

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

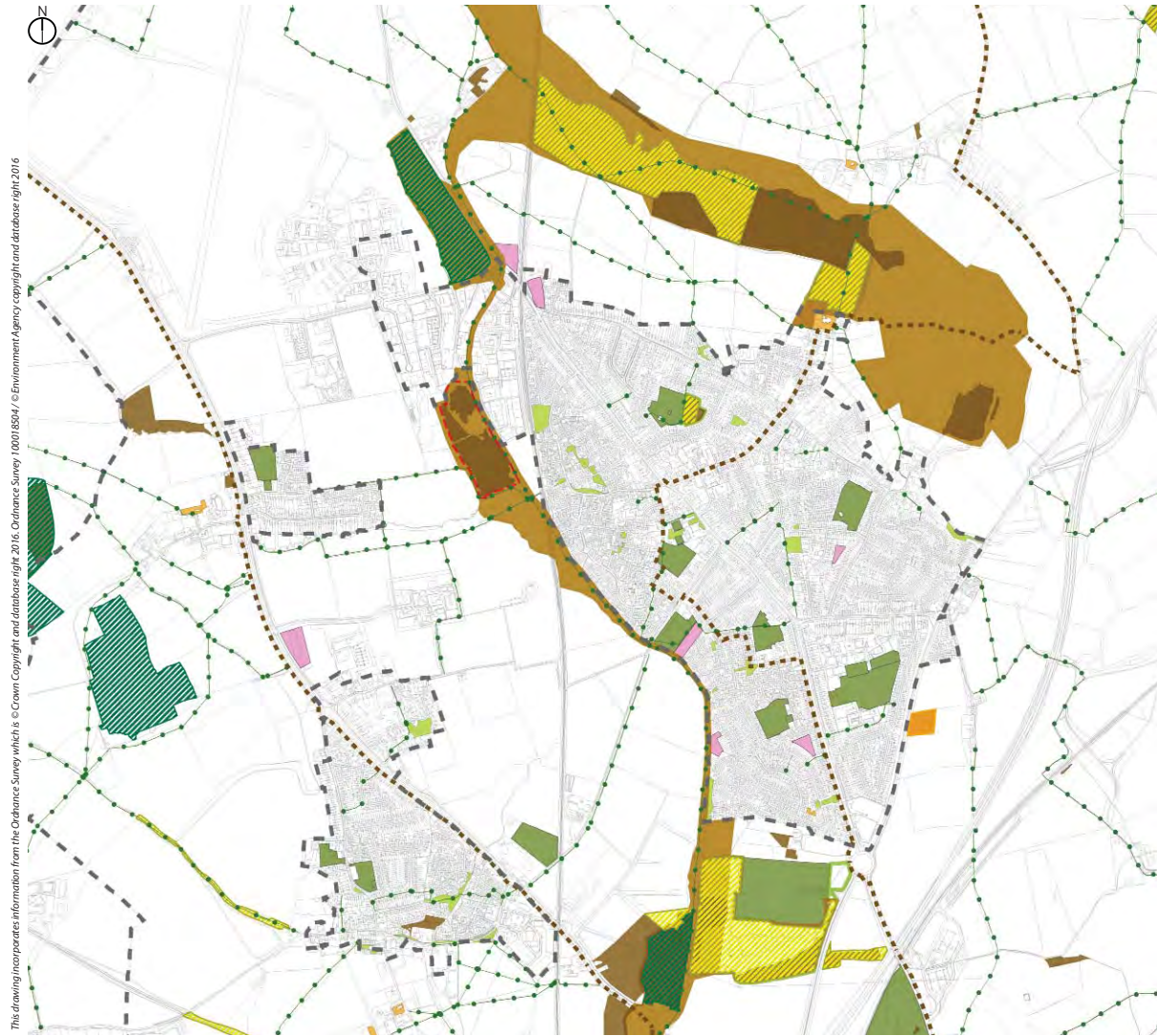


Figure 3.1 Green infrastructure

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.

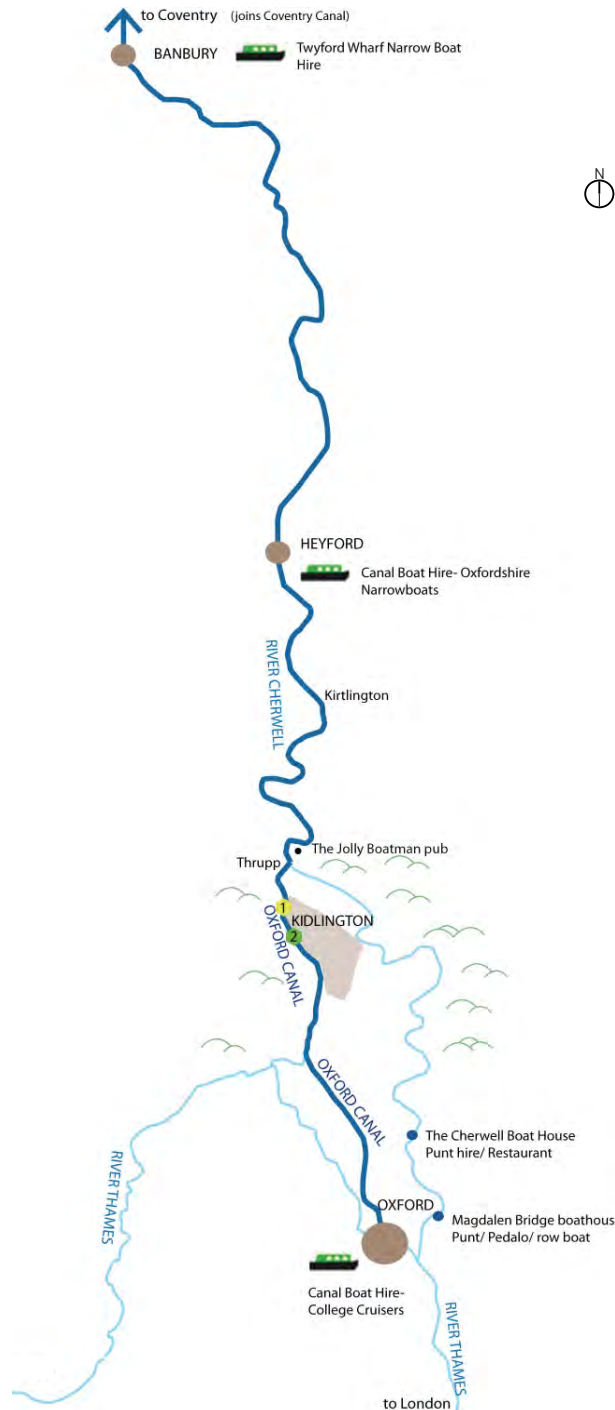


Figure 3.6 Waterway network



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



Figure 3.3 Oxford punting. Source: www.oxfordpunting.co.uk



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).

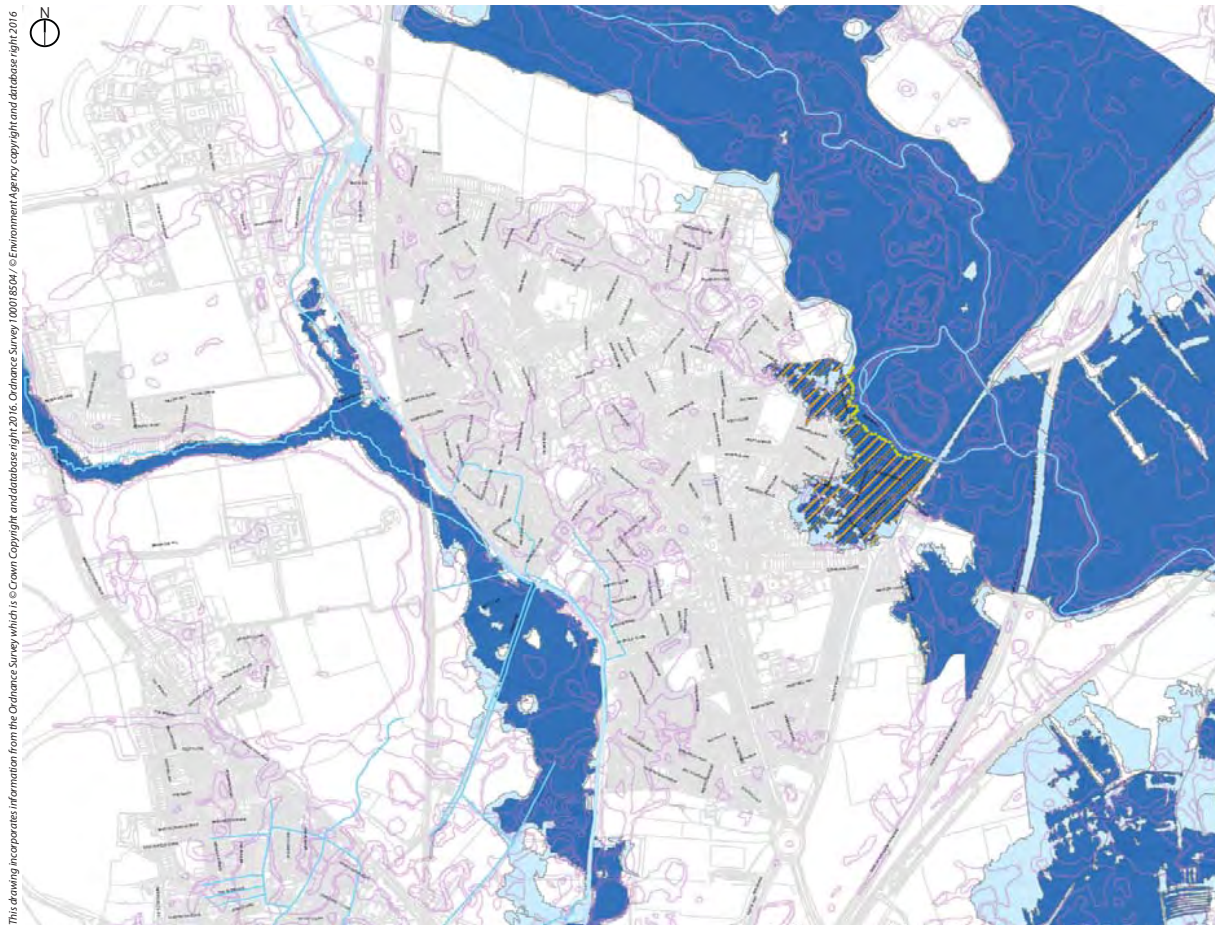
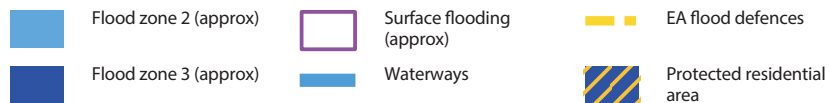


Figure 3.7 Flood risk. Based on Environment Agency EA Flood Zones, 2016



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

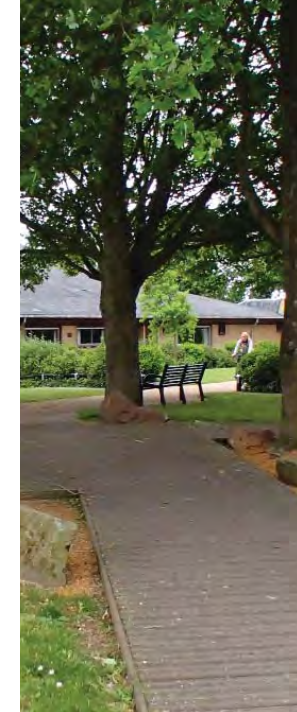


Figure 4.6 Exeter Close



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

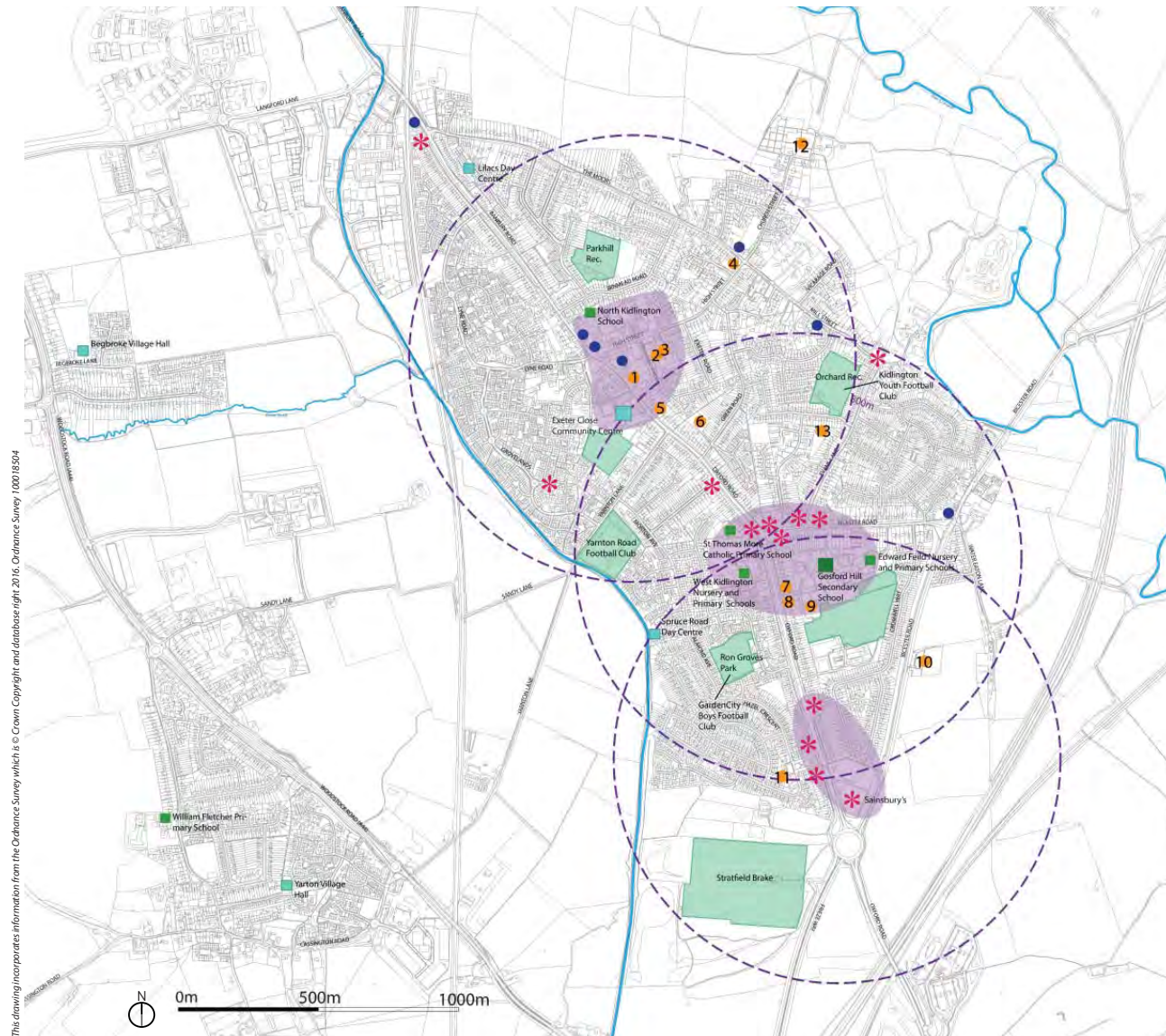


Figure 4.8 Distribution of community facilities and local centres



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 4.16 Village Centre movement and access

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



Figure 4.17 Poor quality design of prominent recent schemes



Figure 4.18 Parade of shops to the east of Oxford Road



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 m² net additional convenience floorspace by 2026 if the overtrading of existing convenience stores is addressed or 1,092 m² if no allowance is made. In terms of comparison floorspace, the study concludes there is capacity to support up to 7,941 m² net additional floorspace by 2026 if allowance was made for overtrading of existing comparison floorspace or 2,557 m² 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.

- | | | | |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Exeter Hall: Parish Council offices and information centre | 7 | Bowling green |
| 2 | Health centre and dental clinic | 8 | Children’s playground and recreation field |
| 3 | Youth centre | 9 | Full size football pitch |
| 4 | Kaleidoscope children’s centre with outdoor space | 10 | Landscaped amenity space |
| 5 | Exeter Close Pavilion | | Surface car park |
| 6 | 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 Feild 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
Total	2085	2140	2567	

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)