong distinctive character in this location – it directly faces the airport’s entrance on Langford Lane. This puts it in a pivotal and highly visible position and would thus be suited to promote Cherwell’s science-based employment credentials to those travelling regionally and internationally via the airport (or indeed to those just accessing Kidlington via Langford Lane). This will become more important as the airport

develops into a regionally critical (business) asset. It is an ideal neighbour to the airport, as opposed to residential development – indeed OTP benefits from being co-located with other business uses.

⁹³ We therefore, also, suggest that it would be sensible to look carefully at the development of an Airport Gateway Concept, including thinking about the public realm along Langford Lane – with OTP playing its own important part.

⁹⁴ The nature of the buildings on OTP – their size and arrangement – is likely to provide a clustered site layout, where the form and details of the buildings can be controlled to convey a ‘working community’; a development with a shared vision.

⁹⁵ We have suggested that OTP will start to pump-prime adjoining development and the future redevelopment of the wider Langford Lane commercial area into a knowledge cluster. In the longer term, the Airport Gateway is likely to generate a need for a hotel (as an amenity offer to people working in the Langford Lane area). In turn, this will generate cross-over footfall as OTP’s businesses use the hotel’s business and accommodation facilities.

⁹⁶ Attracting inward investment depends on attracting businesses which, in this sector, requires decent, attractive places to work. Our introduction, experience, precedents and needs assessment has set out how important getting this character right is in order to retain high calibre scientists.

Continuity & Enclosure

⁹⁷ OTP can play its part in making the urban fabric coherent – by recognising the contribution that it will make to improving the Langford Lane commercial area.

⁹⁸ By defining the edge of Langford Lane carefully – possibly setting back the building line to leave space for a strong landscape element that unifies the public realm in

the immediate vicinity of the Airport Gateway – OTP can develop a relationship between itself and Langford Lane that is more than a crossover-junction. This relationship will provide a positive and attractive response to the large blue aeronautical hanger recently erected by the airport.

⁹⁹ Within the site, it is likely that a central spine will provide access to the individual plots. However it is important that the buildings are not set back behind a sea of cars – innovative and people-centric space will connect the arrival sequence to the individual buildings; especially where increasing proportions of the site’s working population will be arriving other than by car. The creative working environment that we are looking to provide is not that of a plate glass door next to a car park!

Quality of the Public Realm and Landscaping

¹⁰⁰ OTP’s public realm is where the life of this community will be enhanced – as well as being of a high quality, well lit and functionally appropriate; it needs to intrigue and provide small scale places for conversations and people to meet.

¹⁰¹ This is a distinct contrast to other corporate environments – characterised by lines of unused cycle stands and vacant concrete seats. We see excellent landscape design as critical; that the spaces between the buildings are right-sized and treated with significant care.

¹⁰² We are also keen to see Langford Lane improved in a way that it becomes an effective space for people to orientate themselves and connect to transport. This is likely to be a three-dimensional exercise with tree planting, lighting, hard and soft landscaping contributing to the final form. This becomes increasingly important as the airport becomes more manifest – and thereby Cherwell can create a linked public realm that addresses, and integrates, the whole of the Langford Lane commercial area with the airport; linking prosperity and driving regeneration over the longer term.

Ease of Movement

¹⁰³ We have already suggested that the public realm within the site will be an intimate network of connected spaces providing routes for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles; that the transport routes will be concerned with more than merely traffic considerations; and promote low-speed access within the site.

¹⁰⁴ We have projected these aspirations onto Langford Lane; such that it provides an effective and connected corridor for safely moving between sites and accessing non-car transport options – with public transport being integrated into the street layout. Thus, OTP in its location adjacent to the airport will reinforce and support Langford Lane as a transport interchange.

¹⁰⁵ In terms of vehicle access the OTP site is well served – especially coming from Begbroke (i.e. via an all ways junction) – yet it is also accessible via the cycle-route along the canal edges; providing multi-modal opportunities for both public and private transport access.

Legibility

¹⁰⁶ By Design suggests ‘landmarks, gateways and focal points help people find their way. Vistas create visual links between places. Planting can emphasise safe pedestrian routes.’ The careful design of legible environments is essential to the long-term growth and regeneration of Langford Lane as a commercial area – it is one of the largest problems with the existing area, which currently reads as a series of disconnected sites (Figure 6 over the page shows our analysis).

¹⁰⁷ Our analysis shows that there is insufficient route marking along Langford Lane – that once the initial turn off Woodstock Road/Banbury Road has been made, the arrival at the airport roundabout is relatively unannounced. Thereafter and turning towards the airport, the vista is dominated by the Elvisier HQ building.

¹⁰⁸ Over time, it is clear that the airport will develop a masterplan that makes itself appropriately visible – indeed

this has happened to an extent with the recently erected hangers.

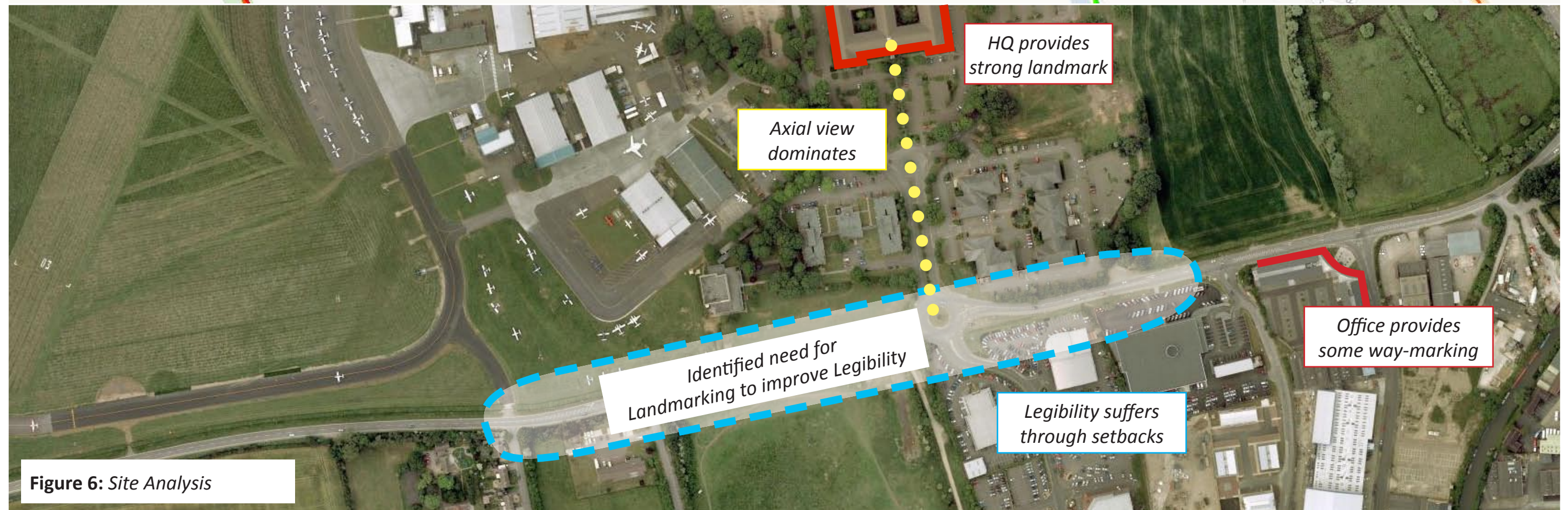
¹⁰⁹ However, this leaves the land to the south of Langford Lane and the OTP frontage – our view is that ‘seeding’ a key economic sector in this visible location both signals that Cherwell is open for business and contributes to the improvement and enclosure of Langford Lane as an important piece of public realm – creating one side of the emerging Airport Gateway.

Adaptability

¹¹⁰ It is important that the Langford Lane Commercial Area prospers; it is important that Cherwell captures a portion of the high-end, high value science-based business that continues to spin out from Oxford – especially with the emerging Oxford Model; whereby the University retains a long-term interest in its spin-out companies (increasingly important as these companies move into their 2nd and 3rd stage iterations and require larger buildings).

¹¹¹ We have identified building users that have particular hybrid needs - including lab, production, storage and general office needs - and that these are most appropriately provided through bespoke hybrid buildings (allowing for cost effective design) rather than radically amending/retro-fitting existing office or storage sheds.

¹¹² An important aspect of adaptability is the need for the certain and timely delivery of appropriate accommodation, within an affordable framework rather than inappropriate generic development. This is in part possible through the funding model being used for OTP where, being owned freehold, there are no onerous draw-down requirements that mean there is a need to rush forward with speculative development. This means that Cherwell will get a ‘seed’ development of exemplary buildings – showcased immediately in front of the airport.



Diversity

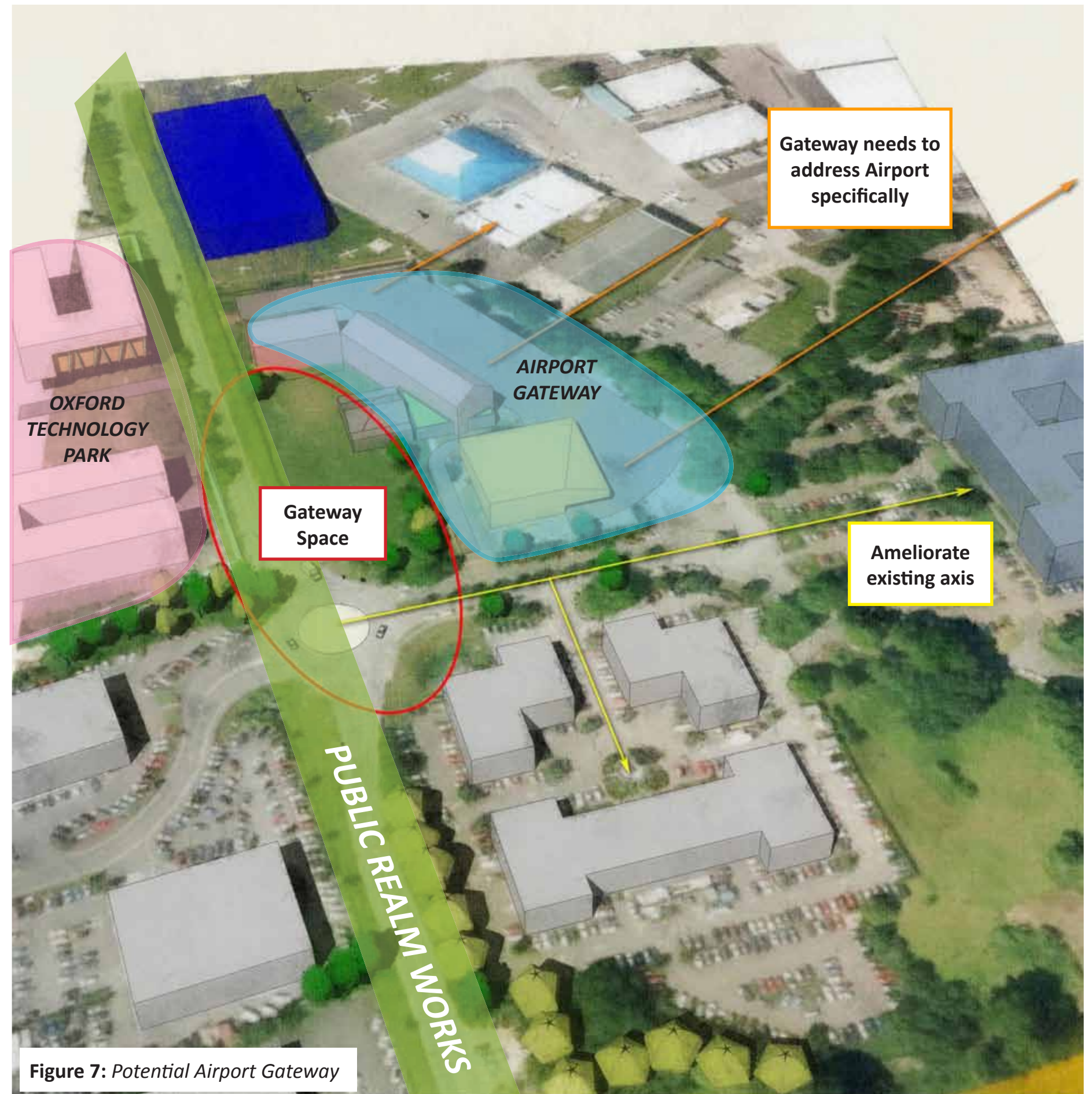
¹¹³ OTP addresses diversity by adding a new sector to the business mix at Langford Lane; acting as the initial spark of science-based employment. Over time and through the growth of the airport and rejuvenation of other areas at Langford Lane, OTP will act as a strong reference site – signalling Cherwell’s ambition to develop a strong science-based employment sector.

¹¹⁴ As critical mass is generated, the technology park will also draw advanced business services and other secondary support businesses to the immediate area and Cherwell generally – adding to and diversifying Kidlington’s economy.

SUMMARY

¹¹⁵ The spatial strategy of putting a technology park in this location – the creation of a science-based employment ‘growth point’ in close proximity to the airport – seems to deliver appropriate contributions to the Langford Lane commercial area in terms of public realm, legibility and enclosure.

¹¹⁶ It will also play its part in providing critical mass for public transport infrastructure and is likely to have an increasingly important relationship to the airport.



6.0 CONCLUSION

¹¹⁷ Cherwell's Options for Growth (2008) classified villages on sustainability. It assessed Kidlington as a Type A village (highest level of sustainability; based on the number/range of services and facilities including public transport, population, employment opportunities and how close it was to larger urban areas).

¹¹⁸ We have looked at the prospect of enhancing Kidlington by capturing high-value, high-growth, high tech employment land uses – seeding this key sector within the existing commercial area that adjoins the airport.

¹¹⁹ Cherwell needs to identify a clear set of objectives for Kidlington; ideally through its own section in the Local Plan.

¹²⁰ OTP scores very well when compared with the other sites being promulgated – in terms of employment, Green Belt and thereby in relationship to Cherwell's Local Plan's Key Spatial Objectives.

¹²¹ In addition, our marketing and economic needs assessment has identified the Airport Gateway as a desirable location for a technology park. We have explored the possibilities of the place that we would be producing; and are excited by the place making potential of this part of Langford Lane.

¹²² We can ask ourselves:

- Can this place be designed for people?
- Will it attract investment?
- Will it add wealth to the community?
- Will it contribute to the quality of life?

¹²³ The answer to all of these is strongly positive – and potential occupiers are talking about the site in the same way (see [Appendix C](#)).

¹²⁴ A 'can do/will do attitude' from Central Government is one thing; but being in the right place at the right time is also essential. Hill Street Holdings and Bloombridge have the experience to deliver precisely the sort of bespoke hybrid buildings discussed in this report, the land is owned freehold, and there is a funding cycle in place that means that it will not have to dilute the value of the site (as a key growth point in Cherwell's economy) by providing abstract speculative development.

¹²⁵ We, therefore, reiterate part of the summary that we promoted in *Oxford Technology Park: The Compelling Case (Part 1)*, published in December 2009. We believe that the case for Oxford Technology Park is compelling and cannot be over-looked:

- *Kidlington fulfils a very important economic role in the Central Oxfordshire Diamond for Growth. Employment space in Kidlington has good take-up credentials and key economic development stakeholders like it, as a location.*
- *Kidlington has close links with Oxford (and of course Oxford University at Begbroke Science Park) and provides a growing, precious cluster that demands recognition and assistance in Cherwell's economic strategies and emerging [Local Plan] (and other development plan documents). Unlike 'Science Vale' to the south of Oxford, the northern part of the Central Oxfordshire Diamond has not been promoted with sufficient robustness or coordination.*
- *The evidence base on the demand and supply dynamics of the Oxford-Kidlington-Bicester Employment Area cannot be ignored. Kidlington has a large shortfall in employment land supply.*

- *Kidlington should be pursued by Cherwell alongside Bicester, not as an 'either/or'. This would acknowledge the distinct economic advantages of both locations, it would provide a Plan A and Plan B for the future economic potential of Cherwell, and it would enable both centres to play to their strengths in a co-ordinated and synergistic way. Such synergies may provide the sort of 'step change' transformation Ove Arup considers is required in order to deliver the County's challenging economic strategy for Bicester (paragraph 5.5.2).*
- *Oxford Technology Park offers a highly sustainable opportunity to deliver valuable, knowledge based 'smart growth'; comprising c1250 direct jobs, with significant indirect and catalytic employment multipliers. The site has good infrastructure capacity and the road system in the locality is relatively unconstrained. There are very few negative impacts, with the balance lying firmly in favour of supporting the proposed development.*
- *We submit that the case for Oxford Technology Park is compelling. There are few, if any, reasonable alternatives. Even if Bicester is the County and District Councils' preferred location, the scale of proposed development at the Technology Park is so modest that it will not undermine Bicester.*

¹²⁶ It is clear that Cherwell has listened to the case we put in 2009 as pages 51 to 53 of the draft Local Plan now provide for development at “Langford Lane Technology Park” – ie OTP. We are grateful for this, and strongly support the new approach to Kidlington and (for that matter) Bicester.

¹²⁷ Our principal point of difference is on timing. We believe the case for economic development is compelling, now, such that a localised amendment to the Green Belt should be concluded as part of the Local Plan. This is supported by this document and, for example, by the unmet demand and need for employment land (hectares) as set out at sub-section 8.2.1.1 of the Employment Land Review (2012):

“The synthesis forecast (Table 7.16 of section 7) estimates that there will be demand for between 9.3 and 11.3 ha of additional B1 employment land in Kidlington in the period to 2026.”

¹²⁸ We request that 8.2 hectares of this need is released now, as a strategic site, leaving the remainder to be considered in subsequent development plan documents. This would enable a planning application for Oxford Technology Park to be submitted in 2013.

¹²⁹ We would welcome your feedback.



**Representations provided by SQW in response to Consultation on the
Cherwell District Economic Development Strategy (21.01.2011)**

Steven Newman
Economic Development Officer
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
White Post Road
Bodicote
Banbury
OX15 4AA

21 January 2011

Dear Mr Newman,

Cherwell District Economic Development Strategy 2011-16

I am responding to the Consultation Draft of the Cherwell District Economic Development Strategy on behalf of Green Park Developments, Hill Street Holdings and SpaceStrategy, who are jointly promoting development of the Oxford Technology Park at Kidlington.

The Oxford Technology Park proposal is for release of 6.5ha (16 acres) of land at Langford Lane, Kidlington, to create 23,200 sq m (250,000 sq ft) of B1(b) R&D space. This letter considers whether the Draft Economic Development Strategy - which in turn performs a key role in formulation of a sound Core Strategy - provides sufficient clarity, direction and strength of purpose regarding specialist provision for R&D related activities in Cherwell.. It does not argue the merits of this specific site, although you will be aware that the promoters consider that such provision cannot be delivered elsewhere in southern Cherwell in the short to medium term.

You will also be aware that SQW is currently working to produce an economic development strategy for the NW Bicester Eco-development. We consider the two developments to be complementary rather than competing, and therefore there is no conflict of interest between these two roles that SQW is performing.

Key elements of the draft strategy

Guidance regarding knowledge based activities

The draft strategy states clearly that “the knowledge economy [in the District] is growing but not quickly enough”, that “the knowledge economy is vital for the future of Cherwell and....it needs to secure focused investment and business growth within key sectors such as advanced manufacturing, biosciences, software and R&D” (draft strategy, page 26). The strategy goes on to state that “the growth in knowledge intensive jobs in recent years has been relatively strong, and that “in the south of

SQW
Enterprise House, Vision Park, Histon, Cambridge CB24 9ZR
T. +44 (0) 1223 209400 F. +44 (0) 1223 209401 www.sqw.co.uk
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Registered office: Enterprise House, Vision Park, Histon, Cambridge CB24 9ZR, United Kingdom

the District businesses generally engage within higher value activities, with strong linkages to the Oxford core” (page 27). However, there is clearly concern that there could be divergence between the area immediately around Oxford and the rest of Cherwell District in terms of the growth of knowledge based and high value jobs, and the strategy emphasises the need to increase inward investment by improving the skill levels of employees and providing local employment opportunities to retain the District’s higher skilled resident workforce. Whilst economic divergence which leads to winners and losers would be undesirable, divergence in which different places develop distinctive roles which reflect their comparative advantages is a sign that the market is working well. In the case of Cherwell, this distinction is important: certain types of knowledge based activity will tend to cluster in and immediately around Oxford, others may prefer to locate elsewhere in the district, for example for reasons of cost, space requirements or skills availability. It is important that economic and spatial policies take this into account and make appropriate provision for growth in different locations.

Guidance regarding land and property

The draft strategy states that “employment land, premises and services do not always meet modern business needs”. Demand for office and manufacturing sites and premises is low, with few new developments beginning, there is pressure to allow existing industrial and office land and vacant buildings to be developed for other uses, and utilities constraints could restrict economic growth (page 19). The strategy states that “the solution to economic growth is not necessarily to increase the supply of employment land, but to provide flexibly and realistically for future needs”, but also that “it is important to ensure that sites identified for development are able to come forward within a reasonable timeframe to ensure balance with housing development” (page 20). In effect, this means provision has to allow some degree of choice, to ensure firms’ requirements are met. In the case of Kidlington, there is zero employment land supply (based on the URS Employment Land Review), which implies very little choice or scope for growth, despite the obvious success of Kidlington as a location for knowledge based businesses over the last 10 years.

Spatial guidance in the draft strategy

The main spatial guidance for future development will be provided in the Core Strategy, which is still in preparation, but the draft economic strategy includes sections on the three main settlements in the District – Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington – and rural areas.

Kidlington is said to be dominated by the proximity to Oxford, and its future is intimately linked with the future of the city. The strategy suggests that Kidlington should be seen as “a quality centre for office and laboratory based businesses, especially in the locally significant bio-technology sector and other activities ‘spun out’ from the universities and those related to the nearby airport” (page 39).

Bicester is expected to become a significant location in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, and so see an increase in science and technology based businesses, exploiting innovations and spin outs from academic research. However, the most distinctive aspect of Bicester’s economic development will be related to the ecotown, which is expected to create at least 5,000 jobs and to be a catalyst for inward investment.

Themes for delivery

The strategy identifies three themes for delivery – developing people, businesses and places – and a cross cutting theme of economic diversity and resilience. The most pertinent of these in relation to the proposals for Oxford Technology Park is ‘Developing Place’, which includes commitments to provide a good supply of employment land, and to continue to work with partners in the commercial property and investment field to encourage the bringing forward of new commercial property to meet demand. This theme also includes support for urban centres: in relation to Kidlington, the strategy intends to “maximise its unique advantages – the benefits of the airport, University of Oxford Begbroke Science Park, and its proximity to Oxford” (page 59). This seems to be at variance with the draft Core Strategy, which still classifies Kidlington as a “Rural Village”.

Suggestions for improving the draft strategy

We strongly support the intentions and focus of the draft strategy. However, we believe it should be more specific about how it is going to achieve its objectives of ensuring a resilient and diverse economy, and supporting the growth of high value and knowledge based jobs, because this will secure greater engagement and commitment from the private sector, which in turn will result in better outcomes. We believe the strategy should be more specific in the following respects.

The significance of the research base in Oxfordshire and its potential contribution to economic development

Oxford is one of the strongest centres of R&D in the country. It has two research based universities, one with world class capabilities, a major teaching hospital, and various specialist research institutions. There has been substantial growth of high tech industries related to this research base in and around Oxford, and particularly southwards from the city, reflecting the location of major research institutes and specialist property provision (eg at Oxford Science Park, Milton Park, and Harwell). North of the city the spillover effects are less, but an important example is Begbroke Science Park.

The draft strategy does not fully acknowledge the national as well as local economic significance of these assets and the importance of making the most of them - particularly because (as the strategy acknowledges) the public sector is set to lose rather than create jobs over the coming years, and the economic climate is very difficult.

Based on what has happened so far, the strength of R&D in Oxford, government policy to promote research commercialisation, and experience elsewhere (eg Cambridge), there is every reason to suppose that the high tech cluster will continue to grow in size and strength, and that it will continue to expand in and around Oxford. The key question for the Cherwell District Council, along with the other local authorities in Oxfordshire, is what provision to make to ensure growth is encouraged and supported rather than frustrated and stifled.

Be more explicit about the distinctive and complementary economic roles of different parts of the District

The existing text for each of the main towns implies that the different places will continue to develop different roles, but there is a concern that there could be increasing divergence

between the area immediately around Oxford and the rest of Cherwell District in terms of the growth of knowledge based and high value jobs.

However, we would argue that if Cherwell is to achieve its vision, there needs to be active encouragement of different types of growth in the different locations within the District that are best placed to support that growth. If managed positively, divergence could lead to complementarities which would benefit all of the main places in the District, rather favour one at the expense of others.

For example, our experience in the Cambridge area is that the growth of the high tech cluster has led to some outward expansion and has brought benefits to the surrounding ring of market towns, such as Ely and Huntingdon (ONS data show Huntingdonshire to be the UK district most similar to Cherwell statistically). However the nature of the activities which have located in the market towns is not the same as those which locate in or close to Cambridge (like Oxford, the Cambridge City Council boundary is drawn tightly around the main urban area). Various firms which started as R&D operations in Cambridge have either relocated or expanded in surrounding areas as their space requirement increased and their range of activities expanded, for example to include more production, sales or storage as well as R&D.

Based on this experience, we would expect most firms undertaking predominantly R&D activities to want to locate close to Oxford and to the relevant organisations and expertise in and immediately around the city: for Cherwell, that means the Kidlington area. If these firms are faced with no choice but to locate much further away, there is a risk that the commercialisation activities which generate the wealth will either locate in another R&D centre in UK or overseas, or be frustrated altogether.

This will not disadvantage Bicester and Banbury, which are more suited to attract other knowledge based activities and larger scale inward investment: for example, in advanced manufacturing related to the high tech and motorsport clusters, and in eco-construction and eco-technologies. Bicester's location in the Oxford Cambridge Arc, mentioned in the draft strategy (page 39), may make it attractive to activities which form part of the high tech cluster but which are seeking lower costs (eg because they are relatively big users of space) and which don't need to be within a few minutes of research institutions and related expertise.

Emphasise the need to provide sufficient quantity, quality and choice of employment land and premises

The draft strategy talks about "a good supply of employment land" - which could be interpreted to mean simply quantity of land. Firms' requirements are different, and they expect to have some choice: the spatial distribution of land allocated for employment use should reflect that, and also the reality of where the private sector will, and will not, develop. The strategy acknowledges that there is very little commercial development underway, yet at the same time there is 125 hectares of land currently available for development (page 20). The implication must be that there is not enough land in the places where the private sector is willing to develop.

The strategy needs to be more specific about what a 'good' supply means – that is, sufficient quantity, quality and choice – and how it is to be achieved. In Section 7, Taking the Strategy

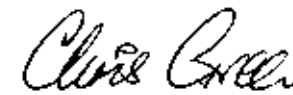
Forward, the only action is to ensure that the LDF allocates sufficient land in the right places and likely to be available for development by 2026. This is too passive: if there are priorities, they should be identified, and if there are specific opportunities, where investors are clearly interested in providing the right kind of property product in the right location, then the strategy should identify them and the Council should commit to working actively with them to secure delivery as quickly as possible. We understand that the economic development strategy cannot perform the role of the Core Strategy by identifying particular sites, but if more specialist space for R&D activities is needed on the northern side of Oxford, and there is an investor willing and able to provide a modest addition to the existing stock in the short term, then surely the strategy should acknowledge that and positively commit to facilitating the development. Put another way, it is clearly up to the Economic Strategy to provide a sound evidence base for the Core Strategy that, in turn, sets a vision, identifies opportunities, and provides a guide to the formulation of policy.

Be clear how the aims for particular places are to be achieved

Although the draft strategy recognises Kidlington as an economic location and also the cluster of the airport and Begbroke, it does not specifically say that growth there should be encouraged. In addition, while the strategy currently contains aims for Kidlington there are no related actions, or any indicators of outcomes, timescales or lead partners. We assume this is because the strategy is still in draft form, and the intention is to include actions in the final version. If so, and subject to the detailed findings of the land availability review, we suggest that an action to support implementation of additional development specifically for R&D activities would be appropriate. Development at Kidlington on a modest scale (such as is proposed at Oxford Technology Park), and specifically for R&D and related uses, would not threaten the economic growth of other parts of Cherwell, and should support it by contributing to the growth of the core element of the high tech cluster).

I hope these comments are helpful in developing the draft into a more targeted, action oriented and deliverable strategy and action plan.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Green
Chief Executive

cgreen@sqwgroup.com

APPENDIX B

Ramidus Report (14.04.2010)

Kidlington, Planning Policy and the Office Market

Prepared for Green Park Land Company
By RAMIDUS CONSULTING LIMITED
14th April 2010



Prepared for Green Park Land Company
By RAMIDUS CONSULTING LIMITED

Kidlington, Planning Policy and the Office Market

Context

We have been asked by Green Park Land Company to undertake a brief overview of the planning policy context to the proposals for Oxford Technology Park at Kidlington. To do this we have reviewed the Cherwell Draft Core Strategy¹, and various supporting documents, including the Employment Land Review (ELR).² We have placed this overview in the context of our own knowledge of the Oxfordshire and sub-regional office market.

Policy background

There is an unusual planning policy context to the office market at Kidlington. The most recent full, adopted planning policy document is the Cherwell Local Plan of 1996 – now fourteen years old. Preparation of a new plan was halted in 2004, in light of proposed changes to the planning system, ie, the switch to the Local Development Framework (LDF) approach. In order to avoid abortive work and a policy vacuum while the LDF was being prepared, in December 2004 the Council approved the Non-statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011.

Consequently, until the formal adoption of the emerging LDF, the adopted Cherwell Local Plan (1996) remains part of the statutory Development Plan for the area. Because the policies and proposals in the Non-statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 have not been subjected to the full rigour of the statutory local plan preparation process, including a public inquiry, they do not have development plan status. However, they can be used as a material consideration alongside other relevant considerations in deciding planning applications.

The Non-statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 makes only cursory reference to office activity in Kidlington. The *Employment* chapter, for example, focuses on Banbury and Bicester, and Kidlington's office market is dealt with as an issue in the *Town Centres, Urban Renewal and Local Shopping* chapter, and solely as an aspect of Kidlington's attributes as a shopping centre.

Now, in 2010, a Draft Core Strategy has emerged which itself relies upon data mainly from 2004, ie, the year that preparation of the new Local Plan was halted. This data set (contained within the 2006 ELR) is now largely at least six years old, during which time the economy has witnessed both rapid growth (2004-07) and a sudden and dramatic fall into recession (2008-2010). The Council acknowledges this weakness of the Draft Core Strategy, in paragraph A.162.

The Council recognises that both the Economic Development Strategy and the Employment Land Review need to be updated given the global economic downturn and changes in local circumstances. A review of the Economic Development Strategy is currently underway, and more work will be undertaken to review the Employment Land Review and understand the need for more employment land within the district. Both of these will be completed before the Core Strategy is submitted. The Council will adjust the approach set out here as necessary in the light of this work.

¹ Cherwell District Council (2010) *Draft Core Strategy*

² URS Corporation Ltd (2006) *Cherwell District Employment Land Review*

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This is indeed an unusual planning policy context. There is no doubt that property markets and the economy have changed very significantly since 2004. There is also now an adopted Regional Plan for the South East (2009) and a whole host of initiatives related to the Regional Economic Strategy (2006). Such changes must be reflected in an emerging LDF. But most importantly, **the policy framework of the LDF must be seen to be reflecting the evidence base rather than leading it.** National guidelines on Employment Land Review (ELR)³ preparation are not very specific, but they do note, in para 2.5 that

As draft PPS1 states "continuing economic growth requires an efficient system for managing development". Central to this are up to date and relevant development plans ...

And again, in para 2.14

Up-to-date and relevant plans are essential if the development needs of commerce and industry are to be met.

More recent guidance for the South East⁴ states that

PPS12 also makes it clear that evidence gathered should be proportionate to the job being undertaken by the Plan, relevant to the place in question and as up-to-date as practical having regard to what may have changed since the evidence was collected.

Clearly, Cherwell's Core Strategy lacks up-to-date and, we would argue, proportionate evidence in a mainstay of its evidence base, ie, the ELR.

The Employment Land Review

The most recent evidence base upon which spatial policies for employment land in Cherwell are being framed is the ELR undertaken by URS, and published in July 2006. The review's *Social and Economic Structure* chapter recognises the relatively high skill levels of the local workforce, and observes that

... the District is looking to attract more high-tech and knowledge based industries to the area in order to match more closely with the skills of the existing population. The premises required by these types of businesses will impact on the amount and characteristics of land required for future development.

The *Local Economy and Business* chapter argues that the Council's development objectives aim

... to promote more office and small-scale industrial unit development (B1/B2 class use), which could capitalise on the recent growth of the business services sector. This strategy would likely impact the amount of and the location of land required for development related to B1/B2 class use.

³ ODPM (2004) *Employment Land Reviews: Guidance Note*

⁴ South East Regional Partnership Board (2009) *South East Plan Supplementary Guidance: Employment Land Reviews*

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The review's *Quality and Characteristics of Employment Land* chapter records a "healthy stock of employment land and premises" and that "business clusters were well occupied and were providing an active business environment for a variety of different business activities". But it also noted that while "there has been some development over the last decade, the majority of premises would be at least 20 years old or older". It then concludes that,

There appears to be a lack of good quality office stock that would be suitable to modern businesses and more aligned with the development objectives of the Council. [our emphasis]

The *Comparison of Demand and Supply* chapter suggests that Cherwell has "a stock of premises and land that provides a broad range of choice for investors" but then concedes that "some of the property is dated" (a statement of the obvious, but the meaning is clear) and, perhaps more significantly,

Changes in the economy and the way businesses operate are presenting new challenges for the Cherwell property market. Modern businesses demand high quality design and a range of size requirements, which may be difficult to find in the current stock.

The review is clearly suggesting a latent constraint in the market for high quality business space (ie Use Class B1) – exactly the kind of space required by the "high-tech and knowledge based industries" the Council wishes to attract "in order to match more closely with the skills of the existing population".

This fact raises significant questions over the Core Strategy's approach to the area's sub-regional role. For example, while the RSS and RES clearly identify the important role of the knowledge economy centred around Oxford (the Regional Hub), in Cherwell there is a clear shortfall in the type of accommodation required by knowledge economy occupiers and, more pertinently, no land use strategy for responding to the potential of the Regional Hub. It is hard to understand this anomaly, since even the out-of-date 2006 ELR provides some very clear pointers on the scale, type and location of economic growth in Cherwell.

Market geography

The 2006 ELR reviews market evidence to assess supply and demand for employment land. In so doing it seeks to define sub-markets. In the *Employment Land Market in Central Oxfordshire* chapter, the review notes that,

On a micro level each property and each town has its own characteristics. There are also clear groupings that make natural market areas. In addition there are particular linkages between them, related to types of land use and road infrastructure.

Co-author of the ELR, Vail Williams, suggests a number of sub-markets, as shown on the map below. There is nothing unusual in the identification of sub-markets: most areas exhibit sub-market characteristics. The principal market areas identified by Vail Williams include two that name Kidlington.

The Oxford, Kidlington and Bicester ... having close access to both the A34 and M40.

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Central Oxfordshire ... along the A34 connecting Bicester, Kidlington, Abingdon and Didcot and is believed to be the major focus for expansion by university spin-offs and related overspill from Oxford. Bicester is also considered to be within the area of influence of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

The curious aspect to these sub-markets is that they make no reference to sectoral focus: they imply that they are *all property* sub-markets. In other words, while the



South Oxfordshire sub-market, to take one example, is presented as an homogeneous market, there is little indication of whether it is a strong market for office occupiers or light industrial occupiers.

The market is clearly more complex, or more subtle, than this, and we would argue that the boundaries as drawn greatly oversimplify market realities and do not inform policy adequately. For example, why is Bicester in the same sub-market as Oxford? Similarly why are Oxford and Didcot in the same submarket? They are very different markets, both inter- and intra-sectorally. Moreover, where does this leave 'Science Vale'?

Towards the end of the *Employment Land Market in Central Oxfordshire* chapter, the review concedes that the market operates a little more subtlety than suggested by the map:

One agent described the Oxford to Didcot area as having a particular "identity for industrial uses", whereas "office activity is more focused on Oxford with migration of demand outwards to Abingdon, Witney, Kidlington and Bicester in part". Other agents suggested that the migration effect was more noticeable to the north of Oxford.

We would further argue that the sub-market definitions used in the ELR fail to meet the demands of recent guidance on ELRs in the South East.⁵ This document suggests that it is important to use quantitative trend data (which the ELR has done) to "understand the spatial characteristics of what has been happening", but that "as a minimum" the ELR must answer

what types of businesses and mix of activities have been taking up space or vacating sites (local, regional, national, international businesses/inward investors)? Why are they in the area, what are they looking for, or why have they vacated the site/area etc? This understanding needs to be undertaken at the local and also functional market area. Plotting these characteristics on a map would again assist spatial understanding.

We would argue that the Cherwell ELR has not met this minimum target.

⁵ South East Regional Partnership Board (2009) Op cit

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We are concerned that, as a result of this evidence base, **the emerging LDF lacks subtlety in the way in which it treats important sub-market supply and demand characteristics**. We believe that there are two main consequences.

- First, the focus of future allocations of land becomes imbalanced in its treatment of Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington.
- Secondly, the framework fails to recognise the specific demand potential and track record of Kidlington (eg its ability to attract high value, technology-based jobs).

With these consequences in mind, it is worth reiterating, and re-emphasising, Oxford's role as a Regional Hub. Since the research and publication of the ELR, the Regional Economic Strategy has identified Oxford/Central Oxfordshire

as one of eight 'Diamonds' in the Region that should act as a catalyst to stimulate economic development in the wider area. Oxford City itself is the principal economic driver within the Central Oxfordshire Sub-Region.

This important role needs to be understood and reflected in Cherwell's Core Strategy. If it is not, the draft plan runs the risk of being held to be unsound because it is not in accordance with national and regional policy or, indeed, the economic evidence base.

Recent supply-demand dynamics

Market supply and demand trends are dynamic, not static. They have to be set in the context of *what might be* as well as *what has been*. Thus, for example, take-up of space and demand for space are not synonymous. Take-up simply reflects a quantity of space absorbed by the market; while demand reflects the underlying need for space. Supply constraints can lead to misinterpretation of both in policy terms, and we would suggest that this might be the case at Kidlington.

The 2006 ELR recognises these issues, suggesting three principal reasons why estimates of past take-up rates might not accurately reflect future levels of demand.

- *That underlying economic factors may mean that future demand for employment land differs from past rates of demand.*
- *That past rates of demand may have been constrained by policy and/or other supply-side constraint factors which if removed would allow an increase in expressed demand.*
- *That B1/B2/B8 uses do not capture all the types of users that typically occupy industrial land.*

These reasons are all pertinent to the current situation in Kidlington.

The ELR recognises that Kidlington has been developing its high-tech and office offerings, "*positioning itself to absorb some of the potential overflow from Oxford University's spin-off businesses*", with Begbroke Science Park in particular being "*well known for the calibre and nature of work undertaken ... linking research, industry and spin-off companies*". The review notes that

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Drivers of property demand, such as the numerous science parks and innovation centres in the area, are now well established and Bicester and Kidlington could benefit more than they have done to date from such growth.

The review suggests that,

The impact of this growth should thus be captured in consideration of demand for the Oxford-Kidlington-Bicester sub-regional market and Oxfordshire markets. However for this full benefit to be realised supply-side factors need to be right.

In short, the ELR is pointing to significant supply-side constraints on Kidlington's office market potential.

The Non-statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 designates four sites in Kidlington for employment generating development. Most of these are either fully or partially developed. The ELR (Table 8.9) identifies five small sites for potential development in Kidlington (see table below), one of which is already designated as such; the others are identified as being either vacant or underutilised and therefore available for development.

Ref no	Name	Site Area (ha)
K3.1	West Side of Canal*	0.6
K3.2	West Side of Canal*	0.8
K5.1	Oxford Spires	0.9
K5.2	Oxford Spires *	0.4
K4.1	Motor Park*	0.5
Total		3.2

* New development sites identified via URS Survey, Dec 2005

These sites total just 3.2 ha of land available for potential development, around 3% of the land available in Cherwell, as shown in the table below (ELR, Table 8.11).

Location	Available Development Area (ha)	% of total
Bicester	38.4	41
Banbury	48.0	50
Kidlington	3.2	3
Rural	6.2	6
Total	95.8	100

Source: URS Calculations, 2006

The 3% figure is more clearly understood when placed in the context of demand. Table 9.7 of the ELR (reproduced below) demonstrates the demand pressures in Kidlington compared with the other Cherwell districts. Kidlington's share of employment land is substantially out of line with Banbury and Bicester which have 13 and 24 years respectively of available land, compared with less than 3 years in Kidlington.

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Town/District	Available employment land (ha)	Average annual rate of demand (ha)	Supply expressed as years worth of demand
Banbury	47.0	3.5	13.4
Bicester	38.4	1.6	24.0
Kidlington	3.2	1.1	2.9
Cherwell District	94.8	6.5	14.6

Source: URS Calculations

The concern here is that the 3% apportionment reflects the policy understanding of Kidlington's market role within Cherwell (relative to Bicester and Banbury), but **fails to recognise its specific market role in meeting demand for technology-based organisations drifting northwards from Oxford.**

Future allocations

The ELR (Table 10.1) recommends that 28.7 ha of available employment land in Cherwell be designated for B1 office development (with 32.8 ha of B2 and 27.5 ha of B8). This, it states, will provide for 28 years worth of supply based on standard plot ratios and historic demand trends, and *“provide a buffer to allow the market to operate efficiently while a new plan is being prepared and adopted”*.

Within the total of 28.7 ha, Kidlington's share is just 2.1 ha, or 7.5%. Bicester receives 14.7 ha and Banbury 8.3 ha. Thus Kidlington's “share” equates to just two-three years of average annual demand, whereas Bicester's “share” can be measured in up to eight decades. Again, we are concerned that the conclusions drawn do not reflect the evidence base and that they are not sufficiently sensitive to market subtleties.

Within this total, Kidlington's share is just 2.1 ha, or 7.5%. Bicester receives 14.7 ha and Banbury 8.3 ha. Thus Kidlington's “share” equates to just two-three years of average annual demand, whereas Bicester's “share” can be measured in decades [I agree – I made it 80 years! So can we be more specific? Also, I think the sums are done on a district wide average take up as opposed to location specific figures – important when you consider that Kidlington has twice the B1 take up of Bicester]. Again, we are concerned that the conclusions drawn do not reflect the evidence base and they are not sufficiently sensitive to market subtleties.

The *Employment Land Strategy* section of the ELR identifies the following, existing developments, and recommends that they are all retained/protected; but beyond this there is a dearth of actual strategy for future supply.

- Cherwell Business Park, Kidlington
- Station Field Industrial Park (Langford Locks)
- Langford Business Park (West side of Canal)
- Oxford Motor Park, Kidlington
- Oxford Spires Business Park
- Yarnton Business Park (Oxford Industrial Park)
- Begbroke Science Park

Despite 85 pages of analysis in the ELR, looking at supply and demand, socio-economic trends, and so on, **there is no real guidance on how Kidlington's**

Kidlington, Planning Policy and the Office Market

office market should be managed in policy terms in the future. Yet, it is a major economic asset: the only Cherwell sub-market that actually connects with the Oxford economy in physical and market terms. This gap is a major weakness of the review.

It is hardly surprising – given the lack of strategic guidance in the ELR – that the Draft Core Strategy document virtually ignores the Kidlington office market and the important economic benefits that it could generate locally if managed correctly; preferring instead to stick with the status quo of just two areas for economic growth (Banbury and Bicester). In these terms, in our view, the plan is unsound.

Following some encouraging words of introduction to the Core Strategy, including the commitment to *“facilitate economic growth and a more diverse economy with an emphasis on attracting higher technology industries”*, the draft plan's strategy for the future is very limited. Policy E1 states that the Council will *“as a general principle, continue to protect existing employment land and buildings for employment (B class) uses”*, and that it will *“identify a range of new sites for employment uses ...”*. These new sites will be

- accessible to the existing and proposed labour supply;
- make efficient use of existing and underused sites and premises;
- make efficient use of previously-developed land wherever possible;
- have good access by public transport, and
- in urban areas.

These objectives are very limited. For example, there appear to be no specific policies for the knowledge economy, consistent with the RES proposals for Central Oxfordshire, and Oxford's role as one of eight ‘Diamonds’ aimed at stimulating economic development in the wider area.

The Core Strategy notes that

A key role for the Local Development Framework is to ensure that a balanced portfolio of sites is made available to support economic growth across the district. This Draft Core Strategy makes strategic allocations for employment use in Banbury and Bicester (see policies BIC 2 and BAN 6).

There is no further consideration of Kidlington specifically; nor any further policy aimed at supporting the subtle sub-market structures. Thus, despite

- an ageing stock;
- a lack of good quality office stock;
- a desire to attract further high value jobs;
- major changes to the economy, and
- Kidlington's success in developing its high-tech and office offerings,

Kidlington's evolving role in supporting the ‘smart growth’ derived from the Oxford office market is largely ignored. Moreover, notwithstanding Kidlington's important role in the sub-regional office market, it receives just 7.5% of employment land designated for B1 office development. This suggests an emergent land shortfall. The danger here is that the policy is being driven by an evidence base that is dated and, of course, this could result in an unsound policy framework.

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Conclusions

As noted above, the ELR states that Cherwell is seeking to attract high-tech and knowledge based industries to the area *“in order to match more closely with the skills of the existing population”*, and further, that the accommodation *“required by these types of businesses will impact on the amount and characteristics of land required for future development”*.

The employment mix of Kidlington already contains a quantity of technology-based jobs that is not the case in other Cherwell markets, and it is achieving this largely as a result of its relationship with the Oxford office market, rather than its relationships within Cherwell.

We have been clear in this brief report on what we perceive to be significant weaknesses in the evidence base of the Core Strategy, and in particular in the utility of the 2006 ELR. We strongly recommend that the data therein are updated, and that there is a sharper focus on (a) Cherwell/Kidlington’s regional role and (b) the established and emerging nature of demand for quality office accommodation within the area.

APPENDIX C

Examples of letters expressing an interest in Oxford Technology Park:



Oxford Nanopore Technologies Ltd
Edmund Cartwright House
4 Robert Robinson Avenue
Oxford, OX4 4GA
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)1845 034 7000
Fax: +44 (0)1845 034 7001
www.nanoporetech.com
info@nanoporetech.com

Angus Bates
Hill Street Holdings
Knowles Farm
Wycke Hill, Maldon
Essex
CM9 6SH

10th May 2010

Dear Angus,

I read with great interest your proposal for an Oxford Technology Park adjacent to the Oxford Airport in Kidlington.

Having completed a comprehensive review of 'fitted laboratory space' 12 months ago this type of facility is essential for developing technology companies and particularly whilst space is limited in Milton Park and the Oxford Science Park services south Oxford. Therefore the North Oxford Science Park would provide much needed laboratory space in a location that is currently lacking any substantive facilities for technology companies.

I would be happy to support your application.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Sanghera
CEO

Registered Address:
MorphoSys UK Ltd.
Grayfriars Court, Paradise Square,
Oxford OX1 1BB, UK
MorphoSys UK Ltd. is registered
in England No.: 1604842

Mr Angus Bates
Hill Street Holdings
Knowles Farm
Wycke Hill
Maldon
Essex
CM9 6SH

10th May 2010

Dear Mr Bates

Re: Oxford Technology Park

I was interested to receive your letter of 21st April 2010 regarding your proposals for the Technology Park opposite London Oxford Airport.

As a local Biotechnology company we would be very happy to support such a proposal given the scarcity of suitable property within our sector to the northern side of Oxford. We have been in our current building in Langford Lane for approximately 3 years and had very few options when looking to relocate our company within the very local North Oxford/Kidlington area towards the end of 2006.

We would obviously also hope that any future developments bring in further companies that we could find collaboration or even sales opportunities with. In terms of our own development, I cannot be certain of our needs for expansion over the next few years, but we would certainly hope to be needing further space in the next 5-10 year period and such facilities nearby would be of significant interest to us.

I would also imagine that it may be of interest to some of the companies working out of the Cherwell Innovation Park at Upper Heyford, also on the northern side of Oxford, who may be looking to develop beyond those initial stages that they have been currently working towards.

I look forward to hearing more about the proposals in due course and would be happy to provide our support if that would be of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Dr Andrew Lane
Managing Director

Registered Address:
MorphoSys UK Ltd.
Grayfriars Court, Paradise Square,
Oxford OX1 1BB, UK

MorphoSys UK Ltd. is registered
in England No.: 1604842



A Division of MorphoSys

MorphoSys UK Ltd.
Endeavour House
Langford Business Park
Langford Lane, Kidlington
OXON, OX5 1GE
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1865 852700
Fax: +44 (0)1865 373899
E-mail: inquiry@abdserotec.com
Web: www.abdserotec.com





Your Resource for Strategic Growth in the Life Science Sector

25th May 2010

Dear Mr Bates,

Thank you for sending me information on the Oxford Technology Park.

My company, Pivotal Scientific Ltd (PSL) provides a bespoke Biotech consultancy service for the Life Science and Healthcare sectors.

Our primary focus is to proactively work with both "start up" and well established Biotech and Pharma Companies in view of assisting them to achieve their business growth objectives.

As the start-up companies expand they will hopefully outgrow their current facilities so the prospect of a new Technology Park designed specifically to suit their needs sounds very attractive.

Working from the Cherwell Innovation Centre, I appreciate the importance of a communal hub and the resources it offers. I feel the Oxford Technology Park could provide this to its residents but on a larger scale, especially as there isn't anything suitable in the surrounding area at present.

I wish you all the best with this venture and look forward to its realization.

Kindest Regards,

Tim Bernard

Susan Newton

From: Susan Newton
Sent: 08 June 2010 09:27
To: angus@hillstreetholdings.com
Subject: FW: Oxford technology Park Kidlington

From: Savell, John [mailto:John.Savell@eurocopter.co.uk]
Sent: 08 June 2010 09:22
To: Susan Newton
Subject: Oxford technology Park Kidlington

Dear Susan,

I refer to correspondence and emails with my colleague Rick Cawley who passed the paperwork to my self. I have discussed the proposal with my MD who is very interested in your plans for the site.

Regrettably we were unable to communicate our support to the Local authority within the timescale specified.

Would you however please keep us informed as to the progress of your application with Cherwell.

Regards

John

John Savell
Senior Facilities Manager/Health & Safety Advisor



Eurocopter UK Ltd.
Oxford Airport
Kidlington
Oxfordshire
OX5 1QZ

+44 (0) 1865 852400 (switchboard)
+44 (0) 1865 852412 (rdd)
+44 (0) 7799 605075 (mob)
+44 (0) 1865 852440 (fax)

e: John.Savell@eurocopter.co.uk
w: www.eurocopter.co.uk

Registration No. 1164090
VAT No. GB 918 3946 89

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10/06/2010



UNICOL ENGINEERING, Green Road, Oxford, OX3 8EU, UK

t: +44(0)1865 767676

f: +44(0)1865 767677

e: sales@unicol.com

w: www.unicol.com

Mr C Vecchione
Benedicts Consultant Surveyors
25 Corn Street
Witney
Oxon
OX28 6DB

Dear Christian

Re: Kidlington – Oxford Technology Park

Following on from our recent telephone conversation, I would like to formally express my support for the proposed development of the land at Oxford Technology Park.

As you are aware, Unicol Engineering have been established in Oxford for over 40 years, engaged in the manufacture of audio visual hardware and its distribution on an international scale. The absence of suitable land for expansion, coupled with a restrictive planning regime, has been a constant theme surrounding our development.

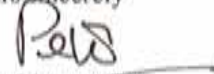
It has been apparent that the availability of land for new commercial development has been limited to the rather slow release of plots at Oxford Business Park and Oxford Science Park where the approach to speculative development has been conservative and where the emphasis has been on the construction of pure office space. It is in this context that we have been very interested to hear of your efforts to promote commercial development at Oxford Technology Park in an area that has clearly become established in recent years as quite a thriving commercial location. The subject site seems to us to be eminently developable without detrimental impact on its surroundings and much needed if the growth of local firms is to be encouraged.

Kidlington has much to recommend it in terms of accessibility and infrastructure, and we do feel that the site would provide a first class location both for expanding local companies and those being drawn to the area; particularly for those engaged in production, hi-tech and science-based activities.

As you are aware, we have been searching for a new site close to the Oxford Ring Road for a number of years capable of accommodating our long term expansion and I would be interested to hear more about your proposals for the site when these become more defined in due course.

No doubt we will liaise further over the coming months.

Yours sincerely


Peter Ligertwood

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Registered Office: Green Road, Oxford, OX3 8EU



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26 May 2010

Dear Angus,

Further to our meeting regarding the OTP, I am writing to confirm that OBN as the leading biotech industry trade association in the region is strongly supportive of the development of the Oxford Technology Park plans which we have seen.

We believe that a lack of facilities for life sciences companies within Oxfordshire may be a limiting factor in the growth of the cluster, the life sciences industry in Oxfordshire boasting about 150 companies employing about 5000 people.

We would suggest that life sciences companies looking to locate within Oxfordshire do not have a large enough choice of facilities under existing provision, and partly because of this firms are locating elsewhere simply through lack of available and appropriate space here in Oxfordshire. A biotech company simply cannot locate where there is no available lab space.

Although there is a large number of life science companies in Oxford, the vast majority of the appropriate facilities for life sciences companies within Oxfordshire are already occupied, and there has been little facilities development for our industry within Oxfordshire for several years.

In particular, there are precious few facilities for start-up life sciences companies seeking perhaps 500-2000 sq ft of space. As I understand it, the OTP would cater for such firms, and therefore would be welcome.

An increase in competition between providers of facilities for high technology companies would be welcome, and would help keep priced competitive, helping to bring more industry to the county of Oxfordshire.

OBN would be delighted were your planning application to be approved, and believe this would benefit Oxfordshire's chances of growing its knowledge economy.

Best wishes

Jon Rees, CEO, OBN

Oxfordshire Bioscience Network Ltd (OBN), Suite L, 11 Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 4RS
T +44 (0) 1865 594 644 – F +44 (0) 1235 835 843 - E info@obn.org.uk- www.obn.org.uk

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Zyoxel Ltd, Centre for Innovation & Enterprise,
Oxford University Regbrooke Science Park,
Sandy Lane, Yarnton, Oxford OX5 1PF, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1865 309 600
Fax: +44 (0)1865 309 601
Email: enquiries@zyoxel.com
www.zyoxel.com

Angus Bates
Hill Street Holdings Ltd
Knowles Farm
Wycke Hill
Maldon
Essex. CM9 6SH

May 24th 2010

RE: PLANS FOR OXFORD TECHNOLOGY PARK

Dear Angus,

Thank you for coming to see me a while back now to discuss the plans for the Oxford Technology Park. I have been working as a CEO in spin-outs around Oxford for nearly 10 years now and work closely with the University and Isis Innovation Ltd.

There are already a few industrial parks around Oxfordshire, but often they don't have the facilities and services we need, i.e. small wet labs with offices at reasonable prices. Your plans sound like they will address this issue and they would be a welcome addition to the science-based business infrastructure in Oxfordshire.

I think the location of Kidlington is also attractive. It's far enough out of Oxford to avoid being caught up in rush hour traffic, but it's still close enough to enable easy interaction with the City and its services and collaborators at the University.

I support your plan and look forward to hearing how things develop.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Tim Hart
CEO, Zyoxel Ltd

Angus Bates

Hill Street Holdings

Knowles Farm

Wycke Hill

Maldon

CM9 6SH

20 May 2010

Dear Mr Bates,

Thank you for sending me details on the Oxford Technology Park and for spending some time in explaining your plans for this park to me.

I am a founder of many bioscience companies, often from the University of Oxford and as such I am always looking for the right premises to locate these companies in. Furthermore, I live near Adderbury in North Oxfordshire and which is why I operate out of the Cherwell Innovation Centre, here in Heyford Park. My present company GFC Diagnostics Ltd, is a company based on technology licensed from the University of Birmingham and which has tremendous growth potential. When the company out grows the Innovation Centre, I will be looking for somewhere to locate it in North Oxfordshire and so I am naturally a supporter of your proposed Technology Park. I was also pleased to hear that you have experience in designing and building units for use as both offices and laboratories and that you will be considering that type of building for the Technology Park.

I am also a non executive director on the Board of the Oxfordshire Innovation and Growth Initiative, and prior to that was business champion on the Board of the North Oxfordshire Enterprise Hub. I represent the interests of early stage technology companies and as many know in Oxfordshire have been involved and have advised a number of science/technology parks over the years as to the building needs of high tech companies. I therefore recognize the importance of Hill Street Holdings having experience in building units that are designed to accommodate laboratory space.

Cherwell Innovation Centre . 77 Heyford Park . Upper Heyford . Bicester . OX25 5HD

Tel: 07770-634232

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Angus Bates

From: Mike Eason [mike.eason@oxfordsurfaces.com]
Sent: 30 April 2010 16:13
To: Angus Bates
Subject: r.e. Oxford Technology Park

Dear Angus,

Many thanks for sharing the latest developments regarding Oxford Technology Park.

Oxford Advanced Surfaces (OAS) are always interested in hearing and engaging in the development of facilities that may suit OAS in the future.

To give you an idea of our current facilities and needs:

At present OAS has 20 full time employees and two additional contracted employees (administration and book keeping) and utilises two large organic synthetic laboratories, and two materials testing laboratories. In addition we have a number of offices for staff to use as write up areas. We also have a meeting room with projection and conferencing facilities. We use the communal services at Begbroke, including the shower room for those that cycle and run, and the tea/coffee making area. We also make use of the Begbroke good received and postal service which are important to our daily operations.

We also make use of the Begbroke canteen. It would be important to have good quality catering on site.

A significant part of our operation involves wet chemical synthesis with the obvious requirement of fume hoods, gas lines and three phase power. We also have some large industrial processing and analytical equipment that requires open laboratory space.

As a prerequisite for any move we would need access to similar support with chemical laboratories equipped with three phase power, fume hoods and high specification PPE / emergency equipment. We would also require air conditioning for the seated write up areas. We would also require similar or better facilities for conferencing and meetings. Ideally a room set up for video conferencing would be ideal. We would clearly be incentivised to move if we found a facility that was already specified to include these features rather than having to pay for fit out a building before moving.

Lastly, one rather off the wall request would be the need for some outside space. OAS has a very high good team spirit and one of the underpinning reasons for this is that we have team games and sports during our lunch hours. We use the field outside of the Begbroke CIE building where we are situated as a frisbee field and for 5-a-side football. Although this seems minor it is essential to the well-being of the team and any site where we were to move to would need to have open space where we could continue these activities.

We do not at present need to relocate from Begbroke, however, I do anticipate further growth in the company through 2010 and in 2011 which may accelerate throughout 2011. As such there is a chance that we will outgrow our current space.

I would be happy to help vouch for the need for further technology park space, especially in the north of Oxfordshire.

You have my full contact details below.

21/05/2010

Regards

Mike

Dr Mike Eason
Managing Director

Oxford Advanced Surfaces Ltd
 Centre for Innovation & Enterprise- Begbroke Science Park
 Sandy Lane- Yarnton - OX5 1PF
 Tel: +44 1865 854807 - Fax: +44 1865 854808


 Registered Office: Centre for Innovation & Enterprise- Begbroke Science Park
 Sandy Lane- Yarnton - OX5 1PF - Company no: 5846542



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21/05/2010

Angus Bates

From: Andrew Wood [a.wood@oxfordbiomedica.co.uk]
Sent: 04 May 2010 11:50
To: Angus Bates
Subject: Re Oxford Technology Park

Dear Sir,

You recently wrote to Alan Kingsman, chairman of Oxford BioMedica plc regarding the proposed Oxford Technology Park. He has passed your letter on to me.

Oxford BioMedica is a biotechnology business that started up in 1996/7 and is based on the Oxford Science Park.

Broadly, we are in favour of developing infrastructure around Oxford to support expansion of the area's high technology economy. Companies such as Oxford BioMedica might be expected to benefit from a greater concentration of similar businesses in its surroundings. However, there is little that I can say with regard to your particular proposal. My own feeling is that the factor that is most limiting expansion at Oxford BioMedica's end of the sector is lack of long-term investment capital. Speaking for Oxford BioMedica in the short term, the facilities we have on the Oxford Science Park are sufficient for our needs. Looking longer-term (and, critically, assuming that sufficient capital for expansion was available on reasonable terms) we would expect to expand, but our strong preference would be to expand within or close to the Oxford Science Park. For a number of reasons (investment in our current laboratories, staff issues) relocation is not attractive, and a split-site with significant distance between units would be sub-optimal.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wood
 Chief Financial Officer
 Oxford BioMedica plc

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Oxford BioMedica harnesses viral-mediated gene transfer for healthcare product development.
<http://www.oxfordbiomedica.co.uk>

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<http://www.star.net.uk>

Angus Bates

From: David Laskow-Pooley [david@pharmafor.com]
Sent: 05 May 2010 12:08
To: Angus Bates
Subject: Re:Oxford Technology Park

Dear Angus,

Many thanks for the copy of "The Compelling Case -Part 1" for the proposed Oxford Technology Park sited at Kidlington. The proposal itself is well formed and indeed quite compelling and on balance I am in favour of the venture. I say on balance as I am deeply aware that to achieve rapid and sustained growth there needs to be a nucleus or a cluster formed. The technology community has worked feverously over the last 8 – 10 years to develop the bases for such nuclei throughout the current locations which are effectively shown within the proposal. At this time these remain at a sub-optimal level, the recent economic downturn not helping the situation, however, there is a growing body of support through the many initiatives operating to enable a more "joined-up" approach to be taken throughout the region. This should help bring the current rather disparate groups closer together towards being a recognizable series of nuclei/clusters. From this viewpoint, the addition of another Technology Park at this juncture may be somewhat of a distraction.

However, taking a longer term view and also reviewing future demographic developments and the effect upon transport infrastructure/networks there will be a definite need for growth and thus the positioning of such a Park beside Kidlington would seem ideal. It is on this basis that I would offer my support for the proposal.

Additionally, the region does lack one key ingredient, which is a decent conference venue capable of accommodating from 50 to 1,500 people. If this could be included within the development then I would suggest that support for the proposal would rapidly gain significant momentum and become overwhelming within a very short timeframe.

I do hope that you find these comments and thoughts useful and I would wish you every success with the progression of the case through to the effective opening of the Proposed Technology Park.

If I can be of any further help please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

David

David Laskow-Pooley
 Managing Director
 pharmafor Ltd

The Magdalen Centre
 The Oxford Science Park
 Robert Robinson Avenue
 Oxford, OX4 4GA
 T: +44 (0)1865 784485
 M: +44 (0)7900 905438
 E: david@pharmafor.com
 W: www.pharmafor.com
 Skype: dlaskowpooley

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26/05/2010

Angus Bates

From: Tony Hart [tony.hart@innovationgrowth.co.uk]
Sent: 26 May 2010 13:55
To: Angus Bates
Subject: RE: Oxford Technology Park
Angus,

I can certainly say that the development is interesting and that it would help in the growth of innovative companies across Oxfordshire, complementing the current resources deployed across the county.

Regards Ton

Tony Hart
Team Director, **Oxfordshire Innovation & Growth**

The Library, Harwell Science & Innovation Campus,
465 Eighth Street, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 0RL
Tel +44 (0)1235 433530
Mobile +44 (0)7919 443303
Email tony.hart@innovationgrowth.co.uk
URL www.innovationgrowth.co.uk/oxfordshire



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From: Angus Bates [mailto:angus.bates@hillstreetholdings.com]
Sent: 21 May 2010 15:01
To: Tony Hart
Subject: RE: Oxford Technology Park

Tony

Just collating the various supporting emails and letters from interested parties for OTP as we get down to detail with Cherwell.

I think we left it that you would also draft a letter for us, although I have to say I can't quite remember!

Thank you for your positive comments when we met, are you able to drop me a note as well?

All the best,

Angus Bates BSc (Hons) MRICS

Hill Street Holdings Limited
DDI: 01621 878640
Main: 01621 850600
Fax: 01621 850580
Mob: 07831 767600

26/05/2010

Susan Newton

From: David Kelly [david.kelly@h2ovp.com]
Sent: 24 May 2010 09:09
To: Susan Newton
Cc: Paul Coleman
Subject: RE: Oxford Technology Park, Kidlington

Dear Susan:

Many thanks for your email. Without prejudice to the planning process, or the details of your specific application, H2O would certainly support in principle the provision of additional technology incubator space in the Oxford area.

Best Wishes,
David

From: Susan Newton [mailto:susan.newton@hillstreetholdings.com]
Sent: 21 May 2010 16:53
To: David Kelly
Subject: Oxford Technology Park, Kidlington

FAO: DR DAVID KELLY

Dear David

We wrote to you on 21st April 2010 outlining our proposals and planning case for the new Oxford Technology Park. The proposal has always been well received by interested parties locally and those in the bio tech sector. We have received many letters and emails in support of this proposal as we go through the final stages of the local development plan.

We will shortly be submitting a compendium of all the comments, letters and emails to Cherwell District Council and I hope that we may receive your positive comments by email or letter shortly.

I do hope you feel able to make a supporting comment and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

For and on behalf of ANGUS BATES, Director
angus.bates@hillstreetholdings.com

Susan Newton BSc (Hons)
Hill Street Holdings Ltd
DDI: 01621 878643
Main: 01621 850600
Mobile: 07939 500970

26/05/2010