

# Kidlington Framework Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document Part 2: Kidlington Today – Baseline Information Cherwell District Council December 2016

**DRAFT FOR EXECUTIVE**





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Aerial photo of Kidlington

# Preface

This Appendix sets out the evidence base and background information which has informed preparation of the Kidlington Framework Masterplan under the following topic headings:

- Location and Context
- Village Character
- Green Infrastructure
- Community Facilities and Village Centre
- Movement and Connectivity
- Socio-economic Context
- Economy and Employment
- Housing
- Planning Context

## Acronyms

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used throughout this document:

KPC: Kidlington Parish Council

CDC: Cherwell District Council

# 1.0 Location and context

## 1.1 Location

Kidlington is located on the A4260 between the A44 and A34 around 5 miles north of Oxford, 4 miles south east of Woodstock and Blenheim Palace and 8 miles west of Bicester. It falls within Cherwell District close to its administrative boundaries with Oxford City Council and the three other Oxfordshire Districts. The proximity to the boundary with Oxford is of particular importance, given that Oxford's Green Belt encircles the village.

With a population of around 15,000 within the built-up area, Kidlington is the smallest of the three urban areas within Cherwell behind the towns of Bicester and Banbury. Most of the village falls within the Parish of Kidlington, with the exception of the south eastern neighbourhoods which fall within Gosford and Water Eaton Parish.



Figure 1.1 District Councils within Oxfordshire (www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)



Figure 1.2 Cherwell District map (www.cherwell.gov.uk)

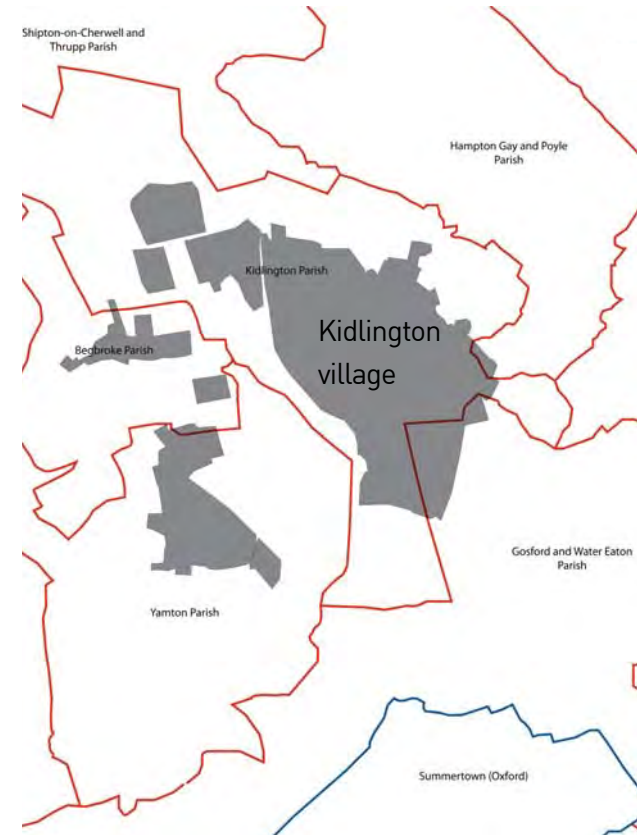


Figure 1.3 Parish Council and District ward boundaries

## 1.2 Context

### 1.2.1 Global relationships

- **International tourism:** Kidlington is located close to the international tourism destinations of Blenheim Palace, Oxford and Bicester Shopping Village which has an increasing number of international visitors.
- **Airport:** Kidlington is the location of London Oxford Airport which sits at the heart of the UK's motorsport industry and is used by F1 teams due to its close proximity to Silverstone. The airport provides business aviation with training facilities, private hire to global locations and has in the past offered commercial flights to Edinburgh, Belfast, Dublin, Jersey and Guernsey.
- **Oxford University and Science Park:** Kidlington is the location of Oxford University's Begbroke Science Park, an internationally important centre for education, research and innovation.

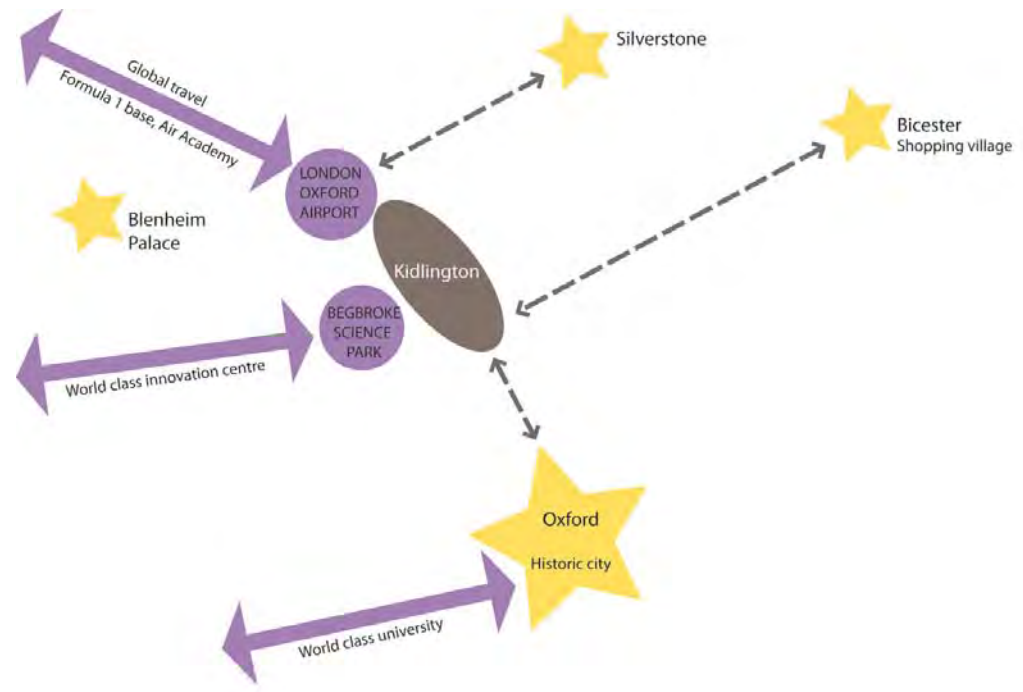


Figure 1.4 Global links and attractions in the Kidlington area

### 1.2.2 Regional relationships

- Kidlington sits within an arc of thriving settlements from Cambridge to Reading which have generally witnessed continued economic growth and investment. The arc ranks high for income levels, employment opportunities and close links to Oxford and Cambridge Universities.
- Kidlington is situated within two LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships), the Southeast Midlands LEP and Oxfordshire LEP which both play a key role in determining local economic priorities to provide a catalyst for economic growth and the creation of local jobs.
- Kidlington has good strategic road connections - links into the motorway network connect the village into the wider city network of Birmingham, Reading and London.
- Oxford Parkway station, part of the proposed east-west rail link, provides direct rail connections from Kidlington to Bicester, Oxford (from December 2016) and London Marylebone.

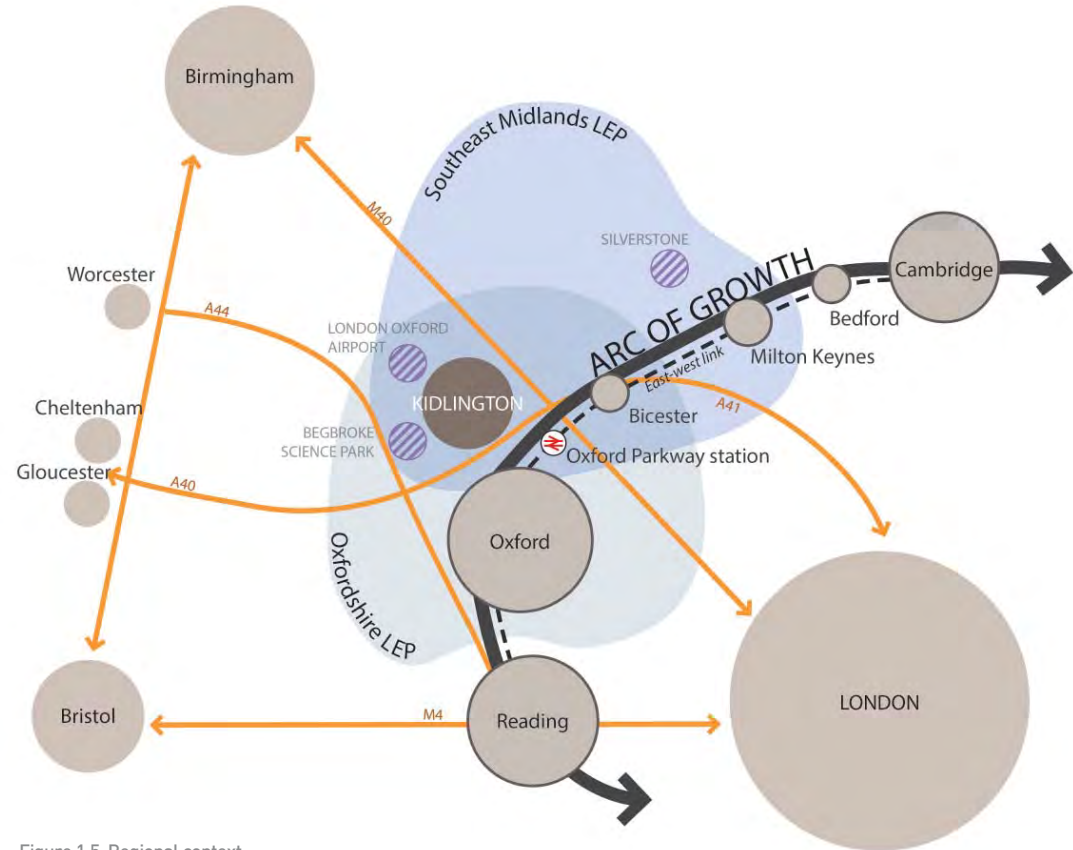


Figure 1.5 Regional context



### 1.2.3 Local relationships

- Kidlington is closely linked with the city of Oxford and its wider network of surrounding settlements including Woodstock, Abingdon, Witney and Didcot, in terms of business, education, transport and retail, with high levels of in and out commuting.
- The village is well connected by road and bus routes with the A4260 running through the centre of the village, creating a direct connection to Oxford city centre and Banbury, and the A34 linking to Bicester. However, bus services to smaller settlements including Woodstock, Yarnton and Otmoor are infrequent.
- The Oxford Canal and River Cherwell running along the east and west boundary edges of the village link Kidlington to Oxford whilst providing an attractive leisure corridor, in particular for canal boat hire, walking and cycling.
- Facilities associated with the University of Oxford form an educational corridor which stretches from North Oxford to Kidlington and the Begbroke Science Park site. In addition, Oxford Brookes University further extends the educational quarter with three campuses situated across Oxford.
- To the south west, Oxford's Northern Gateway is a major employment led growth area set to deliver up to 90,000 sqm of employment space and 500 homes by 2026. An Area Action Plan has been adopted by Oxford City Council. The development has yet to be implemented.

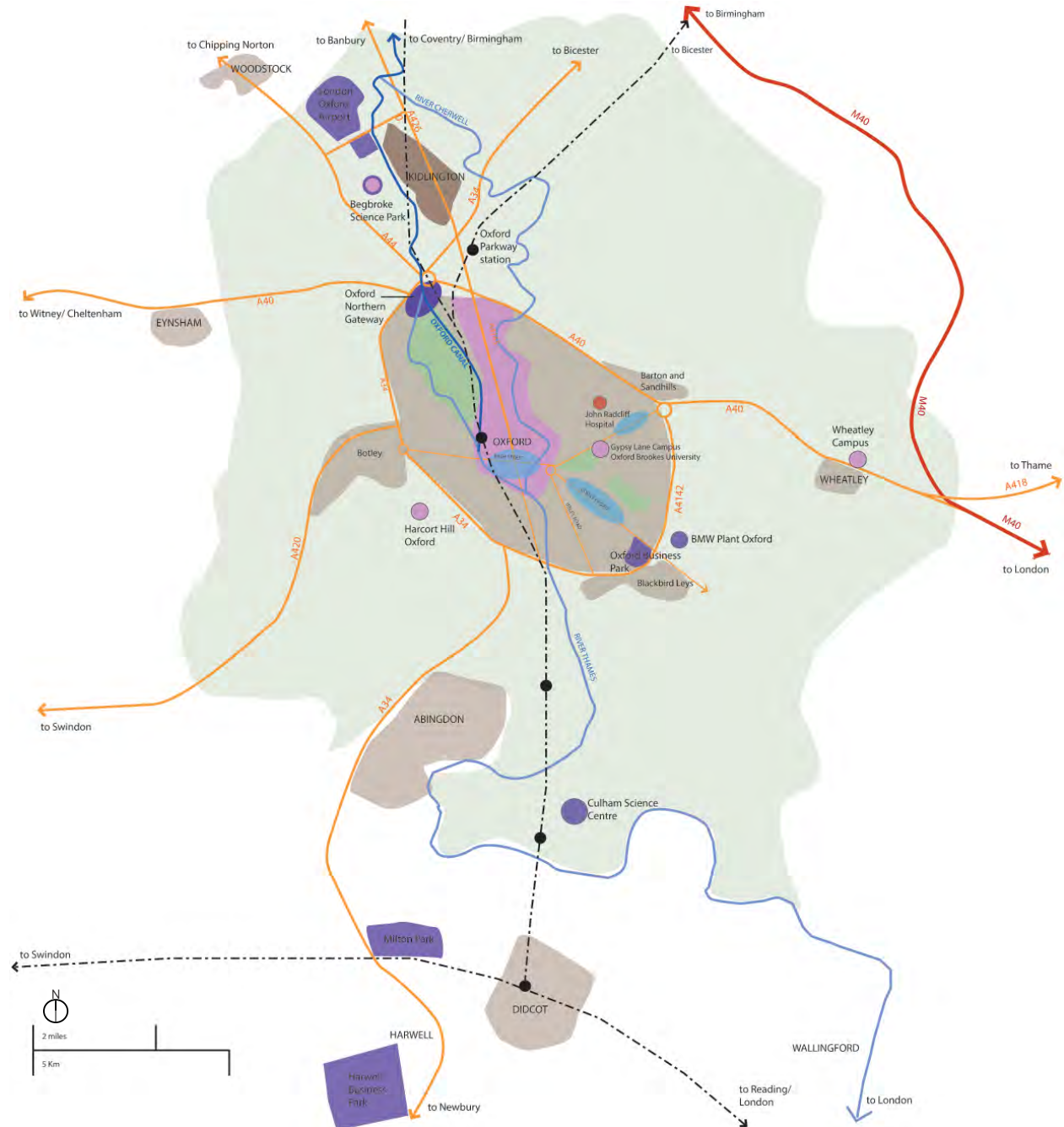
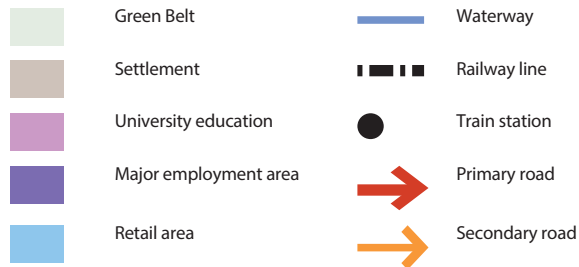


Figure 1.6 Local context

# 2.0 Village character

## 2.1 Evolution of the Village

Kidlington has a long history of habitation dating back to the Anglo Saxons and beyond. It is recorded in the 1086 Domesday Book as 'Chedelintone'. From its origins as a small rural settlement close to the River Cherwell it grew gradually over many centuries, its shape and form changing in response to new roads, canals and the availability of land. It was not until the mid 20th century that Kidlington began to grow at a much greater pace due to rapid housing development.

### 2.1.1 Kidlington-on-the-Green

The medieval settlement of Kidlington was a series of dispersed hamlets, the largest of which grew around the Church of St Mary the Virgin (built 1220), the Mill and Manor House, located immediately to the west of the River Cherwell on today's Church Street. At the junction of today's High Street and Mill Street was the Town Green and during the 17th and 18th centuries, substantial properties were built around it on today's School Road, Mill Street and The Moors. The Town Green was built on during the 19th and 20th centuries but its original extent is marked by the remaining historic properties which now front onto later residential development.

The village was bounded to the south-west by a second green known as 'Kidlington Green' – a large area of unenclosed common land, which appeared in an early-modern suffix to the village's name ('Kidlington on the Green') and was celebrated in a minor English folk song.



Figure 2.1 Kidlington on the Green was celebrated as an English folk song

### 2.1.2 Growth to the west

The Enclosure Act of 1818 privatised the common land south of the High Street and led to the expansion of residential dwellings along the High Street. Passing trade generated by the Oxford to Banbury Road encouraged growth of commercial premises including a number of public houses at the junction with the High Street.

The Oxford Canal running to the west of Kidlington opened in the 1790s followed in the 1850s by the railway and its station located at Station Approach (closed in 1964) which linked Kidlington to Oxford, Banbury and the Midlands. These new connections brought employment and growth of residential properties northwards along Oxford Road. The railway and canal continue to form two linear barriers which have come to define the western edge of the village. By 1901 the village had a population of around 1,000.

### 2.1.3 Early 20th century ribbon development

During the first half of the 20th century the village began to spread out with 1930s ribbon development of semi-detached properties along Oxford Road and Bicester Road. To the south a 'Garden City' development commenced, which initially formed an isolated residential area separated from the rest of the village by an enclosed area of the old Green which remained as farmland.

To the north of the High Street, The Moors was developed, characterised by detached properties and bungalows on large plots set back from the road.

In 1931 Kidlington became the location of the Oxford Zoological Garden (in the area now occupied by Gosford Hill School) which hosted animals including an elephant, lions and flamingos. The attraction was short-lived and closed in 1937 when it was relocated to Dudley Castle. Other attractions included the Sterling Cinema on the High Street (now Tesco superstore).

In 1932 Kidlington Church of England Central School opened (later to become Gosford Hill School) to provide schooling for secondary age pupils. In 1935 Oxford City Council bought land at Campsfield to the north-west of Kidlington for the Oxford Municipal Aerodrome, becoming RAF Kidlington during the second world war.

### 2.1.4 20th century rapid growth

Following the war, Kidlington experienced rapid expansion, increasingly functioning as a dormitory village to Oxford. The large residential estates which were created are typical of their time, consisting predominantly of inward facing, cul-de-sac based layouts, with little reference to village character, vernacular detailing or materials.

Despite the closure of the railway station in 1964, employment growth continued with the development of business parks and a motor park to the north of Kidlington adjacent to London Oxford Airport. The airport itself was privatised in the 1980s and became a centre for aviation training, business aviation and subsequently, charter flights. Population growth was matched by the expansion of Village Centre retail and services to the west of Oxford Road including construction of The Kidlington Centre shopping mall, and new primary schools (bringing the total to four) and community facilities at Exeter Close.

### 2.1.5 Late 20th and early 21st Century

In recent years housing development has been of a small scale (restricted by the Green Belt which surrounds the village), for example, the estate expansion adjacent to the canal at Croxford Gardens and a 36 home rural exception site for affordable housing at Bramley Close, off Bicester Road. Employment uses have grown to the south of the airport and at Begbroke, where Oxford University purchased the site to establish a research facility in 1998.

The High Street has been partially pedestrianised and new retail and office development has taken place at the High Street / Oxford Road junction and on the High Street's southern side. To the south of the village, Stratfield Brake opened in 1999 providing 20 acres of sports facilities for a range of local clubs.

The Green for which Kidlington was once famous has been lost, but the majority of historic properties remain in pockets, protected by Listed Building designation and conservation area status. In 2011, the built up area of Kidlington (including Gosford) had a population of 15,046. It lays claim to being the second largest village in England, governed by a Parish rather than Town Council and retains a physical separation from the adjacent communities of Begbroke, Yarnton and Oxford to the South.

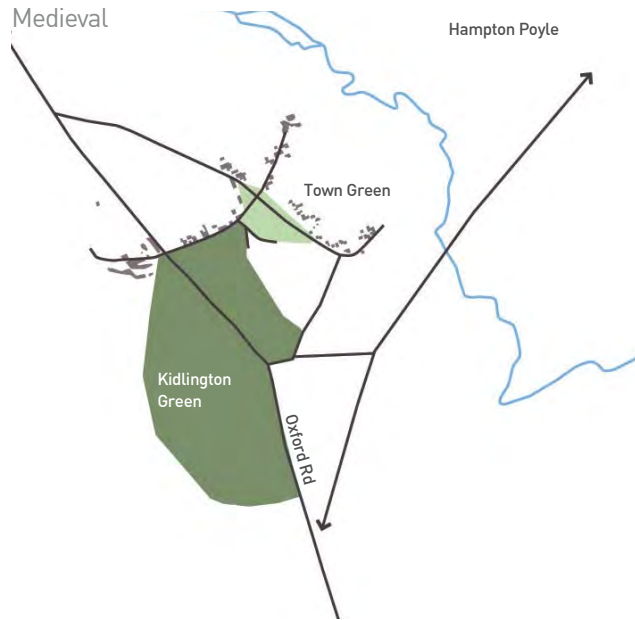


Figure 2.2 Medieval

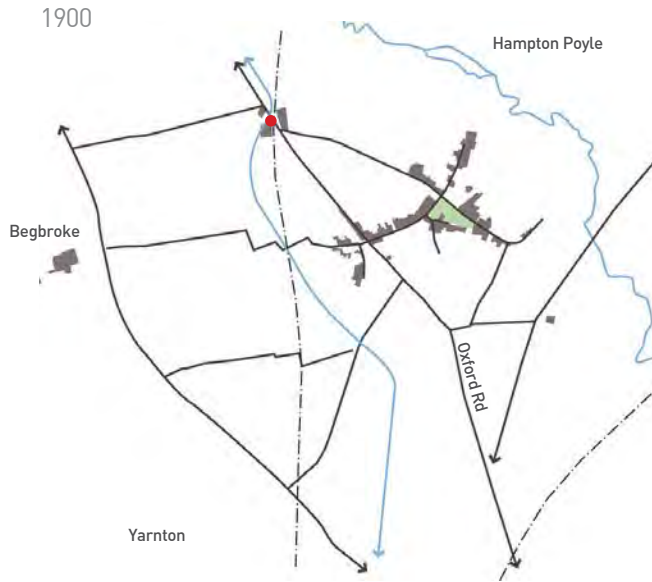


Figure 2.3 1900

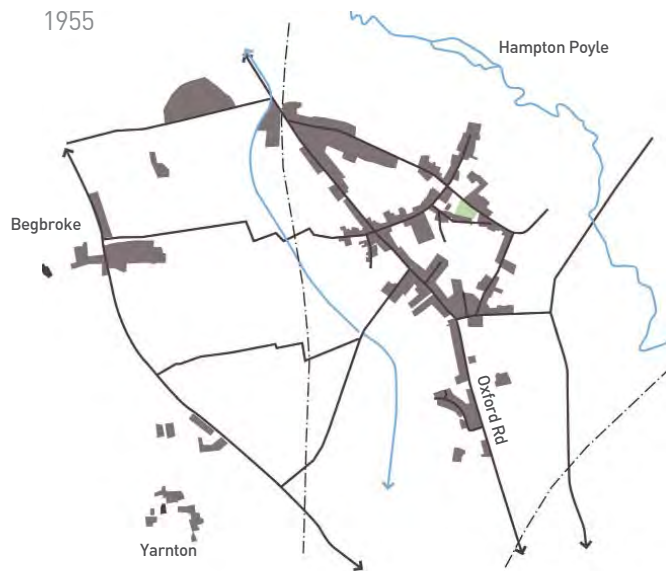


Figure 2.4 1955

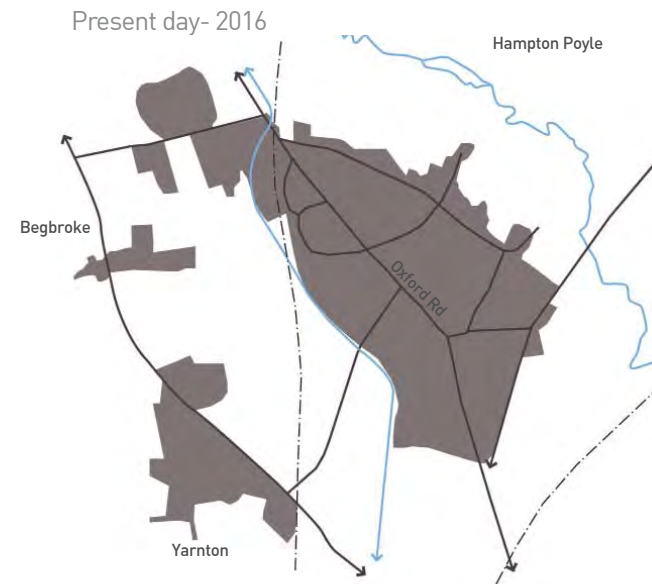


Figure 2.5 2016



Figure 2.6 From top: Church Street, 1904; Banbury Road outside the Black Bull pub, early C20th; High Street before 1980s redevelopment; Orchard Tea Gardens (now site of the Audi Garage) on Oxford Road. Source: All images taken from John A. Amor (2003). Kidlington Past and Present. Oxfordshire Books

## 2.2 Historic assets

A conservation area is defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act, 1990).

Kidlington contains six conservation areas; Church Street (the historic core), High Street, Crown Road, The Rookery, Langford Lane Wharf and the length of Oxford Canal.

The majority of statutorily listed buildings are situated within the Church Street and High Street conservation areas to the north-east of the Village Centre and include St Mary's church (the village's only Grade I listed structure), The Old Priests House, Manor Farmhouse, Dovecote, The Old Vicarage and Mill House. Kidlington's Historic Village Trail described in leaflet form, takes in fifteen of the areas important buildings in the Church Street and Mill Street area. Buildings materials reflect local geology with limestone walls giving a distinctive character and roofs of clay tile, slate and thatch.

The listed buildings have been identified and protected by the Secretary of State with the guidance of English Heritage, for their special historic or architectural interest.

In addition, there are a number of locally listed structures which are recognised by the Council as historically important and worthy of retention. These buildings of local interest are not graded or protected by law unless they are situated within a conservation area. Conservation area appraisals for all areas have been produced by the Council.



Figure 2.7 Historic assets within conservation areas

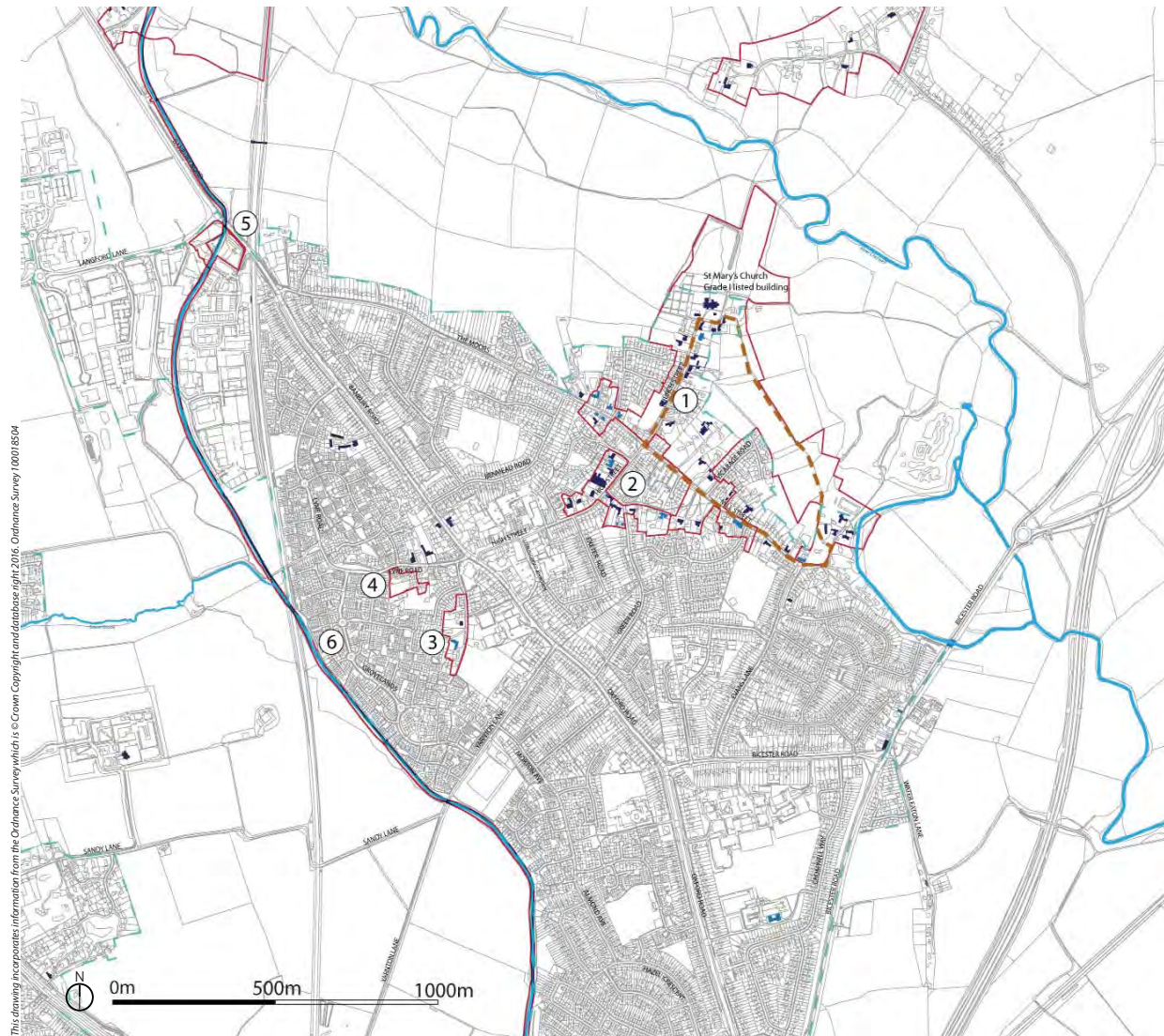
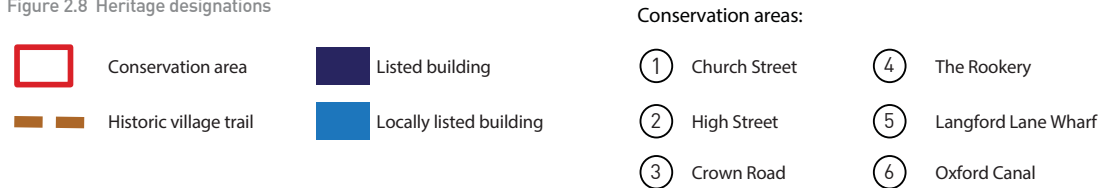


Figure 2.8 Heritage designations



### 2.3 Topography and geology

The majority of Kidlington is underlain by Oxford Clays of the Kellaways Formation, which to the east and west of the village is overlain by Alluvium. To the north (including London Oxford Airport) the bedrock is the Great Oolite group of limestones, with superficial river terrace deposits of sand and gravel.

Much of the village is relatively flat and low lying (around 60–65m AOD) except for a central ridge of higher land running north-south to the east of the Banbury to Oxford Road. The land gently falls to the floodplain of the River Cherwell to the east and towards the Rowel and Kingsbridge Brooks (now the route of the canal) to the south west.

Higher land to the north-east forms rolling farmland with a ridge linking Thrupp to St Mary's Church across Kidlington Fields which provides views of St Mary's Church spire and the surrounding countryside. To the west and north-west the land rises more steeply towards Begbroke, the airport and the hills beyond.

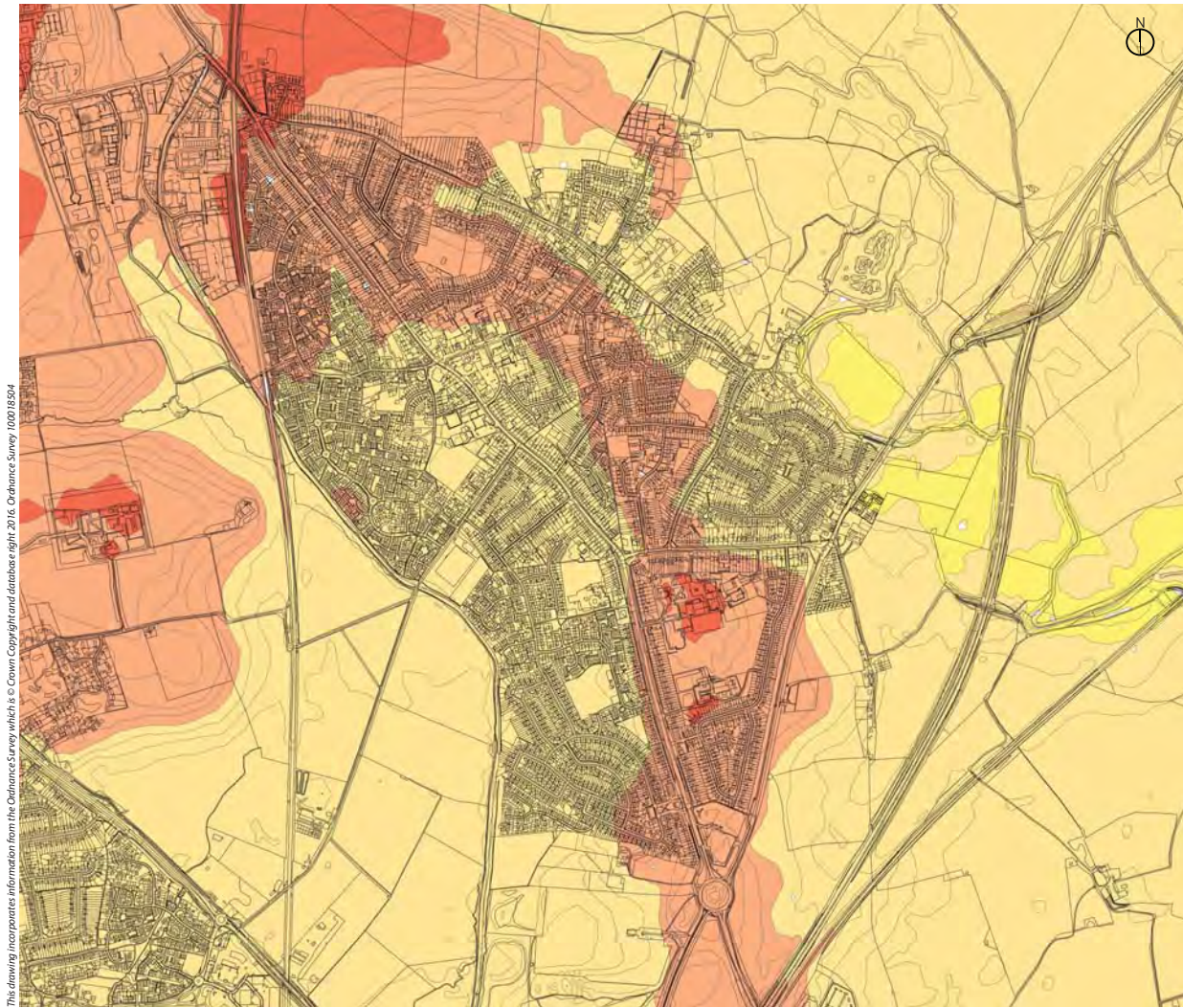
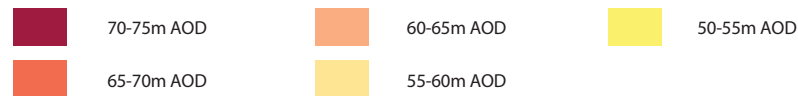


Figure 2.9 Topography



## 2.4 Character and setting

### 2.4.1 First impressions and hidden gems

Today, to a driver passing through the village on the Oxford Road, the first impression of Kidlington is of a primarily suburban linear settlement of 1930s semi-detached dwellings, leading into large modern housing estates. The character of the village is affected by it being a main route for travelling between Oxford and Banbury. Kidlington's distinctive and historic townscapes and landscapes including the remnants of the historic village around St Mary's Church, the canal and wetlands are located at the edges of the village and unfortunately not apparent to many visitors.

The Pevsner architectural guide emphasises the poor first impression created by 2-3 mile stretch of ribbon development along Oxford Road and Banbury Road. One of the purposes of the Framework is to identify ways of revealing Kidlington's identity and improving the quality of the built environment.

### 2.4.2 Townscape and landscape character areas

The physical character of Kidlington and its landscape setting has been classified into thirteen distinctive character areas (Figure 2.10).

<b>Townscape</b>		<b>4d</b>	The Moors
<b>1</b>	Village centre	<b>5</b>	Business Park
<b>2</b>	Historic village	<b>6</b>	London Oxford Airport
<b>3</b>	Ribbon development	<b>Landscape</b>	
<b>Residential estates</b>		<b>7</b>	Oxford Canal
<b>4a</b>	Late 20th century cul-de-sac estates	<b>8</b>	Kidlington fields and River Cherwell
<b>4b</b>	Garden City and mid 20th century housing	<b>9</b>	Stratfield Brake and surrounds
<b>4c</b>	Gosford	<b>10</b>	Western Gap

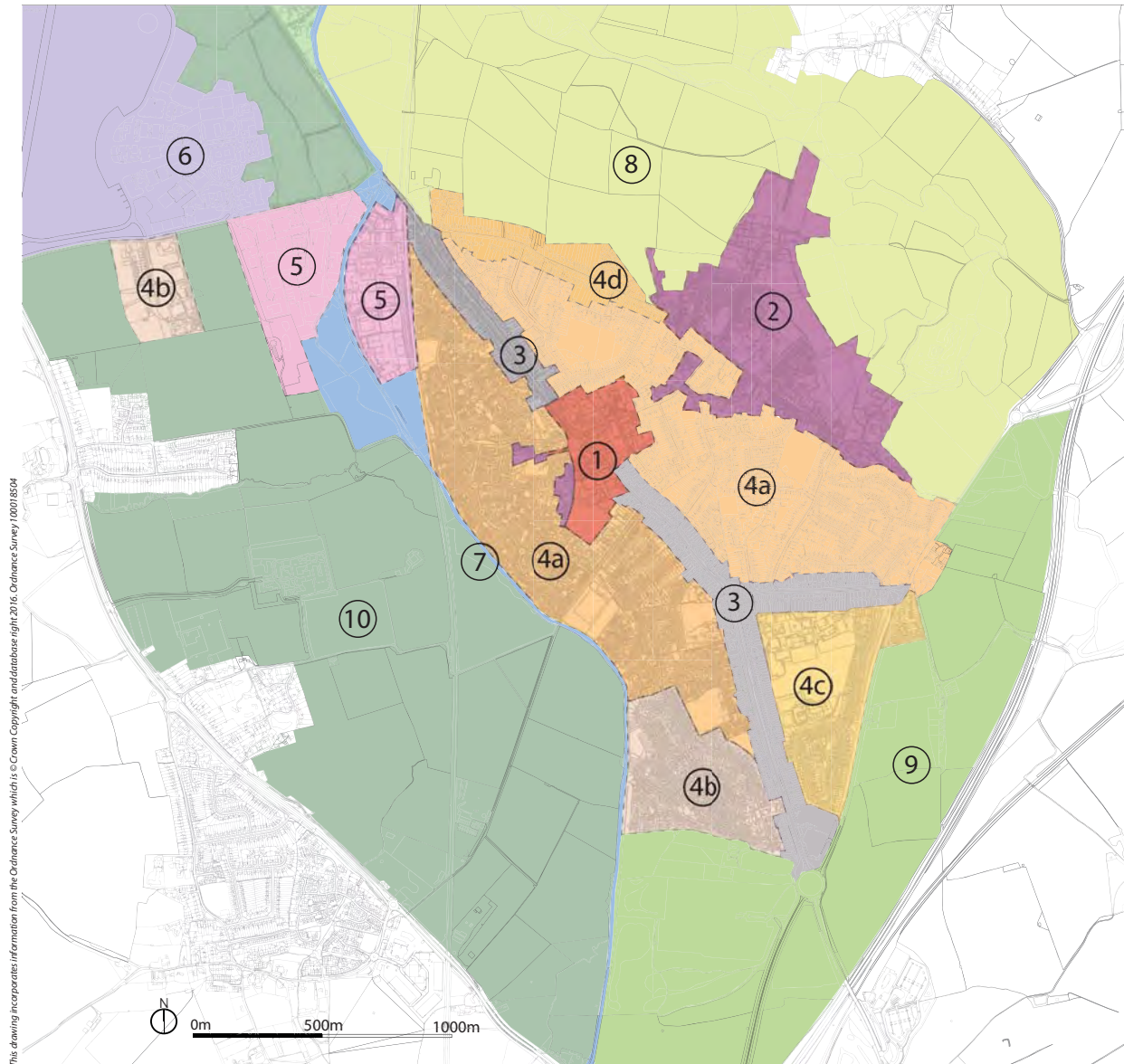


Figure 2.10 Character areas

### 1 Village centre

Located at the geographic centre of the village, the partially pedestrianised High Street to the east of Oxford Road is the focus for retail and services, while nearby Exeter Close provides a cluster of community facilities. Much of the architecture of the centre is recent and ranges considerably in character, height, scale, materials and quality. The result is a fragmented townscape which relates poorly to the remaining historic properties fronting Oxford Road to the north of the junction with the High Street. A detailed analysis of the Village Centre is provided in chapter 4.

### 2 Historic village

This area contains the historic core of the village, which grew around St Mary's Church, the Town Green and the Mill. It is designated the Church Street conservation area and retains the character of a quintessential Oxfordshire Village with fluctuating street widths, winding lanes, limestone houses and cottages (many of which are listed) and stone walls. Non-residential uses include the historic Six Bells public house and a small row of shops.

The church spire is a landmark particularly from views across the Cherwell Valley, and marks the eastern edge of the village and start of the footpaths along the River Cherwell.

A nature reserve known as St Mary's Fields sits within the Conservation Area boundary. This wild area contains a rich variety of indigenous shrub and tree species providing ideal habitats for bird species such as warblers, tits and thrushes. Wet meadow plants are typical for this area including bee orchid, meadowsweet and angelica. Wildlife includes roe deer, muntjacs, grass snakes and foxes. A full description of the conservation area is available in the Kidlington Conservation Area Appraisal, Cherwell District Council, 2009.

The character area also contains two discrete pockets of similar character: Crown Road and The Rookery conservation areas.

### 3 Ribbon development

The main through roads, Oxford to Banbury Road and Bicester Road, are characterised by the ribbon development of predominantly semi-detached dwellings dating from the 1930s with large front gardens and service roads to accommodate the car. The short cottage terraces, on the northern section of Banbury Road (opposite Lyne Road) have a modest, arts and crafts architectural style with front hedges to the street. The residential frontage is interrupted by small local retail centres at the Broadway and at the Bicester / Oxford Road junction and occasional public houses and community facilities. There are wide green verges and street trees on the southern section of the Oxford Road which gives a boulevard character but overall the corridor feels dominated by traffic.



Figure 2.11 Village centre- High Street



Figure 2.12 Village centre- Exeter Close



Figure 2.13 Historic Core- St Mary's church



Figure 2.14 Historic core- limestone houses with views of the church spire



Figure 2.15 Ribbon development- Oxford Road

#### 4. Residential estates

Kidlington's residential neighbourhoods consist predominantly of estates built in the 20th century.

##### 4a Late 20th century cul-de-sac estates

The large areas of inward facing housing estates built from the 1960s onwards have poor connectivity due to their cul-de-sac, or curving street layouts which prioritise movement by car. The car is often dominant within the streetscape and estate loop roads are fronted by back fences. Homes are generally 2 storey and range from small detached, semi-detached and short runs of terrace, of brick construction with pitched roofs. The layouts result in small 'leftover' green spaces which have limited function and narrow rear footpaths. Several of the estates have larger recreation areas located behind the houses which are bounded by the rear fences of properties and lack surveillance.

##### 4b Garden City and mid 20th century housing

Homes towards the south of the village in the area known as the 'Garden City' are laid out in the curved street pattern typical of 1950s Garden Suburb developments. They consist of plain red-brick semi-detached properties of two storeys. There are intermittent street trees and boundary treatments vary. Some properties have attractive front gardens and hedges, but most have been paved over for parking. The estate is accessed from Oxford Road at The Broadway which is the location of local shops and St John the Baptist Hall Church which also dates from the 1950s.

##### 4c Gosford

Residential streets surround a cluster of community facilities including Edward Feild Primary and Nursery Schools, Gosford Hill Secondary School, a medical centre, Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centre, and Thames Valley Police Headquarters. A large enclosed recreation field is used by the schools and leisure centre.

Homes date from the 1950s to 1980s and include detached and semi-detached properties in a range of styles, with a high proportion of bungalows on streets to the south of the Thames Valley Police Headquarters (e.g. Hampden Drive).



Figure 2.16 Late 20th century housing



Figure 2.17 Late 20th century estates with cul-de-sac layouts



Figure 2.18 Garden city tree lined streets and green public spaces



Figure 2.19 Garden city semi-detached housing



Figure 2.20 Gosford - leisure centre



Figure 2.21 The Moors- detached homes



**4d The Moors**

The Moors is an attractive leafy street with grass verges and large, hedged front gardens to properties. Detached, semi-detached homes and bungalows in a range of architectural styles occupy large plots with long back gardens. These back onto Kidlington Fields to the north, creating a soft edge to the village. As one of only a handful of through roads in the village, The Moors experiences rat-running and speed humps have been added to provide traffic calming. A number of small cul-de-sac estates have been built off The Moors in the late 20th century.

**5 Business Park**

Office and light industrial uses are concentrated to the north-west of Kidlington, south of Langford Lane. There are eight separate business clusters, operating independently of one another and with limited connectivity.

The employment clusters are generally in good condition (building, condition, environment and access) with the exception of Cherwell Business Park which is identified as being in poor or very poor condition in the Employment Land Study 2012. Langford Locks industrial development to the west of Oxford Canal is a mix of industrial 1-3 storey buildings situated within large areas of surface car parking. A number of these business sites, particularly along the canal edge, have informal boundary treatments of wire fences and vegetation. Oxford Motor Park incorporates showrooms including brands of Honda, Nissan and Toyota. The Cherwell Employment Land Study (2012) identifies London Oxford Airport and Field of Langford Lane as employment clusters containing undeveloped sites.

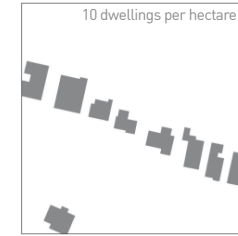
**6 London Oxford Airport**

To the north of Langford Lane is the airfield and buildings of London Oxford Airport, and the adjacent office park which is the home to Elsevier publishing and Thames Valley Police offices. The airport focuses on private and charter flights, maintenance support and professional pilot training.

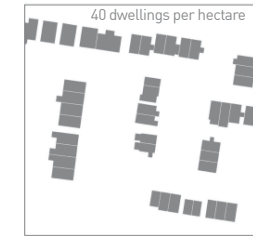


Figure 2.22 Figure ground comparison between The Moors and

The Moors (4d)



Grovelands Estate (4a)



Grovelands Estate  
Figure 2.23 Business Park situated off Langford Lane



Figure 2.24 London Oxford Airport



Figure 2.25 Oxford Canal- Views along Oxford canal



## 7 Oxford Canal

The Oxford Canal forms a green western boundary to Kidlington that can be explored along the formal towpath on its western side. The waterway provides habitat for an abundance of wildlife such as swans, mallards and water voles. Situated north of Roundham Lock is a Site of Special Scientific Interest known as Rushy Meadows, a wet meadow which is very rich botanically with a wide variety of rare plant species.

The canal has greater activity in the north with Roundham Lock and bridge, canal boat moorings and pretty towpath gardens, cottages and a pub garden overlooking the canal. Further south there is poor connectivity between the canal and the residential streets to the east. Properties back onto the canal edge with high garden fences and dense vegetation limiting access and views.

## 8 Kidlington Fields

The River Cherwell meanders south from Thrupp and to the east of Kidlington, surrounded by a water meadow landscape with overhanging willows along the bank edge attracting herons and kingfishers. Within these meadows is an overgrown reed area attracting a wide range of bird species including warblers, bitterns and woodcocks. Between the River Cherwell and the north edge of the village are broad rolling fields which rise in height to the north west, these are known as Kidlington Fields. Footpaths across the fields provide links to Thrupp and Hampton Poyle. Views towards St Marys Church are particularly distinctive.

## 9 Stratfield Brake and surrounds

The focus of this area is the sports facilities at Stratfield Brake consisting of large playing fields and supporting facilities. To the north, Stratfield Farm has finely divided fields, bordered by thick hawthorn hedges. South of the sports ground is an area of public oak and ash woodland also known as Stratfield Brake, managed by The Woodland Trust. It provides a habitat for a variety of wildlife species including rooks, titmice and buzzards. The land between the woodland and the canal is a wetland area with lakes, shallows and islands creating an ideal habitat for dragonflies, little egrets and sandpipers. Access to the canal is via a new footbridge.

## 10 Western Gap

The landscape to the west of the canal is divided into large open fields surrounding Begbroke Science Park which is screened by mature vegetation. These fields have substantial hedges with mature trees and provide a green gap between Kidlington, Yarnton and Begbroke.



Figure 2.26 Oxford Canal-canal boat moorings near Roundham Lock



Figure 2.27 Kidlington Fields- Footpaths through Kidlington fields



Figure 2.28 Kidlington Fields- Distinctive views towards St Marys church

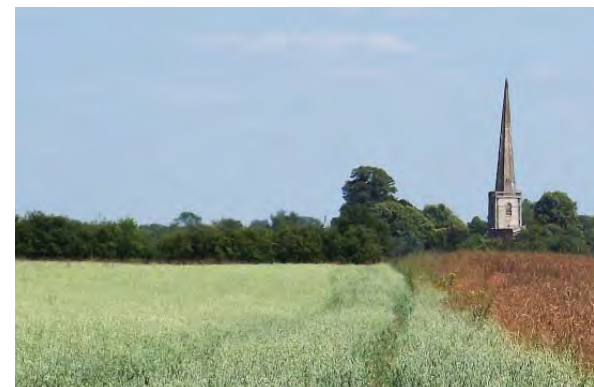


Figure 2.29 Stratfield Brake sports facilities

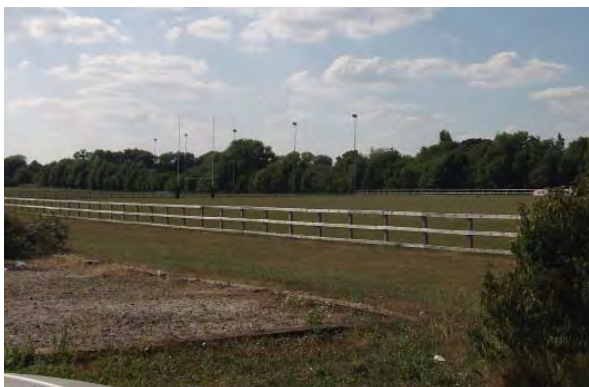


Figure 2.30 Western Gap- large open fields surrounding Begbroke



Science Park  
Figure 2.31 Long views to St Mary's Church

## 2.5 Views and setting

### 2.5.1 Village edges

Kidlington is an ‘inset’ village within Oxford’s Green Belt which tightly encircles the built up area. The protection of the Green Belt has prevented coalescence of settlements and preserved the integrity of the village and ensured the retention of Kidlington’s landscape setting.

The western edge of the village is strongly defined by the canal. Development has not extended beyond the canal and the area is liable to flooding. To the west, the railway forms a further barrier, separating Kidlington from Yarnton. Yarnton Road / Sandy Lane is the only vehicle route crossing the canal and railway, the latter by an at grade level crossing.

In contrast, the village’s eastern edge is softer, with back gardens abutting fields which lead down towards the River Cherwell. St Mary’s Church at the eastern end of Church Street marks the eastern end of the village and the start of the footpath network across Kidlington Fields towards the River Cherwell. Views towards the distinctive church spire from the surrounding valley landscape and from Hampton Poyle are particularly characteristic of this area.

To the south east, the boundary of the village is defined by Bicester Road. This long, straight, road has no development frontage and is characterised by a wooded hedge to the south and an avenue of mature poplar trees to the north, hiding the back fences of adjacent homes. There are no streets or footpath connections for around 1km, making this an impenetrable edge.

### 2.5.2 Approaches

Kidlington roundabout forms the ‘gateway’ to the village from the south and provides access to Oxford Road which is fronted by homes and a large Sainsbury’s. Stratfield Brake sports grounds (hidden from views by vegetation) and Oxford Parkway station / Water Eaton park & ride are located within the otherwise open landscape to the south.

The approach to the village from the north on the A4260 is more gradual, starting with glimpses of the canal, the Langford Lane turn-off and Highwayman Hotel before the road travels over the rail bridge and enters the main settlement.

From the A44 to the north-west the approach is via Langford Lane past the London Oxford Airport, Campsfield House and business estates.

Approaching Bicester Road from the east, the gateway to the village is marked by the Harvester pub, which fronts the junction with Water Eaton Lane.



Figure 2.32 High Street clock tower



Figure 2.33 Aircraft on view from Langford Lane



### 2.5.3 Key views and landmarks

The village has few notable landmarks which have an impact beyond their immediate setting:

- The spire of St Mary's is visible from all directions across St Marys and Kidlington fields and from Hampton Poyle. It is the village's most distinctive and identifiable landmark.
- Within the Village Centre, the most prominent building is the square clock tower which sits at the Oxford Road / High Street and is a visible landmark from Oxford Road to the south.
- The aircraft are visible at London Oxford Airport from Langford Lane.
- Long distance views within much of the village are restricted as a result of the cul-de-sac / curving layouts of many of the residential estates, which make orientation and legibility difficult. Where estates back onto the canal's eastern edge the overgrown vegetation and buildings prevent clear views of the water. There are small pockets of green space where the canal can be viewed.

Longer distance views are available in the following locations:

- At the northern gateway to the village, the canal towpath widens and the vegetation is less dense allowing longer views down the canal and across the countryside, and to the canal from Banbury Road.
- The footpath running across the ridge of higher land at Kidlington Fields offers wide ranging views across open countryside and a direct view of the church spire.
- From the western towpath of the canal there are curving, enclosed views along the canal itself and filtered short distance views into adjacent fields to the west. Begbroke Science Park is visible from footpaths heading west due to its elevated position, but is partially screened by field boundary planting.
- Along the straight sections of Oxford Road, Bicester Road and Yarnton Lane.

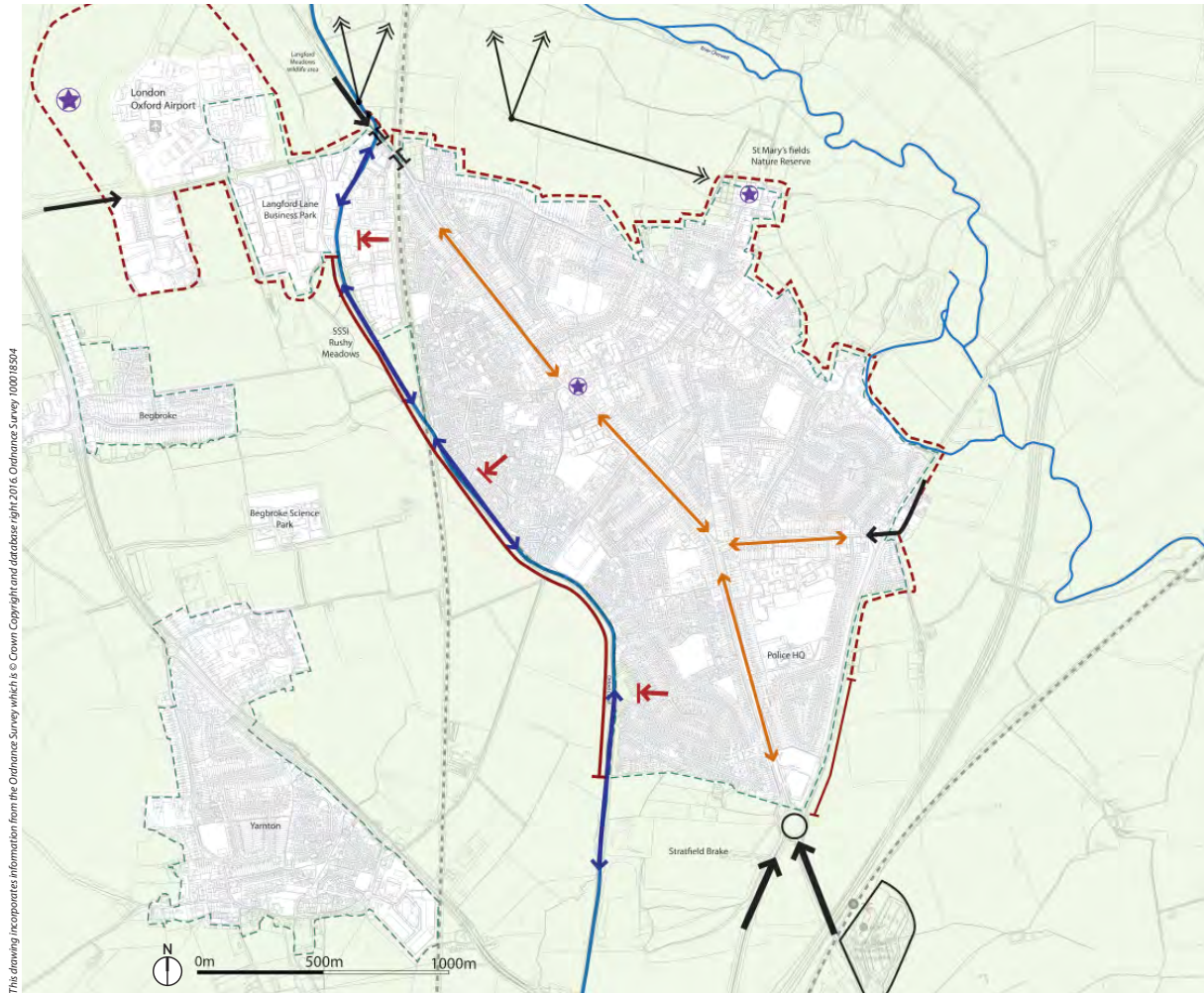
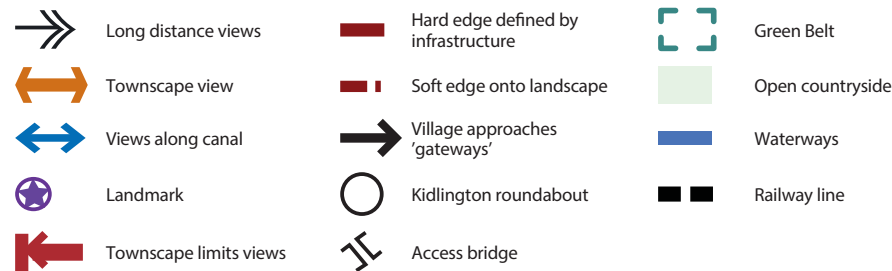


Figure 2.34 Views and approaches



# 3.0 Green infrastructure

## 3.1 Introduction

Green Infrastructure is a term used to describe networks of green spaces, habitats and waterways that support biodiversity and provide recreation and amenity. Kidlington is relatively well served by green infrastructure particularly sports and recreation grounds, wetlands and other natural green spaces along the canal and river corridors. However deficiencies in some types of public open space provision have been identified.

The River Cherwell and Oxford Canal are important green infrastructure corridors for biodiversity and human movement connecting Kidlington towards Oxford and giving access to the wider countryside beyond. Within the settlement, planted gardens, public spaces, rights of way and trees create localised networks of green infrastructure.

## 3.2 Planning Policy Context

A number of existing deficiencies and future shortfalls in green space provision have been identified in Kidlington. **Local Plan Policy Villages 4:** Meeting the Need for Open Space, Sport and Recreation states:

*'In terms of addressing existing deficiencies in Kidlington, based on the findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy and Green Space Strategy (as updated by the 2011 Open space Update) land would need to be allocated for the following if possible:*

- 1 new junior football pitch
- A park ideally on the northern outskirts of Kidlington
- 11.29 ha of amenity open space with priority provision in South ward
- 1.51ha of allotments.

*The Playing Pitch and Green Space Strategy estimated that the following additional provision was required to meet needs to 2026:*

- 1 adult football pitch
- 4 junior football pitches
- 5 mini-soccer pitches
- 0.4ha park ideally on the northern outskirts of Kidlington
- 0.1ha natural/semi-natural green space
- 0.4ha amenity open space
- 0.2ha allotments.

*These strategies were formulated before the amount and preferred distribution of development in the District for an extended plan period had been established, and as a result future needs will need to be updated to cover the period through to 2031'.*

The Oxford Canal is an iconic historic structure running the length of the District and is of historic, ecological and recreational significance.

**Policy ESD16** states:

*'We will protect and enhance the Oxford Canal corridor which passes south to north through the District as a green transport route, significant industrial heritage, tourism attraction and major leisure facility through the control of development. The length of the Oxford Canal through Cherwell District is a designated Conservation Area and proposals which would be detrimental to its character or appearance will not be permitted. The biodiversity value of the canal corridor will be protected.*

*We will support proposals to promote transport, recreation, leisure and tourism related uses of the Canal where appropriate, as well as supporting enhancement of the canal's active role in mixed used development in urban settings. We will ensure that the towpath alongside the canal becomes an accessible long distance trail for all users, particularly for walkers, cyclists and horse riders where appropriate. Other than appropriately located small scale car parks and picnic facilities, new facilities for canal users should be located within or immediately adjacent to settlements'.*

-  Green Belt
-  National Cycle Network
-  Public Rights of Way
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
-  District Wildlife Sites
-  Local Wildlife Sites
-  Woodland Trust Sites
-  Species of Principal Importance (NERC S41 Act)
-  Conservation Target Areas
-  Allotments
-  Amenity Green Space
-  Cemeteries and Churchyards
-  Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace
-  Outdoor Sports Facilities



Figure 3.1 Green infrastructure

### 3.3 Waterways

Kidlington is situated between the River Cherwell and Oxford Canal (which follows the route of Kingsbridge Brook) and Rowel Brook. The waterways support an abundance of wildlife including a variety of bird species and the endangered water vole.

#### 3.3.1 Oxford Canal

Oxford Canal has a total length of 77 miles with 43 locks and 1 tunnel providing a historic link between Birmingham and London which can be covered in approximately a one week cruise. On route it meanders through picturesque Oxfordshire countryside from its source at Hawesbury Village Junction near Coventry through a number of settlements; Rugby, Brauston, Napton, Cropredy, Banbury, Heyford, Kidlington and Oxford. It was opened in sections between 1774 and 1790 to transport coal from Coventry to Oxford and London. Today the waterway is a popular leisure route for boaters including private leisure boats, holiday and day hire of narrow boats whilst the canal towpath provides walkers and cyclists scenic routes through the countryside

Following an appraisal, the length of the canal through Cherwell District was designated as a Conservation Area in October 2012. The conservation area boundary has been drawn to include the towpath and towpath hedge, canal related earthworks and features including historic locks, and woodland. In terms of recreation, the canal is popular for boaters and anglers. A public footpath runs the length of the canal and a section of the route is a public bridleway. The canal and towpath is owned and maintained by the Canal and River Trust, but the responsibility for planning matters lies with the District Council. This policy for the Oxford Canal draws on the recent Design and Conservation Strategy (2012) and reflects its status as a conservation area.

The majority of the settlements it passes through provide popular mooring spots for narrow boats. Kidlington provides permanent residential moorings but there is a lack of temporary moorings for visitors, although these are provided to the north at Thrupp alongside The Jolly Boatman canal side pub. Other facilities at Thrupp include boat servicing, boat hire and Annie's tearooms.

#### 3.3.2 River Cherwell

The River Cherwell is a major tributary of the River Thames, flowing from the source at Hellidon near Daventry meandering through Banbury, Upper Heyford and Kidlington and through unspoilt natural landscapes and often meeting the Oxford Canal. In Oxford, the river is popular for leisure activities including punting, rowing and canoeing.

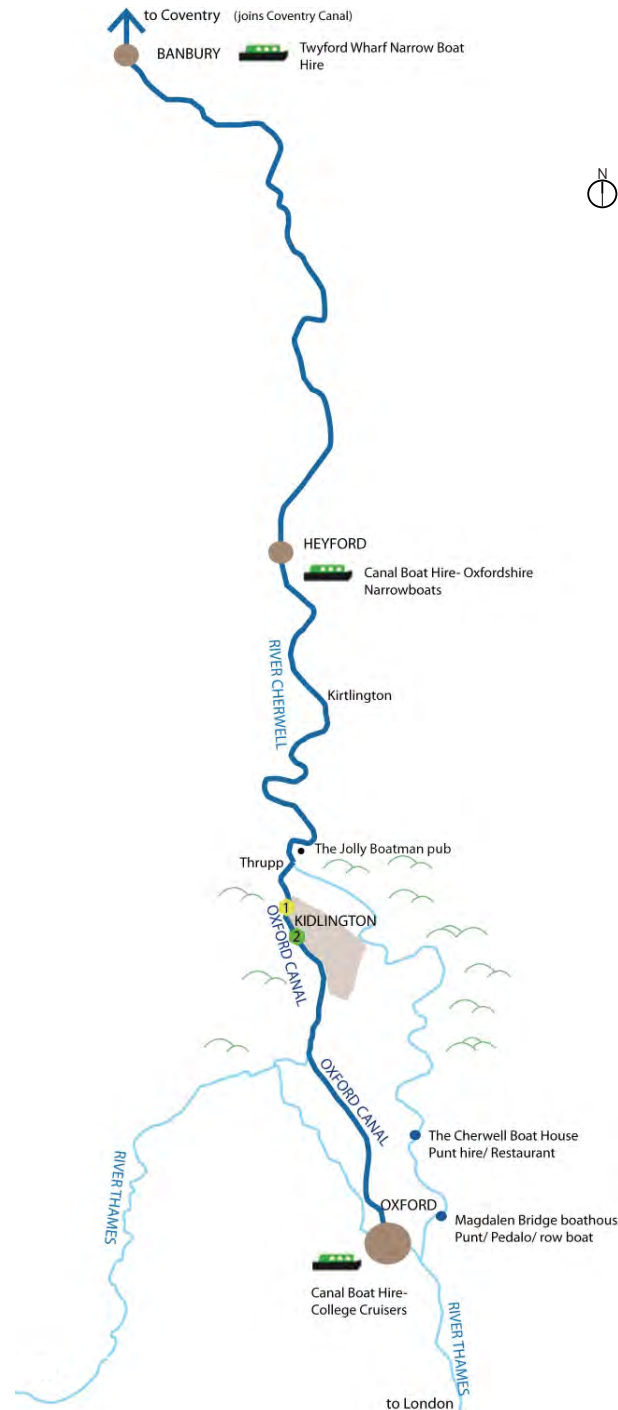


Figure 3.6 Waterway network



Figure 3.2 Canal boat on Oxford canal. Source: <http://www.twyfordwharfnarrowboats.co.uk>



Figure 3.3 Oxford punting. Source: [www.oxfordpunting.co.uk](http://www.oxfordpunting.co.uk)



Figure 3.4 Canal boat mooring



Figure 3.5 Roundham Lock

### 3.4 Flood Risk

The land surrounding the River Cherwell and Oxford Canal is at high risk of flooding, situated within the Environment Agency Flood Zone 3 (1:100 year or greater probability of flooding).

There are a number of properties at risk of fluvial flooding to the east of Kidlington, although Mill Street, parts of Mill End, Watermead, Cherwell Avenue, Queens Avenue, Edinburgh Drive, Springfield Road, Waverley Avenue, Lovelace Drive and Kings Way Drive are protected by Environmental Agency (EA) flood defences.

Surface flooding is a risk particularly on the western side along the canal edge where large areas of residential dwellings fall within the surface flood risk zone.

### 3.5 Biodiversity

#### 3.5.1 Lower Cherwell Valley Conservation Target Area

Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) in Oxfordshire have been mapped by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) in consultation with local authorities and nature conservation organisations in Oxfordshire. The Target Areas have been identified to focus work to restore biodiversity at a landscape scale through the maintenance, restoration and creation of UK BAP priority habitats, and this is their principle aim. Conservation Target Areas represent the areas of greatest opportunity for strategic biodiversity improvement in the District and as such development will be expected to contribute to the achievement of the aims of the target areas through avoiding habitat fragmentation and enhancing biodiversity.

Part of the Lower Cherwell Valley Conservation Target Area (CTA) lies within the area covered by Kidlington Framework Masterplan. The CTA is characterised by River Meadowlands with small areas of Clay Vale. Along the canal at Kidlington there are small areas of Lowland Village Farmlands and Alluvial Lowland. (Please refer to figure 3.1).

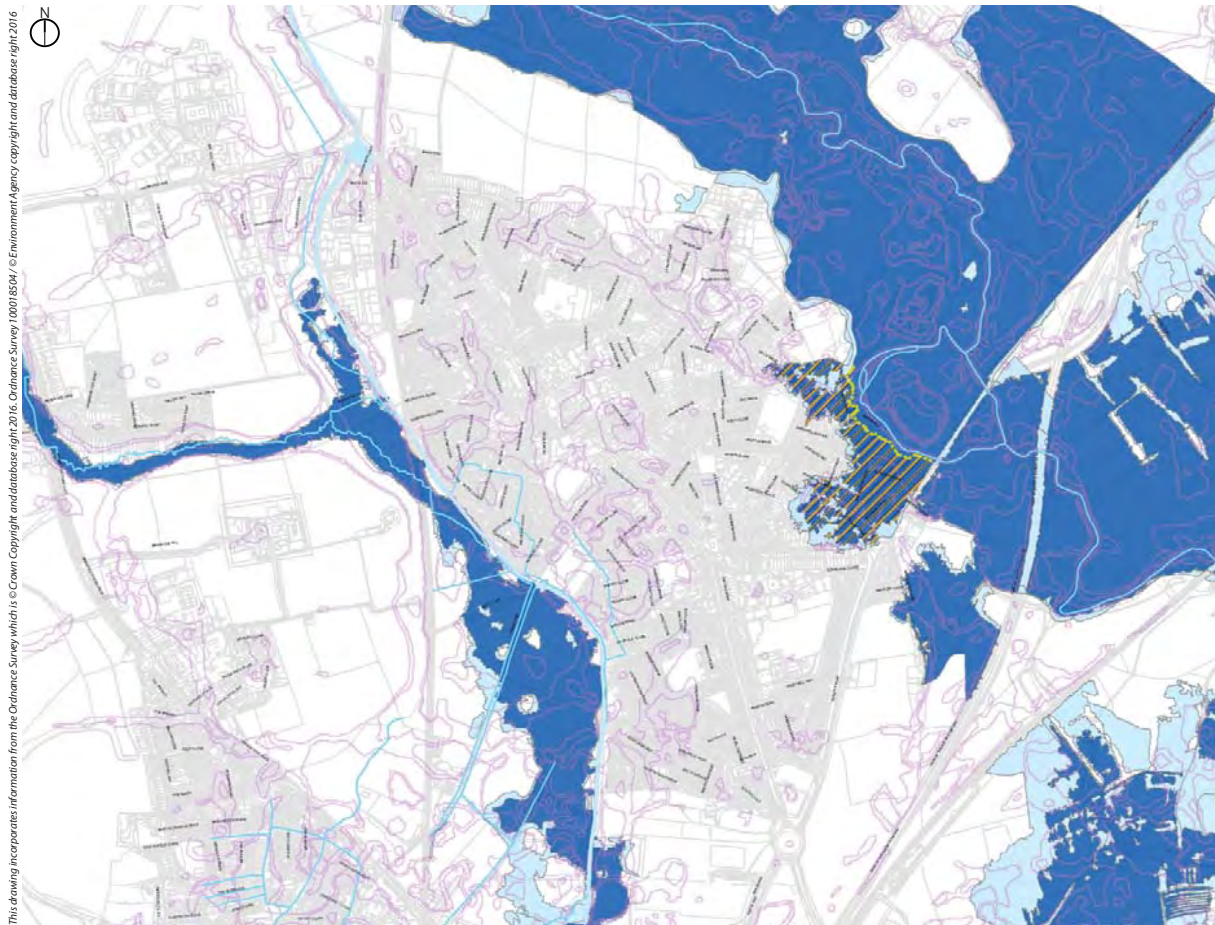
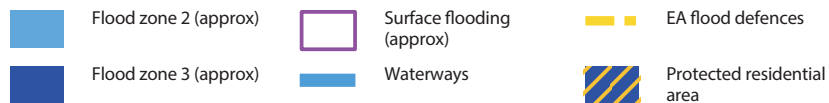


Figure 3.7 Flood risk. Based on Environment Agency EA Flood Zones, 2016





Principal features of biodiversity interest within the CTA comprise:

- **Reedbed:** there are areas in the area east of Kidlington and an area has been created next to the canal south of Kidlington.
- **The canal south:** the main site is Rushy Meads SSSI at Kidlington. There are remnant areas in the meadows east of Kidlington, in a meadow near Pigeon Lock and canal side fields at Yarnton.
- Some parts of the area are floodplain grazing marsh, such as Langford Meadows, which is wet grassland and some meadows near Yarnton.
- **Scrub:** a Cherwell Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat. The main site is St. Mary's Field Parish Nature Reserve at Kidlington.
- **Species:** the Oxford Canal is a key site for water vole. The area holds populations of BAP bird species including reed bunting, skylark yellowhammer and grey partridge. Lapwing and curlew have declined.

General targets for maintenance, restoration and creation of habitats have been set for each area, to be achieved through a combination of biodiversity project work undertaken by a range of organisations, agri-environment schemes and biodiversity enhancements secured in association with development.

The targets associated with this CTA may be summarised as follows:

- **Lowland meadow:** management, restoration and creation.
- **Floodplain grazing marsh:** management, restoration and creation (for breeding waders in particular).
- **Lowland Fen (including swamp):** management and restoration.
- **Reedbed:** management and creation.
- **Rivers:** management and restoration (including management for water vole).

These targets are in the process of being made more specific in terms of the amount of each habitat type to be secured within each CTA.

Biodiversity enhancements to be sought in association with development could include the restoration or maintenance of habitats through appropriate management, new habitat creation to link fragmented habitats, or a financial contribution towards biodiversity initiatives in the CTA.

### 3.5.2 Important Habitats

Priority habitats are recognised as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity (see figure 3.1). Within Kidlington the following areas include priority habitat and support priority species including water vole, reed bunting, skylark and grey partridge:

- **Rushy Meadows:** generally lowland meadow with an area of fen and swamp. The importance of this area is recognised through its designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest which are protected by legislation
- **Langford Meadows Local Wildlife Site**
- **Meadows west of the Oxford Canal Local Wildlife Site**
- **The River Cherwell and Oxford Canal**
- **St Mary's Fields Nature Reserve (proposed Local Wildlife Site with two adjacent meadows)**
- **Branson's Lake and Scrub (proposed Local Wildlife Site)**
- **Parkhill Copse District Wildlife Site**
- In addition, areas of woodland located north of the Moors, Kidlington and west of Hampton Poyle are identified as Thrupp Community Woodland District Wildlife Site
- Woodland to the south of Stratfield Brake playing fields is managed by the Woodland Trust and so is a protected habitat area for a variety of wildlife species as well as being identified as a District Wildlife Site.

### 3.6 Natural and semi-natural green spaces

The attractive natural landscape which surrounds Kidlington is a significant asset to the village and is accessible via footpaths and cycleways. Further details of these routes are provided in section 5.0.

Four publicly accessible sites of natural and semi natural green spaces are defined in the Cherwell District Open Space Update 2011 for protection: Park Hill Copse, St Mary's Fields, Thrupp Woods and Stratfield Brake. The review notes that there is no quantitative shortfall in provision, however the quality and access to sites could be improved to enhance their value to the local community.

### 3.7 Sports and recreation

Kidlington has a range of amenity and recreation facilities with a variety of different typologies ranging from small pocket parks to formal recreation grounds. Consultation undertaken in preparing the Framework Masterplan highlighted the importance to Kidlington residents of access to localised recreation spaces and how well-used and highly valued the existing spaces are for various types of formal and informal recreation. There are clear aspirations for further improvements to the quality of the open space, sport and recreation provision at Kidlington.

The majority of these spaces are used primarily for outdoor sports including football pitches, rugby pitches and running tracks, with many containing children's playgrounds which are inspected on a regular basis by Cherwell rangers to ensure they are high quality and safe. There are six allotment sites across the village.

Larger sports and recreational open spaces within Kidlington are owned by Kidlington Parish Council. These include:

- **Exeter Close:** contains a small civic garden adjacent to Exeter Hall, with a large open area for informal play to the rear, together with a football pitch, Football Foundation funded sports pavilion, multi-use court and children's play area.
- **Ron Groves Park, Maple Avenue,** leased and managed by Kidlington Recreational Trust. The park contains two football pitches, a pavilion and children's play area. It is the home ground of the Garden City Football Club.
- **Parkhill Recreation Ground, Benmead Road,** leased and managed by Kidlington Recreational Trust. A small area of woodland, two small pitches, plus children's play area and multi-use court. The site has no toilet or shop facilities for the football pitch users but does contain a small hall used by a children's nursery.
- **Orchard Park Recreation Ground, Evans Lane,** leased and managed by Kidlington Recreational Trust. The ground has a children's play area, youth shelters and 3-4 football pitches. It is the home ground of Kidlington Youth Football Club who manages the pavilion.

- Yarnton Road, an NLS Step 4 Stadium leased to Kidlington Recreation Trust and sub-leased to Kidlington Football Club who play here. The adjacent social club is leased by Kidlington Football Club.
- Stratfield Brake, this purpose built sports facility includes a pavilion, two cricket grounds, three rugby pitches, a football pitch. It is managed by a joint committee of Kidlington Parish Council and Gosford and Water Eaton Parish Council. It is the home of Kidlington Cricket Club, Gosford All Blacks Rugby Club and Kidlington Running and Athletics Club . Existing users include Garden City FC (10 teams), Kidlington Youth FC (23 teams).

Local Plan Policy Villages 4: Meeting the Need for Open Space, Sport and Recreation identifies the current shortfall in provision and likely future requirements for open space and sports facilities based on the findings of Cherwell’s Playing Pitch Strategy and Green Space Strategy (as updated by the 2011 Open space Update). Full details of this policy are provided in section 3.2.

Further pitches, parks, natural space, amenity space and allotments will be required to meet future needs (see table 3.1).

### 3.7.1 Football Clubs

Kidlington has around 8 adult and youth grassroots football clubs which play at the green spaces listed above.

The following sites have received Football Foundation investment in the past 14 years for a variety of projects and are subject to a 21 year funding agreement for the continued provision of football:

- Evans Lane
- Exeter Close
- Kidlington FC
- Orchard Recreation Ground
- Park Hill Recreation Ground
- Ron Groves Park
- Stratfield Brake

In line with the FA National Games Strategy (2015-19) participation objective of more people playing football more often, Oxfordshire FA have published the following growth and retention targets for Cherwell District:

- 10% increase in Mini Soccer Teams
- 5% increase in Youth Male Teams
- Retain (and increase) Youth Female Teams
- Retain Adult Male Teams
- Retain (and increase) Adult Female Teams
- 15% increase in Male Disability Teams
- Retain Female Disability Teams

A new Playing Pitch Strategy is being prepared by the Council in line with updated 2013 Sport England methodology. Any loss of facilities would need to be reprovided on an equivalent or enhanced basis.

Consultation with football club representatives and the Football Association has revealed the following issues:

- Existing pitch provision is dispersed, lacking facilities (particularly at Parkhill, Benmead Road) and at capacity.
- Pitch size requirements range from 5 a-side for younger children to full size adult pitches and a range of sizes in between. Pitches can be designed to be multi-functional.
- There is a lack of available playing and training facilities in highly populated football areas such as Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington and team growth is now under threat due to shortage of space. There are no dedicated cold weather training facilities. Clubs currently hire the astro turf pitch at Gosford Hill but this is not an ideal surface for football and costly to the clubs.
- The heavy use of larger parks by football clubs at the weekends limits their use for general amenity.
- Clubs are managed and (some) run independently and there may be potential for some consolidation or centralisation to assist with revenue, co-location and player progression.
- Kidlington Football Club is currently investing in improvements to their facilities at Yarnton Road to support the club’s growing status. The social club is well used by the wider community and benefits from being located relatively close to the centre of the village.
- Stratford Brake is oversubscribed and offers limited additional potential in terms of capacity and access for players.

Category of Open Space	Current Shortfall of provision in Kidlington (2011 Update)	Green Spaces Strategy Action Plan
Parks & Gardens	6.44 ha	Development park in vicinity of Exeter Hall with additional provision on northern outskirts of village
Amenity Green Space	11.29 ha	Seek to ensure additional amenity green space provision and improve quality of existing spaces especially access
Allotments	1.51 ha	Provide 1.51 ha of space subject to demand
Children & Young Persons	7.5 ha younger children and 2.41 ha older children	Address shortfalls through new equipped play areas and additional play opportunities using other forms of green space. Improve quality of existing play areas

Table 3.1 Sports and recreation shortfall. Source: Cherwell Open Space Update 2011

# 4.0 Community facilities and Village Centre

## 4.1 Planning Policy Context

The Local Plan recognises that it is important that the Village Centre is supported and strengthened to help meet the aspirations of Kidlington and to ensure that the everyday shopping needs of residents are met, avoiding the need for unnecessary journeys to Oxford, Bicester and other destinations. **Policy Kidlington 2: Strengthening Kidlington Village Centre** states:

*'Shopping, leisure and other 'Main Town Centre Uses' will be supported within the boundary of Kidlington Village Centre. Residential development will be supported in appropriate locations in the Village Centre except where it will lead to a loss of retail or other main town centre uses.*

*The change of use of sites used for main town centre uses in the Village Centre for residential development will normally be permitted if proposals contribute significantly to the regeneration of the Village Centre. Mixed use schemes will be encouraged'.*

The 2012 Retail Study showed that significant new development should not be directed to Kidlington but that the centre is in need of some further environmental improvements and the evening economy should be encouraged. It is proposed to expand the geographical area defined as Kidlington Village Centre to include land on the western side of the Oxford Road and other small areas of commercial uses. The exact boundary will be determined in Part 2 of the Local Plan. The aim of the extension is to:

- support the viability and vitality of the existing Village Centre
- encourage economic activity
- assist with the connectivity between the existing Village Centre and the civic, community and green open space at the Exeter Hall area
- contribute to and maximise the benefits of improvements to the character and appearance of the Village Centre and the public realm.

The Council is preparing a new retail study which will inform Local Plan Part 2.



Figure 4.1 Watts Way Piazza and toilets



Figure 4.2 Kidlington Centre shopping mall

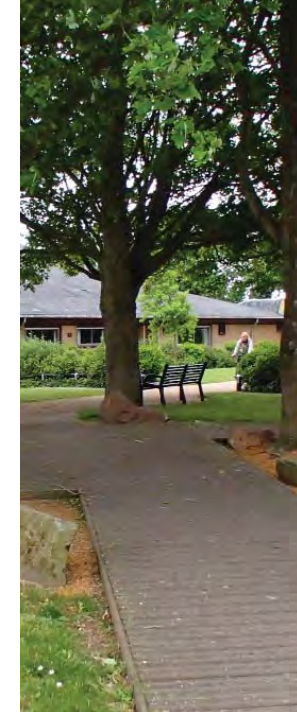


Figure 4.6 Exeter Close



Figure 4.3 High Street public realm



Figure 4.4 Surface car parking



Figure 4.5 View north along Oxford Road towards High Street junction



Figure 4.7 Health centre, Exeter Close

## 4.1 Location of facilities

Kidlington has two large clusters of community and retail facilities, both of which are located on Oxford Road. The first comprises Kidlington Village Centre, including the High Street, Tesco and Kidlington Centre shopping mall, North Kidlington Primary School and the nearby community facilities of Exeter Close. This is located at the geographic centre of the village.

The second cluster is a corridor of facilities, in the southern part of the village, comprising the education and sports facilities around Gosford Hill School, the smaller shopping parades fronting Oxford Road and the Sainsbury's supermarket.

Other facilities are scattered across the village and include:

- Individual convenience shops, pubs and garages
- Day centres associated with sheltered housing
- Churches
- Smaller sports and community club venues e.g. Yarnton Road football club and Kidlington Scouts Centre (Blenheim Road)
- Stratfield Brake which includes club house facilities and sports pitches to the south of the village.

Walking distance isochrones (800m or 10 minute walk) from the larger clusters reveal that central and southern Kidlington and Gosford are well served by community facilities and retail within easy walking distance. In contrast, the north-western and eastern parts of Kidlington are distant from the majority of facilities and schools.

Details of recreation and amenity space provision are provided in section 3.7.

## 4.0 Community facilities and Village Centre

Community facilities:

- 1 Kidlington Library
- 2 Kidlington Brass Band hall
- 3 St John's Ambulance HQ
- 4 Kidlington Baptist Church
- 5 Kidlington Methodist Church
- 6 Kidlington Green Social Club
- 7 Gosford Hill Medical Practice
- 8 Thames Valley Police HQ
- 9 Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centre
- 10 Kidlington Cemetery
- 11 Kidlington St John the Baptist Hall Church
- 12 St Mary's Church
- 13 Kidlington Scout Centre

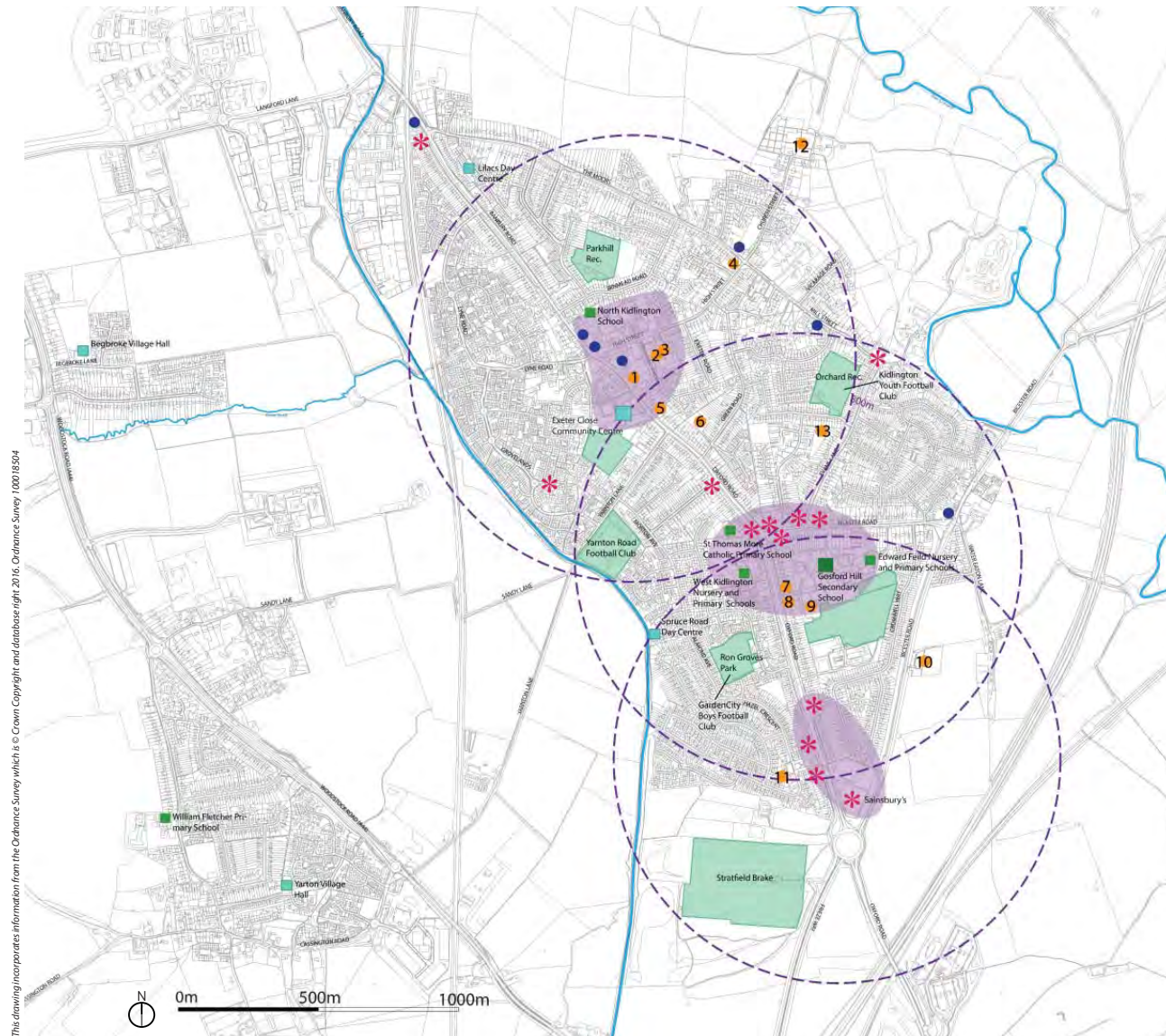


Figure 4.8 Distribution of community facilities and local centres



## 4.2 Village Centre

### 4.2.1 Distribution of land uses

The Village Centre has a mix of retail, office, residential and community uses with large areas of surface car parking to the north and south of High Street.

Primary retail frontage including a high proportion of services is concentrated on the 240m long stretch of High Street, to the west of Oxford Road with secondary retail and pubs on Oxford Road (predominantly on its eastern side). The anchor stores are the Cooperative and Tesco supermarkets located at the middle and eastern ends of the High Street respectively (Tesco makes use of the former Sterling Cinema building). The Village Centre has a small covered mall 'The Kidlington Centre' located opposite the Coop which has a rear entrance from the car park and piazza.

- There is a sudden change of land use from retail to residential to the east of Tesco, with a dramatic drop-off in footfall and activity. At this point the historic village core to the east is not evident.
- The junction of Oxford Road and High Street is dominated by a large Skoda car showroom. This is a prime site with excellent visibility from the main road.

- The pubs and food and drink outlets on Oxford Road offer a small scale 'evening economy'. However there is a lack of arts / cultural venues into the centre to attract evening visitors.
- The majority of retail units have either residential, retail storage or office accommodation above. To the north of High Street a block of apartments has recently been built overlooking the car parks and adjacent to a historic terrace of cottages.
- An important asset is the twice weekly market along High Street and the piazza, and occasional producer and specialist markets which bring vitality, colour and activity to the streetscape. The weekly market is managed by the Kidlington Market Traders Co-operative.
- Community facilities and edge of centre uses such as the Library, Fire Station, Postal Sorting Office and St John's Ambulance HQ are located to the south of the High Street and at Exeter Close. Kidlington North Primary School is located to the north of the High Street with access from Benmead Road.
- Although located outside the Village Centre, the large Sainsbury's supermarket provides a significant amount of convenience and comparison goods floorspace and forms an important part of the retail offer of the village. It serves as a gateway at the south of Kidlington and provides a large number of jobs.



Figure 4.9 Eastern end of High Street



Figure 4.10 Library and 1960s retail parade on the eastern side of Oxford Road



Figure 4.11 Village Centre landuses



Figure 4.12 Village Centre building heights

- Retail/ services/ food & drink (black line denotes primary frontage)
- Retail ground residential above
- Retail ground offices above
- Residential
- Education
- Pubs
- Green space
- Outdoor sports facilities
- Community facilities
- Surface car parking
- Other



Figure 4.13 Entrance to the Kidlington Centre

- 4 storey
- 3 storey
- 2 1/2 storey
- 2 storey
- 1 storey
- Views to landmark
- Landmark



Figure 4.14 Three storey buildings on the southern side of High Street

## 4.2.2 Townscape character

In contrast to other villages and towns with a long history, the townscape of Kidlington's High Street is not based on a fine grained historic Village Centre or Victorian retail parades, neither of which occurred in this location. Instead its townscape is a mixture of 1960s mall development, remnant historic pubs and houses, and modern retail schemes. The result is a rather incoherent arrangement of different styles, building heights (from 2 to 4 storeys), materials and roofscapes reflecting the piecemeal manner in which the High Street has been developed.

The quality of buildings on High Street varies considerably. There are a number of poor quality older properties on the northern side of the High Street which offer potential for redevelopment fronting the square onto Oxford Road.

Unfortunately several recent developments are of poor design quality, lacking attention to details, materials, roofscape and scale. In contrast the clock tower development at the junction with Oxford Road has created a distinctive landmark in local stone which now defines the entrance to the High Street.

On Oxford Road, to the north of the junction with High Street, a cluster of historic properties and public houses front the street. This area is let down by poor quality public realm, narrow pavements and highways clutter but has the potential to become an area of high townscape value.

To the south of the junction, there is a contrast between the 1960s three storey retail parade to the east and the businesses and remaining detached residential bungalows to the west which sit on large plots, set back from the road.

## 4.2.3 Public realm

### 4.2.3.1 High Street

Lack of control over vehicle movements and parking in High Street has long been a contentious issue for many residents and shoppers. In the mid 1990s the section of High Street to the east of Sterling Approach Road was partially pedestrianised creating a widened footway on the northern side of the street and a shared surface carriageway. Traffic on this stretch proved difficult to manage and

dissatisfaction with the situation was highlighted in the Village Health Check Survey of local people in 2007. In April 2012 a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was implemented to fully pedestrianise this stretch of High Street between the hours of 10am and 4:30pm.

Today, Sterling Approach Road provides the only access from Oxford Road into the Village Centre. To the east of Sterling Approach Road, High Street remains open to traffic in both directions, providing access to car parking to the north of the High Street and bus stops.

The public realm is characterised by block paving and setts with mosaic insets, raised stone planters, and heavy wooden bollards and hanging basket columns. A small structure / folly with a tiled roof marks the eastern end of High Street – this is an interesting structure but not large enough to comfortably accommodate seats or activities, and clutters the view along the High Street from Oxford Road. To the north of the High Street a small public piazza has been created which leads to the car park and houses the (visually dominant) toilets and recycling bins.

Despite the recent pedestrianisation the carriageway is still demarcated by double yellow lines which detract from the overall character of the public realm and give the impression that traffic is permitted. Whilst the TRO has helped to create a more comfortable shopping environment there is concern that it is being abused by some motorists. A rising bollard has recently been installed which has helped to alleviate this problem.

Improvements have recently taken place to the Watts Way Piazza funded by the Government's 'Portas Pilot' money. This has included a screen around the public toilets, new planting and basket columns. Further improvements funded by the New Homes Bonus are planned including installing electricity for use by the market and to enable live entertainments.

### 4.2.3.2 Oxford Road

The materials and character of the High Street public realm have not been extended onto Oxford Road. Here the public realm is dominated by the highways function of the A4260 and pedestrian crossings are limited. The key view along the High Street from Oxford Road is dominated by the garish road markings of the yellow box junction. A service road provides parking in front of the retail parade.

## 4.2.4 Parking

Kidlington Village Centre has large areas of surface car parking to the north and south of the High Street. This has a detrimental effect on the image of the Village Centre when approached from Sterling Road Approach and Forester's Way.

The Council manages 145 car parking spaces in the Village Centre at Watts Way to the north of High Street. These comprise 85 short stay (max. 2 hours, no return) and 60 long stay (unlimited stay) which are all free of charge.

Tesco provides a further 140+ spaces on adjacent land and the Co-op superstore around 100+ spaces to the south of the High Street, also free of charge. The three Oxford Road pubs each have car parks and there is additional public parking on the service road on the eastern side of Oxford Road.

There are areas of permit holder only car parking, rear servicing and private car parks to the north and south of the High Street serving offices, retail and other uses.

Around a further 90 spaces are provided nearby at Exeter Close associated with community facilities.

The Council has not undertaken formal car park surveys but approximate occupancy for their managed car parks is reported to be:

- Long stay – usually 100% occupancy
- Short stay – usually 50% occupancy, except Friday (market day) when it increases to around 80%.

Current occupancy levels for other Village Centre car parks are not known.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the long stay car parks are used by commuters as an informal 'park and ride' service for onward travel by bus into Oxford and as a result occupancy levels do not reflect the car parking need generated by Village Centre uses.

A review of Council owned main car parks is currently in preparation by the Council. Subject to the findings of this study, further surveys of Village Centre car parks may be required to understand in detail the potential to reduce car parking or introduce measures to prevent use by commuters. This could potentially result in the release of land for development and improvements to the setting of the centre.





Figure 4.15 Village Centre townscape quality

- Listed Buildings
- High townscape value
- Detractors
- Extensive surface car parking/ service areas
- Conservation area



Figure 4.17 Poor quality design of prominent recent schemes



Figure 4.18 Parade of shops to the east of Oxford Road



Figure 4.16 Village Centre movement and access

- Vehicle / pedestrian access
- Pedestrian only
- Car parks
- Barrier to movement
- Pedestrianised core area
- Bus stops
- Pedestrian crossings



Figure 4.19 Box junction markings dominate the Oxford Road junction



Figure 4.20 Double yellow lines remain despite High Street pedestrianisation

#### 4.2.5 Village Centre retail provision

The Cherwell Retail Study (CBRE 2012) provides an assessment of current retail provision in the District and the performance of existing centres. The study refers to the Health Check undertaken in 2006 which found that Kidlington operates as a local shopping centre which primarily serves customers from the local vicinity and fulfils the role of 'top-up' or convenience shopping. The Village Centre has a total of 11,446 sqm of gross retail floorspace over 61 units (Goad Centre Report, 2011). The retail composition and comparison with the national average is summarised in the tables right (top).

Kidlington is dominated by independent retailers and lacks key multiple occupiers, particularly fashion operators. Kidlington falls just below the national average in the proportion of comparison units and 9.42% below the national average in terms of comparison floorspace. The majority of comparison retailers are independent and concentrated on the High Street and in the Kidlington Centre.

Service units account for approximately half of all the retail units and represent the largest retail category in Kidlington centre. Current provision remains above the national average by approximately 10%. These uses dominate the High Street and Oxford Road and comprise a number of offices, banks, a dental surgery and betting office – many of which do not have an active shop frontage. This has a negative impact on the vitality of the High Street and particularly on the night time economy.

The convenience offer comprises the Co-op, Tesco and Iceland stores. Representation remains above the national average.

See section 9.6 for details of current development proposals relating to the Co-op, a decision on which has not been issued.

From a total of 31 key retailers identified by Goad for enhancing the appeal of a centre, Kidlington Village Centre is currently occupied by only two: Superdrug and Tesco. Costa Coffee has recently opened and appears to be a popular venue. Footfall is highest around the Co-op and Tesco and between these stores and the adjacent car parks and declines significantly in the evenings due to a limited food and drink offer. A market operated by Kidlington Market Association is held on Fridays and Saturdays on the High Street and comprises an average of 12 stalls offering a range of produce.

The 2010 Retail Study Update (CBRE) indicates there is capacity to support additional convenience and comparison retail floorspace in Kidlington in the period up to 2026 (the figures in the 2010 study are dated but provide a guide). This is summarised in the table 4.2. The study estimates there is capacity for 3,211 m<sup>2</sup> net additional convenience floorspace by 2026 if the overtrading of existing convenience stores is addressed or 1,092 m<sup>2</sup> if no allowance is made. In terms of comparison floorspace, the study concludes there is capacity to support up to 7,941 m<sup>2</sup> net additional floorspace by 2026 if allowance was made for overtrading of existing comparison floorspace or 2,557 m<sup>2</sup> net if overtrading is not addressed.

The 2012 Retail Study showed that significant new development should not be directed to Kidlington as this could change its role and the market it serves but that the centre is in need of some further environmental improvements and the evening economy should be encouraged. In qualitative terms, the study concluded that the centre would benefit from some improvements to the environment (such as new street furniture) and the Council may wish to consider encouraging food and drink uses to improve the vitality of the centre in the evening.

The Local Plan identifies the western side of Oxford Road between Exeter Close and Lyne Road as the location for expansion of town centre uses.

Retail Category	No Units	% Total	National Average (%)	Variance (%)
Convenience	7	11.48	8.57	+2.91
Comparison	24	39.34	41.43	-2.09
Service/Food/Drink	28	45.9	35.21	+10.69
Vacant	2	3.28	13.64	-10.36
Total	61			

Retail Category	Floorspace	% Total	National Average (%)	Variance (%)
Convenience	3,493	30.52	17.11	+13.41
Comparison	4,255	37.18	46.60	-9.42
Service/Food/Drink	3,521	30.76	23.28	+7.48
Vacant	177	1.54	11.98	-10.44
Total	11,446			

Table 4.1 Uses in Kidlington village centre by floorspace. Source: Experian Goad Centre Study, March 2011

Net capacity for new shop floorspace	2016	2021	2026
Convenience	2,414	2,745	3,211
Comparison	4,349	5,660	7,941

Table 4.2 Future Retail floorspace capacity 2010 assessment. Source: 2010 Retail Update (CBRE)



Figure 4.21 Kidlington Centre

### 4.3 Exeter Close

Exeter Close, just to the south west of the Village Centre, accommodates a number of community and health facilities in a range of standalone buildings. Recent landscape improvements have created a much stronger entrance to the site from Oxford Road; however the area still feels relatively disconnected from the High Street. Facilities comprise:

- Exeter Hall: hall and meeting rooms, Kidlington and District information centre, CAB, Cherwell District Council and Kidlington Parish Council offices
- Exeter Close Health Centre: Key Medical Practice, Pharmacy, Family Planning Clinic, NHS Dentist surgery
- Forum Youth Centre – used by Meadowcroft Academy (with multi-use outdoor games area)
- Kaleidoscope Children’s Centre: provision for a variety of activities, adult learning, parenting courses and drop-ins for families with children under 5. (This service is to be withdrawn in January 2017)
- Exeter Close Pavilion (Kidlington Forum Table Tennis Club), plus football changing and various sports and leisure classes and activities
- Bowls Club
- Tennis Courts
- Exeter Close has a large area of surface car parking, recycling facilities and landscaped garden area. It adjoins a football pitch/recreation field and a children’s play area.

The buildings are of varied quality and include temporary buildings and are mostly single storey. There is considerable opportunity to develop a more integrated and efficient layout, increasing the available floorspace and releasing land for new uses.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>1</b> Exeter Hall: Parish Council offices and information centre | <b>7</b> Bowling green                              |
| <b>2</b> Health centre and dental clinic                            | <b>8</b> Children’s playground and recreation field |
| <b>3</b> Youth centre   | <b>9</b> Full size football pitch                   |
| <b>4</b> Kaleidoscope children’s centre with outdoor space          | <b>10</b> Landscaped amenity space                  |
| <b>5</b> Exeter Close Pavilion                                      | Surface car park                                    |
| <b>6</b> Tennis court and basketball court                          | Vehicle access                                      |
|   | Pedestrian access                                   |
|   | Line of trees                                       |



Figure 4.22 Distribution of facilities at Exeter Close



Figure 4.23 Exeter Hall



Figure 4.24 Bowling Green



Figure 4.25 Landscape setting

## 4.4 Education

There are four primary schools and a secondary school in Kidlington and a further primary school in nearby Islip. Based on the analysis contained in the Pupil Place Plan 2015-2019 (Oxfordshire County Council 2015), there are pressures on primary school places. There was exceptionally high demand for Reception Places in 2014-2015 and whilst forecasts indicate demand will subside slightly, Kidlington is expected to have well below the level of spare spaces required to respond to fluctuations in demand. Action is being taken at Edward Feild Primary School to accommodate higher pupil numbers and permanent expansion will follow if pupil numbers are sustained. Forecasts indicate Gosford Hill School may need to increase admission numbers over the next few years but the total accommodation capacity should support the expected level of demand. Details of existing capacity are summarised in the Table 4.3.

Forecast demand is summarised in Table 4.4. The plan takes into account housing sites identified by Cherwell District Council as developable and deliverable and forecast demand is based on development of 290 new homes in the period 2011-2020 in Kidlington, Yarnton, Gosford and Water Eaton (Pupil Place Plan, 2015). However, changes in the local demographic profile may result in pupil numbers growing faster than forecast and the requirement for school expansion will be dependent on distribution of housing growth in Kidlington and the Rural Villages.

	Pupil Numbers October 2012	Pupil Numbers October 2015	Capacity May 2015	Comments
Dr South's Primary School	86	95	105	
Edward Field Primary School	299	315	296	Agreed to take over admission numbers in 2014 and 2015 to meet local population pressures. Permanent expansion expected if pressure continues
North Kidlington PS	251	278	315	Capacity significantly dependent on temporary classrooms (90). Admission numbers increased to 45 from 40 in September 2013. Shares site with Magpies Pre-School
St Thomas More PS	199	197	210	
West Kidlington Primary School	385	394	420	Capacity significantly depends on temporary classrooms (120)
Gosford Hill Secondary School	865	861	1221	The 2014 primary to secondary transfer cohort was atypically small
<b>Total</b>	<b>2085</b>	<b>2140</b>	<b>2567</b>	

Table 4.3 Existing School Capacity (Pupil Place Plan (Oxfordshire County Council, 2015))

The Local Plan has identified that due to a lack of spare education capacity in the town, expansion of one of the existing primary schools will be required over the plan period and developer contributions will be sought.

There is one Children's Centre in the Kidlington area, the Kaleidoscope Children's Centre in Exeter Close which offers a crèche, drop in sessions and support plus other sessions with midwives etc. However, this facility is to close in January 2017 as a result of Oxfordshire County Council funding cuts.

Edward Feild Nursery School offers 26 full time equivalent places for pupils aged 3 to 5 and is federated with Edward Feild Primary School. West Kidlington Nursery School offers 26 full time equivalent places for pupils aged 3 to 5 and merged with West Kidlington Primary School following consultation in 2013. There are not enough places for all eligible 2 year old children in the partnership are to access early years entitlement locally. Otherwise, early years sufficiency across the area currently meets needs of the population but additional capacity may be required in response to further population growth.

Through the District Council, Oxfordshire County Council will seek developer contributions to improve or extend existing schools. North Kidlington and West Kidlington Primary Schools and Gosford Hill School are currently dependent on the use of temporary classrooms to accommodate pupils on site.

## 4.5 Health

There have been significant changes in the provision of healthcare services with the introduction of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in April 2013. The Oxfordshire CCG is responsible for commissioning, planning, designing and paying for health services. The Oxfordshire CCG has a budget of £612 million to commission healthcare services. The key priorities are:

- A shift to commissioning for outcomes
- Promoting integrated care through joint working
- Moving care closer to home
- Commissioning patient centred services.

There are two GP Practices in Kidlington: The Key Medical Practice, is located at Exeter Close and the Gosford Hill Medical Centre is located on Oxford Road.

Proposals were drawn up in 2011 for a new medical centre in Exeter Close for the co-location of the existing GP practices and extended clinical provision. These proposals were not progressed and it is understood that further work by health providers is now underway to develop a scheme for the reconfiguration of services at Exeter Close.

	PAN 2015	Pupil numbers Oct. 2014	Forecast pupil numbers 2016/2017	Forecast pupil numbers 2019/2020	Total capacity May 2015 (including temporary accommodation)
Reception	210		191	190	
Primary		1279	1349	1342	1346
Year 7	180		185	194	
Secondary		861	924	1034	1221

Table 4.4 Forecast demand for school places (Pupil Place Plan, Oxfordshire County Council, 2015)