



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

West Oxfordshire: Draft Local Plan

Consultation

October 2012



01993 861000

www.westoxon.gov.uk/draftlocalplan

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I. INTRODUCTION

- I.1 This is the draft Local Plan for West Oxfordshire. It sets out how the District will move forward in the period 2011 – 2029 in response to local issues such as housing need and flood risk and wider global issues such as climate change and the need for economic growth. The plan has been shaped by extensive community engagement which has helped to ensure that it focuses on those issues of greatest significance to West Oxfordshire.
- I.2 A strong message received throughout is that this part of the country is a special place which is highly valued by the people who live here and which must not be eroded by decisions to accommodate inappropriate future development or other change. A key challenge for the plan is to deliver the new development needed to support economic growth in a way that does not compromise the quality of life and the environment enjoyed by those who live and work in the District - in other words to achieve 'sustainable development'.

The Role of the Local Plan

- I.3 The Local Plan sets out how much development will take place, what type, where and when it will come forward as well as what infrastructure is needed to support it. In this respect it seeks to provide certainty for the local community, service providers and those looking to invest or move into the area. It is aspirational, yet realistic about what can be delivered on the ground.
- I.4 The plan contains a number of 'core policies' to manage change and to ensure that all new development is sustainable. These include 'cross-cutting' policies that apply to all development, 'topic-based' policies that apply to certain types of development and 'placed-based' policies that apply to specific parts of the District. The core policies replace many of the policies contained in the existing adopted Local Plan. Further information is provided at Appendix I.

The Plan Period

- I.5 The plan covers the period 1st April 2011 – 31st March 2029. It will however be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate.

Structure and Content

- I.6 The plan is structured as follows:

Section 2 sets out a profile of the District, identifying the key issues and challenges to be addressed.

Section 3 sets out a vision of West Oxfordshire in 2029 which is underpinned by a series of core objectives. These have been refined through extensive consultation.

Section 4 sets out the overall strategy for the District, which is based on five key strands including a presumption in favour of sustainable development, locating

development in the right places, prudent use of natural resources, high quality design and supporting infrastructure.

Sections 5 – 8 deal with a number of specific aspects of the overall strategy including the provision of new homes, sustainable economic growth, the natural and historic environment and transport.

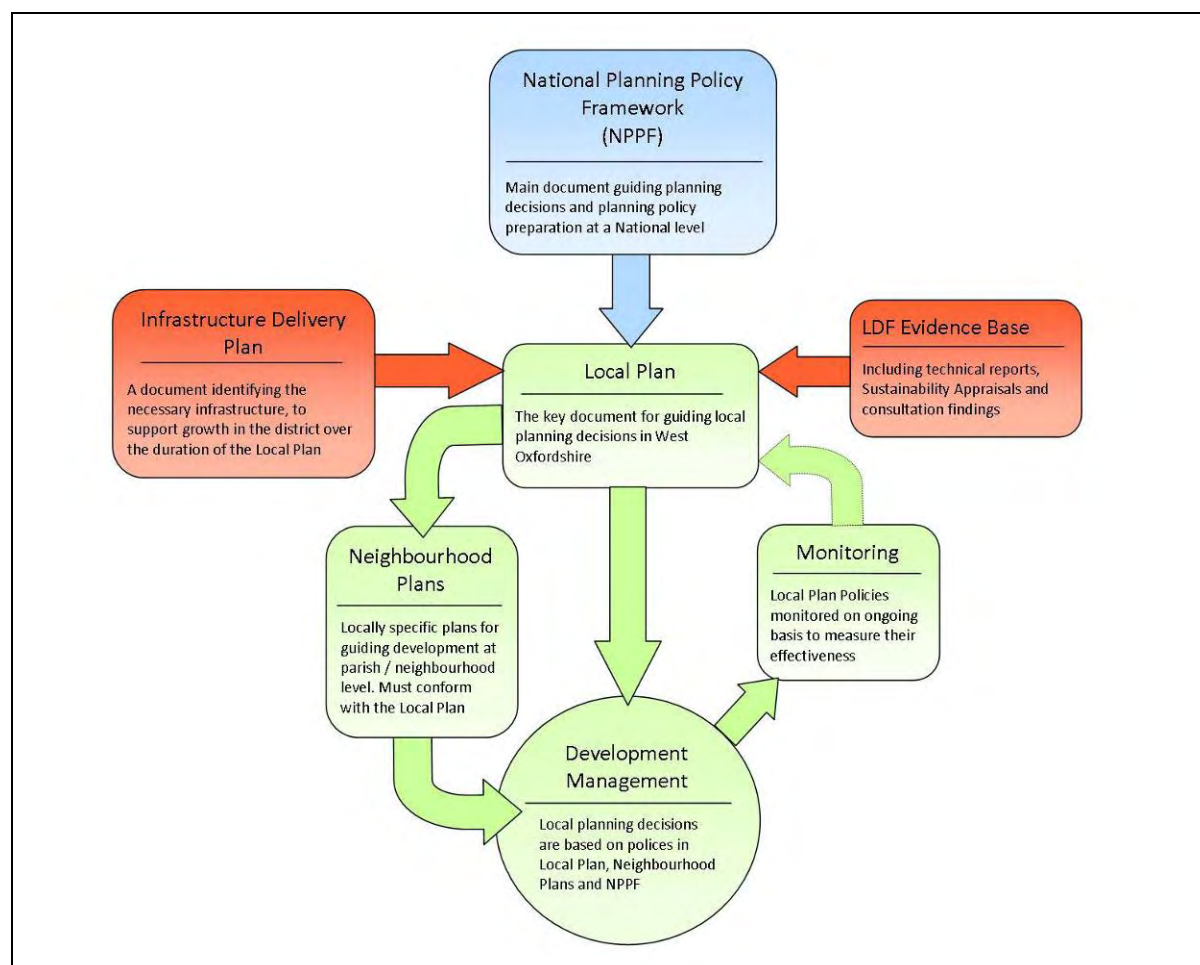
Section 9 sets out the local strategies for the Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton and rural sub-areas.

Section 10 explains how the various elements of the Local Plan will be implemented and monitored.

Status of the Local Plan

- I.7 The Local Plan is the key document within the West Oxfordshire Local Development Framework (LDF) a portfolio of documents which collectively deliver the planning strategy for the District. Sitting above the Local Plan is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. The Local Plan must be consistent with the NPPF.
- I.8 Sitting below the Local Plan are 'Neighbourhood Plans' drawn up by local communities and businesses to determine how their local areas will develop in the future. Where Neighbourhood Plans come forward they must be in general conformity with the Local Plan but can choose to promote more development and focus on particular local issues.
- I.9 Sitting alongside the Local Plan is the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which identifies the physical, social and environmental infrastructure needed to support future growth including new schools, roads and open space. These various linkages are illustrated in Figure I.1.

Figure I.1 - The Local Plan in Context



Important Influences

- I.10 In line with the duty to co-operate, the Local Plan has been shaped by ongoing engagement with local communities and organisations including other local authorities, the Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust, Thames Water, Natural England and the Environment Agency.
- I.11 A further key influence has been the application of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which has helped to determine the choice of certain options over others. A separate SA report of the draft Local Plan has been made available including a non-technical summary.
- I.12 Other influences include:
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 - Oxfordshire and West Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategies
 - District Council Strategies such as Housing and Tourism
 - Development plan documents in neighbouring local authorities.
 - Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and planning guidance

- Information, including site suggestions for development, provided by parish councils, landowners, developers and their agents
- Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- Evidence base studies on issues such as housing and retail needs, transport and flood risk
- Affordable housing viability study

I.13 The various evidence base studies can be found online at <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning/LDFsustapprevidbase.cfm>

Measuring Progress

I.14 Section 10 sets out a delivery and monitoring framework explaining how each core policy will be delivered and monitored. Planning has a key role to play but is only part of the way forward. Successful delivery of many elements of the strategy will only be achieved through working in partnership with the many organisations that have a responsibility or interest in some aspect of West Oxfordshire, particularly local communities and landowners.

Reviewing the Local Plan

I.15 The Local Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it remains relevant and appropriate. In particular, the plan will be subject to regular annual monitoring to ensure that the policies and proposals are achieving their objectives. Where monitoring suggests that policies are proving to be ineffective or are having unintended effects, there may be a need for a partial or total review of the plan. As a general rule of thumb the plan is likely to be reviewed every five years.

2. WEST OXFORDSHIRE IN 2012

- 2.1 In this section we set out a brief profile of the District. This is important because the Local Plan cannot address every single issue, but must focus on those issues of greatest local importance to West Oxfordshire.

Location

- 2.2 West Oxfordshire is located in the south east of England in the County of Oxfordshire, which has borders with Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. The District's central location, coupled with its high environmental quality makes it an attractive place to live and work.

Figure 2.1 - West Oxfordshire in its wider setting



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Relationship to Other Areas

- 2.3 The District has functional links with a number of other areas. There is for example some movement of commuters between the District and Wiltshire, in particular Swindon as well as further afield to Reading and London. The closest links are however with the rest of Oxfordshire including in particular Oxford, which acts as the main 'hub' within the County and is the focus for the District's main transport connections. Oxfordshire also forms a relatively cohesive single housing market. Plans for major growth at Oxford and in the surrounding areas are a key consideration for the Local Plan, particularly in terms of the potential transport and economic implications.

Character

- 2.4 West Oxfordshire is a rural area and enjoys a strong sense of place derived from the Cotswold vernacular style of building, rolling countryside and river valleys. It is one of the least densely populated areas in the south east with almost 60% of the 81 parishes containing fewer than 500 residents. Dispersed across the District are around 130 separate towns, villages and hamlets, the three main towns being Witney (28,000) Carterton (16,000) and Chipping Norton (6,500). Underpinning these are six rural service centres; Bampton (2,500) Burford (1,300) Charlbury (3,000) Eynsham (5,000) Long Hanborough (2,400) and Woodstock (3,000). The remaining settlements comprise a number of medium-sized and smaller villages and hamlets.
- 2.5 The dispersed nature of the District means that despite a general level of affluence, some areas are classed as being within the most deprived in the country in terms of access to housing and services. This is of particular relevance for those living in relative poverty and in West Oxfordshire the majority of people claiming pension credit live in rural areas.

Population and Demographics

- 2.6 The District has a total population of almost 105,000 and is reasonably well-balanced in terms of different age groups although the number of older people (65+) is higher than the county and national averages and forecasts suggest the number of older people will increase, which has implications for housing, healthcare, the economy and transport.

Housing

- 2.7 The number of households in West Oxfordshire increased from 38,000 in 2001 to around 43,200 in 2011. Most of this growth has taken place at Witney and Carterton through major new housing developments at Madley Park and Shilton Park. As a desirable area to live, house prices in West Oxfordshire are above the national average and affordability is a major issue with around 2,000 households on the waiting list for affordable housing. There is a predominance of detached and semi-detached properties in the District and a relative shortage of smaller terraced properties and flats. This has implications not only for affordability but also for the suitability of the existing housing stock to meet future needs, with household sizes forecast to decline in line with national trends.

Transport

- 2.8 The District's main transport connections reflect the focus on Oxford and London. Rail services connecting to Birmingham and London pass through a small part of the eastern fringe of the District. The Cotswold line passes through the largely rural central part of the District, connecting several small towns and villages with Hereford in the west and Oxford and London in the east. Witney and Carterton, the two largest settlements, are connected to Oxford by high frequency bus services. Other bus services operate throughout the rural area with varying frequencies but many require ongoing public subsidy. Most cycle and pedestrian routes are focused on the main towns.

- 2.9 A large number of people commute out of the District to work, particularly to Oxford and the employment locations in the Abingdon and Didcot area. Many journeys continue to be made by private car causing congestion on major routes, particularly the A40, A44 and A415 as well as within towns. As a result, central areas of Chipping Norton and Witney have been identified as failing national air quality standards.

The Local Economy

- 2.10 The local economy continues to perform well despite the recession, with generally vibrant retail centres, high rates of economic activity, relatively low unemployment, high rates of business formation and a relatively skilled workforce. There are about 49,000 jobs in the District with significant manufacturing, engineering, retail and tourism sectors. Many businesses are located within or next to one of the larger towns and villages but there is a diversity of mainly smaller business sites and businesses in the rural area.
- 2.11 One of the main issues for West Oxfordshire is the growth of major employment centres nearby including Science Vale UK which will inevitably compete for investment. It will therefore be essential for the Local Plan to provide enough high quality employment land in the right places so that the District is able to compete for inward investment. The successful roll-out of high speed broadband will also be essential for economic growth, particularly in the rural areas.

Leisure & Recreation

- 2.12 The District offers various leisure and recreation opportunities. The three main towns each have leisure centres although the Witney and Carterton facilities are in need of enhancement and expansion respectively. There are also other known requirements in some parts of the District such as for additional playing pitches. The rural nature of the District lends itself to walking, cycling and other leisurely pursuits and in the south of the District water-based opportunities are presented by the River Thames and the various lakes created as a result of sand and gravel extraction in the Lower Windrush Valley.

Health and Well-Being

- 2.13 Primary and secondary health care in West Oxfordshire is provided by a network of 16 local GP practices and two hospitals, the Witney Community Hospital and the War Memorial Community Hospital in Chipping Norton. Generally speaking, the health of West Oxfordshire's residents is better than the England average and life expectancy is around two years longer, for both men and women. However, there is still room for improvement in some areas including obesity.

Education

- 2.14 Throughout much of the District primary schools are either already under pressure or are forecast to fill as pupil numbers are increasing. At the secondary level, whilst a new secondary facility may be needed to support new development in Witney, there is flexibility elsewhere. In terms of further education, Abingdon and Witney College offers part time and full time further and higher education courses and also works with secondary schools offering part time courses for 14-16 yr olds. The college has recently redeveloped part of its site to provide enhanced facilities.

Natural Environment

- 2.15 The District has a rich natural environment with around 34% falling within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Land on the eastern edge of the District is within the Oxford Green Belt and at Cassington Meadows there is a Special Area of Conservation (of European importance). There are also a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, areas of Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Sites. There is however a need to further enhance and extend habitats to develop networks and a series of Biodiversity Target Areas have been identified where the restoration and enhancement of habitats would have the greatest benefit.
- 2.16 There are several rivers flowing through West Oxfordshire which are important corridors for biodiversity, provide opportunities for recreation and form part of the setting of many towns and villages. However they also present a flood risk, with severe flooding events affecting many communities in 2007.
- 2.17 West Oxfordshire contains some extensive sand and gravel and limestone resources, the extraction of which needs to be managed to protect environmental quality and public amenity and help ameliorate flood risk. Significant mineral extraction has already occurred and continues in the Lower Windrush Valley with after-uses presenting opportunities for leisure and tourism as well as creating opportunities for nature reserves.

Historic Environment

- 2.18 The District has a rich archaeological and architectural heritage including 3,200 listed buildings, 149 scheduled monuments, 51 conservation areas and 16 parks and gardens of special historic interest. Blenheim Palace at Woodstock has been designated as a World Heritage Site (WHS) and is a major asset to the District and key visitor attraction.

Summary of Key Issues & Challenges

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central, accessible location • High quality environment – landscape, built heritage and biodiversity • Strong sense of place • Generally good place to live with a high quality of life • Strong and articulate community groups • Generally vibrant town centres, particularly Witney • Strong and diverse local economy including many small businesses, specialisms in high-tech manufacturing and engineering plus RAF Brize Norton • Relatively skilled workforce with no major skills gaps although perhaps lacking in some technical skills • Relatively low unemployment • No significant areas of dereliction • Oxfordshire Cotswolds - important tourism sector with nationally important attractions • Good variety of formal and informal leisure opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out-commuting and reliance on the private car and rural road network • Severe traffic congestion in Witney and on Oxford approach roads, particularly A40 east of Witney • Air quality problems within Witney and Chipping Norton • Limited public transport, particularly in more rural areas. Also main towns not directly served by rail • Limited opportunities for safe travel by foot or cycle outside main towns • Disturbance from activity at RAF Brize Norton • House prices higher than national average and very high in some areas with a predominance of larger properties • Some rural areas have poor access to services and facilities plus trend for loss/closure of rural services • Limited access to high speed broadband • Small pockets of rural poverty with lower wages for workers in West Oxon compared to those travelling to work elsewhere • Generally limited or no spare capacity in existing primary schools • Many areas and communities affected by flooding, particular in the south of the District.

Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development to help secure increased affordable housing provision as well as new supporting infrastructure, including green infrastructure • To attract additional inward investment and achieve a more self-contained local economy • Further investment at RAF Brize Norton • Capitalising on and contributing to the Oxfordshire high tech economy • Improvements in internet and mobile phone technology • New sustainable construction methods and renewable energy schemes • Investment in town centres • Biodiversity Conservation Target Areas • Biomass and woodland management • Sustainable drainage schemes to reduce flood risk • Provision of new green infrastructure through after-use of mineral working • Provision of primary road connection between Carterton/RAF Brize Norton and the A40 • Improvements in public transport, walking and cycling facilities to help reduce the use of the private car • Further develop the District's tourism offer • Further develop the role of the Thames for leisure and recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ageing population • Meeting the needs of local communities with access to services and facilities whilst maintaining West Oxfordshire's high environmental quality • Provision of new housing to meet the needs of smaller households and an older population • Delivery of an increased supply of affordable housing • Reduction in our higher than average carbon footprint • Reducing dependence upon travel by private car including long distance travel to nearby urban centres and London • Pressures from growth centres close to West Oxfordshire • Climate change – extreme weather events • Flood risk • Water scarcity • Use of Greenfield land to meet development needs • Satisfactorily accommodating and benefitting from the expansion of RAF Brize Norton • Modernisation of older employment stock • Supporting the agricultural sector and diversification of the rural economy • Mitigating the impacts of sand and gravel extraction • Roll out of high speed broadband in rural areas

3. WEST OXFORDSHIRE IN 2029 – OUR VISION

- 3.1 Having considered the key issues facing the District, we need to look to the future and where we want to be by 2029. Set out below is our vision for West Oxfordshire which is underpinned by a number of ‘core objectives’ that inform the remainder of the plan. These have evolved through extensive consultation with local communities and partner organisations and have particular regard to the West Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) ‘Shaping Futures’.

Our Vision

Our vision for the future....

...is to meet the needs of West Oxfordshire’s communities without significant change to the intrinsic character of the District. We want this area to continue to be one of the best places in which to live, work, play and visit.

There will be a network of safe, inclusive, vibrant, well-connected and prosperous market towns and villages within a healthy and attractive environment where new development respects and complements the distinctive character of the area whilst managing the impacts of climate change.

Witney will provide an enhanced range of services and facilities with improved transport infrastructure, whilst maintaining its character and vibrancy as a market town. The town will offer a choice of well-designed housing which meets lifetime needs and benefits from a network of green spaces linking with the surrounding countryside. There will be a diverse range of local employment opportunities to foster sustainable economic growth, innovation and enterprise and reduce the necessity for commuting to nearby towns and cities. The town centre will be vibrant, attractive, convenient and safe for all users with a wide range of retail and leisure activities on offer and will be well served by parking facilities, frequent bus services and opportunities for walking and cycling.

Carterton will strengthen its role as a service centre meeting the daily needs of its residents and work force, including personnel at the country’s premier military transport airbase, RAF Brize Norton. A choice of well-designed housing which meets lifetime needs will be provided and benefit from a network of green spaces linking with the surrounding countryside and continuing to provide a green buffer between Carterton and nearby villages. Much of the older MOD housing will be replaced with new urban development which will complement Carterton’s enhanced role. The range of services and facilities in the town centre will expand, alongside further improvements in the quality of the built environment. Local employment opportunities will promote greater levels of inward investment and enterprise.

Chipping Norton will strengthen its role as a centre of enterprise in the northern part of the District. It will continue to be an economically and socially strong market town serving the needs of a large rural area. Its distinctive historic character and fine setting will be conserved and enhanced at the same time as accommodating new development to meet identified needs.

Elsewhere, the distinctive qualities of the District's other towns and villages will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. The larger towns and villages will accommodate growth of an appropriate scale and type to help ensure their future prosperity and that of the rural areas around them. New affordable housing for local families and development specifically to meet the needs of older people will be delivered to help maintain the vibrancy of rural communities.

Our Core Objectives

3.2 The core objectives are listed under four key headings:

1. Strong market towns and villages
2. Meeting the specific housing needs of our communities
3. Sustainable communities with access to services and facilities; and
4. Protecting and enhancing our environment and reducing the impact from climate change

3.3 West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district with its population dispersed to market towns and villages. It is vital that its distinctive rural characteristics are maintained while meeting the needs of local communities. Although it is a relatively affluent area there are pockets of deprivation. For rural communities to be sustainable they must have affordable housing, access to good employment opportunities and access to services.

I. Strong market towns and villages

CO1 Provide new development, services and facilities of an appropriate scale and type in locations which will help improve the quality of life of local communities and where the need to travel, particularly by car, can be minimised.

CO2 Locate new residential development where it will best help to meet local housing needs.

- 3.4 There needs to be a greater choice within the local housing market to help achieve a better balance of property types and meet the needs of those who cannot afford to buy or rent suitable market housing. Two key challenges will be to address as much local housing need as is feasible and sustainable, and to better meet the needs of older people and newly forming households.

2. Meeting the specific housing needs of our communities

- CO3 Ensure the timely delivery of new housing to meet forecast needs and support sustainable economic growth.
- CO4 Plan for an appropriate mix of new residential accommodation which provides a variety of sizes, types and affordability with special emphasis on the provision of homes for local people in housing need who cannot afford to buy or rent at market prices including those wishing to self-build, as well as homes to meet the needs of older people, newly forming households and travelling communities.

- 3.5 In a rural area it is important to achieve a sensible balance between delivering services direct to local residents and expecting people to travel elsewhere to particular services. In many rural parts of the District there is little choice other than to travel by private transport. However new development should not lead to more people being isolated from services and facilities which they need on a regular basis. New development must provide the necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of its residents and/or users.

- 3.6 These objectives seek to deliver a high quality of life with a prosperous and sustainable economy whilst improving opportunities wherever possible or appropriate for travel by means other than the car.

3. Sustainable communities with access to services and facilities

- CO5 Promote inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free communities.
- CO6 Ensure that land is not released for new development until the supporting infrastructure and facilities are secured.
- CO7 Maximise the opportunity for walking, cycling and use of public transport.
- CO8 Achieve sustainable economic growth which improves the balance between housing and local jobs, provides a diversity of local employment opportunities, removes potential barriers to investment and provides flexibility to adapt to changing economic needs.
- CO9 Achieve a prosperous and sustainable tourism economy.
- CO10 Promote safe, vibrant and prosperous town centres and resist proposals that would damage their vitality and viability or adversely affect measures to improve the centres.

CO11 Maintain or improve where possible the health and wellbeing of the District's residents through increased choice and quality of shopping, leisure, recreation, arts, cultural and community facilities.

CO12 Improve access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.

- 3.7 These objectives seek to protect and enhance the high environmental quality of our area and meet the challenges of climate change by improving the sustainability of new development.

4. Protecting and enhancing our environment and reducing the impact from climate change

CO13 Conserve and enhance the high environmental quality of West Oxfordshire with protection and promotion of its diverse landscape, biodiversity and geological conservation interests, and its local cultural, heritage and environmental assets.

CO14 Reduce the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.

CO15 Achieve improvements in water and air quality.

CO16 Minimise use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.

CO17 Improve the sustainable design and construction of new development, including improving energy, water efficiency and water management.

CO18 Ensure that new developments are suitably located and well designed to protect and enhance the individual form, character and identity of our towns and villages as well as contributing to the quality of life in West Oxfordshire.

Overall Strategy



4. OVERALL STRATEGY

4.1 Having set out our vision and objectives for the future, we need to consider how these are going to be achieved. How are we going to deliver more affordable housing, how will we tackle flooding and what will we do to boost the economy?

4.2 This section sets out the overall strategy for the District which has five key strands that apply to all development regardless of scale or type:

- **Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development** – allowing development which is sustainable to go ahead.
- **Locating Development in the Right Places** - influencing where development takes place can help to ensure housing and jobs are provided where they are most needed, ensure good access to facilities, help reduce car use, protect important areas such as Green Belt and AONB and avoid other sensitive areas such as those that are prone to flooding.
- **Prudent use of natural resources** – natural resources are those that occur naturally within the environment including water, air, wind, sunlight and minerals. Some of these such as wind and sunlight are ‘renewable’ because they are naturally replenished, whilst others such as gas and oil are ‘non-renewable’ because they are limited and may be used up before they can be naturally replenished. We must give careful consideration to the use of natural resources particularly those that are ‘non-renewable’.
- **High quality design** - the Government’s objective for the planning system is to promote good design that ensures attractive, usable and durable places. This is a key element in achieving sustainable development and a key consideration for West Oxfordshire which enjoys a high quality, distinctive environment.
- **Supporting infrastructure** – provision must be made for the facilities and services that are essential for growth such as schools, roads, libraries and open space. Without appropriate investment in new and enhanced infrastructure, existing services will come under pressure and may be unable to cope.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 4.3 Sustainable development is that which provides for current needs without putting at risk the needs of future generations. In other words it is about thinking beyond the immediate impact of development and considering what might happen as a consequence in the future. There are three main dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental.
- 4.4 In terms of the economy, it is about the timely delivery of sufficient land in the right locations to support growth, whilst from a social perspective it is about ensuring strong, vibrant and healthy communities through the provision of enough housing, the creation of high quality environments and accessible local services. From an environmental perspective, it is about protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.
- 4.5 This Local Plan is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In other words, development that is sustainable will be allowed to go ahead. This plan sets out what will and won't be considered sustainable in West Oxfordshire. Regard should also be had to the NPPF.
- 4.6 When considering development proposals and Neighbourhood Plans, the Council will take a positive approach and will work with applicants to ensure that where appropriate, proposals are approved and that development which would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the District is secured

Core Policy I – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

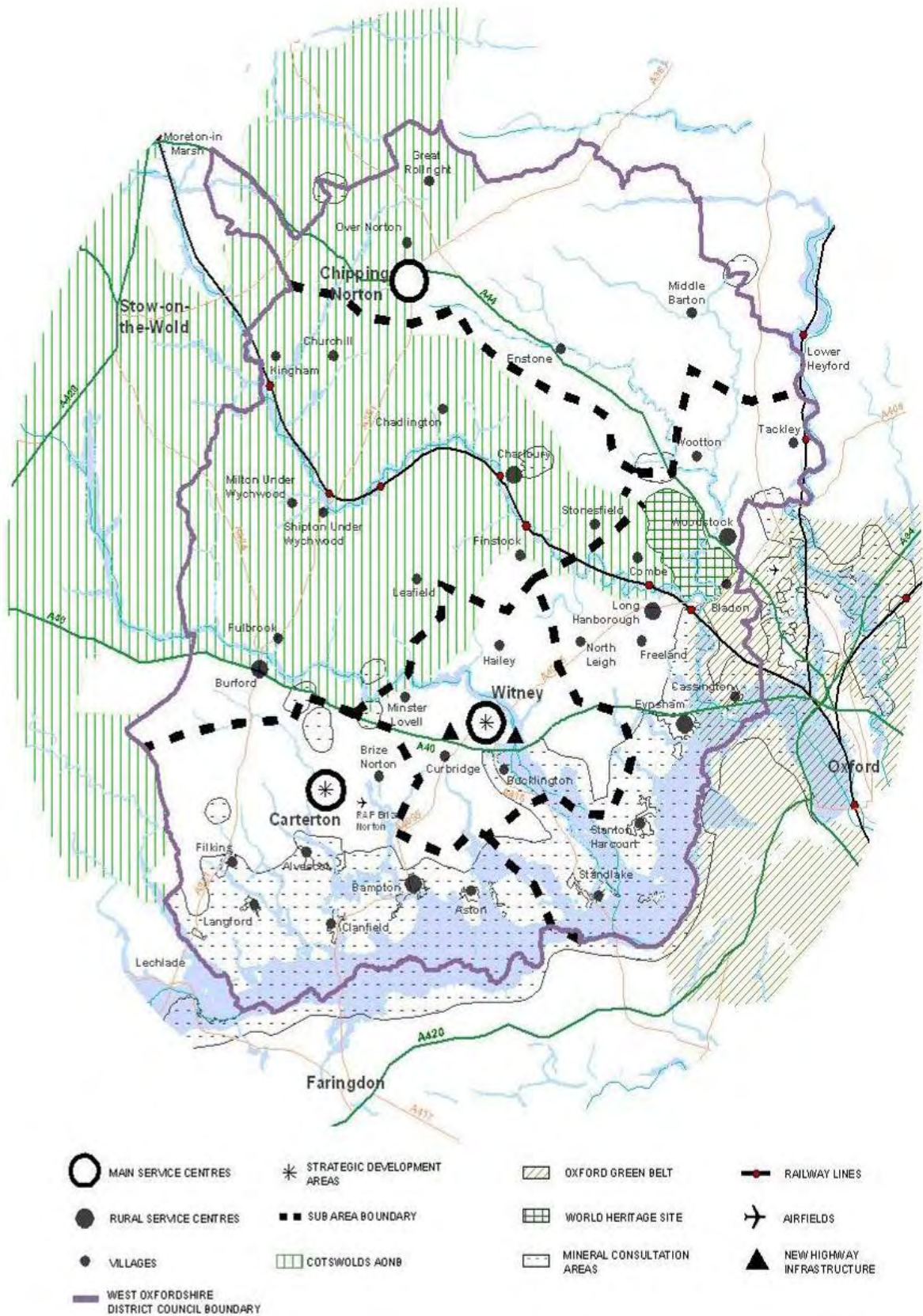
Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Locating Development in the Right Places

- 4.7 The location of development can influence how people choose to travel, where children go to school, how an area changes physically and socially and where people choose to live and work. Throughout the preparation of the Local Plan we have sought views on the most suitable locations for future development and tested various options through a process of sustainability appraisal (SA).
- 4.8 For the purposes of this Local Plan the District has been divided into five sub-areas:
- Witney Sub-Area
 - Carterton Sub-Area
 - Chipping Norton Sub-Area
 - Eynsham – Woodstock Sub-Area
 - Burford – Charlbury Sub-Area
- 4.9 These are illustrated on Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 - West Oxfordshire Key Diagram and Sub-areas



- 4.10 Taking account of previous consultation responses and sustainability appraisal (SA) the proposed strategy is to focus most future growth in the Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton Sub-Areas, with a particular focus on Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. These towns offer the widest range of services and facilities, have suitable and deliverable development sites available, are accessible by a choice of transport modes and offer the greatest range of job opportunities. Strategic Development Areas (SDA) are proposed at Witney and Carterton with future growth at Chipping Norton to be delivered primarily through the Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.11 Not all growth can or indeed should go to Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton and there is a need for development elsewhere in order to spread the potential benefits of growth and help sustain the more rural parts of the District. Outside of the three main towns, the focus of development will be the six rural service centres of Bampton, Burford, Charlbury, Eynsham, Long Hanborough and Woodstock. These contain a good range of services and facilities and are considered to be suitable for accommodating development of an appropriate scale and type that would help to reinforce their existing service centre roles and as such meet their development needs and those of their immediate hinterlands.
- 4.12 Beyond the rural service centres, some development will be supported in the villages but this will be limited to that which respects the village character and local distinctiveness and would help maintain the vitality of the local community. In the small villages, hamlets and open countryside, new development will be limited to that which requires and is appropriate for a rural location and which respects the intrinsic character of the area. In accordance with national policy, isolated new homes in the countryside will be avoided unless there are special circumstances¹.
- 4.13 New development should also take place on the most sustainable, available sites. These will be sites that accord best with the policies of this Local Plan which are founded on the principles of sustainability. However, in general terms they will be sites within or on the edge of a settlement and have the least environmental impact and best access, particularly on foot, to supporting services and facilities. The various settlements are listed in the table below and the overall approach towards each is summarised in Core Policy 2.

Table 4.1 - Settlement Hierarchy

Main Service Centres		
Witney	Carterton	Chipping Norton
Rural Service Centres		
Bampton	Burford	Charlbury
Eynsham	Long Hanborough	Woodstock

¹ National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraph 55

Villages		
Alvescot	Aston	Bladon
Brize Norton	Cassington	Chadlington
Churchill	Clanfield	Combe
Curbridge	Ducklington	Enstone
Filkins & Broughton Poggs	Finstock	Freeland
Fulbrook	Great Rollright	Hailey
Kingham	Langford	Leafield
Middle Barton	Milton-u-Wychwood	Minster Lovell
North Leigh	Over Norton	Shipton-u-Wychwood
Standlake	Stanton Harcourt	Stonesfield
Tackley	Wootton	
Small Villages, Hamlets and Open Countryside		
All other villages and settlements not listed above.		

Core Policy 2 – Locating Development in the Right Places

- 1) New homes, jobs and supporting services will be primarily focused within and on the edge of the main service centres of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. This includes Strategic Development Areas (SDA) at Witney and Carterton with future growth at Chipping Norton to be delivered primarily through the Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan. Development elsewhere will be more limited and will focus on meeting locally identified community and business needs.
- 2) The rural service centres of Bampton, Burford, Charlbury, Eynsham, Long Hanborough and Woodstock are suitable for development of an appropriate scale and type that would help to reinforce their existing service centre role. Sites may be specifically identified within or on the edge of some of these service centres, including through Neighbourhood Plans.
- 3) The villages are suitable for limited development which respects the village character and local distinctiveness and would help to maintain the vitality of these communities. Sites within or on the edge of some of these villages may be specifically identified to help meet local needs, including through Neighbourhood Plans.
- 4) Having regard to the scale and type of development envisaged in the main service centres, rural service centres and villages, development will be permitted:
 - a) On sites specifically allocated in a local or neighbourhood development plan for the proposed use;
 - b) On land within existing built-up areas; and
 - c) On other land adjoining a town or village where the proposed development is necessary to meet a District-wide need or a specific local housing, economic or community need that cannot be met in a more sustainable way in terms of the criteria in 6) below and other policies in this plan.

5) Development in the small villages, hamlets and open countryside will be limited to that which requires and is appropriate for a rural location and which respects the intrinsic character of the area. Appropriate development will include:

- re-use of appropriate existing buildings, with preference given to employment, tourism and community uses;
- new dwellings where there is an essential operational or other specific local need that cannot be met in any other way, including use of existing buildings. Any new homes provided (other than replacement dwellings) will be controlled by an occupancy condition linked to the operational need and/or to the 'rural exception site' approach for permanent affordable dwellings;
- new accommodation proposed in accordance with policies specifically for travelling communities;
- small-scale development which will remain ancillary to existing dwellings, such as to facilitate home-working or other residential annexes;
- proposals to support the effectiveness of existing businesses and sustainable tourism;
- development which will make a positive contribution to farm and country estate diversification; and
- telecommunications development sited and designed to minimise impact upon the environment.

6) As a general principle, all development will be located where:

- it forms a logical complement to the existing scale and pattern of development and the character of the area;
- it protects or enhances the local landscape and the setting of the settlement;
- it makes use of previously developed land where available, provided it is not of high environmental value;
- it does not involve the loss of an area of open space or any other feature that makes an important contribution to the character or appearance of the area;
- it can be provided with safe vehicular access and safe and convenient pedestrian access to supporting services and facilities;
- it is not at risk of flooding or likely to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;
- it complies with policies for the protection of the natural environment and heritage assets;
- it safeguards mineral resources;
- in the Green Belt, it complies with national policies for the Green Belt;
- necessary supporting infrastructure can be provided.

Prudent Use of Natural Resources

- 4.14 As a planet we are living beyond our means, consuming natural resources at a faster rate than they can be replenished. The use of fossil fuels such as coal, gas and oil has increased exponentially in the last few decades and the resultant increases in CO₂ emissions are generally acknowledged to have contributed towards an increased rate of climatic change. It is essential that we reduce our consumption of natural resources and planning has a key role to play.
- 4.15 We have already explained how the location of development can help to reduce the need to travel and thereby reduce the consumption of oil and emission of carbon dioxide (CO₂). As well as influencing the location of development, the Local Plan can ensure that new development uses less energy through greater efficiency in the use and management of resources. A three-step hierarchy is to be used:
1. Lean – use less energy, by the use of sustainable design and construction measures
 2. Clean – supply energy efficiently, giving priority to decentralised energy supply
 3. Green – use renewable energy, especially biomass
- 4.16 The starting point is to minimise energy use (for example, through energy efficiency improvements to buildings such as loft and cavity wall insulation), before consideration is given as to how to supply energy more efficiently and then to the generation of renewable energy. In this section we address the first stage of the energy hierarchy - sustainable design and construction. The use of decentralised and renewable energy is addressed in Section 7.
- 4.17 With emissions from buildings accounting for approximately 50% of CO₂ emissions in the UK (and West Oxfordshire having higher levels of domestic energy consumption per person than the South East average), there is increasing recognition that constructing buildings using sustainable techniques, is essential in addressing climate change, through influencing resource use, especially energy, as well as carbon emissions.
- 4.18 In 2009, the District Council jointly commissioned a study of the potential for decentralised, renewable and low carbon technologies and local requirements for sustainable construction. The study concluded that in West Oxfordshire these objectives can most easily and effectively be achieved through the adoption of the Code for Sustainable Homes (a national system for measuring the sustainability performance of new homes) and BREEAM requirements (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) a similar construction standard for non-domestic buildings.

- 4.19 While use of the Code/BREEAM should lead to the greater use of decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy, the big advantage is that it also addresses the wider issues of sustainable design and construction, contributing to a range of policy objectives, such as ensuring greater efficiency in the use and management of resources, the reduction of pollution and waste, improvements to water and air quality, and the protection and enhancement of features of importance, including wildlife and landscapes.
- 4.20 As a general principle, all developments will be expected to meet or exceed relevant national minimum standards for sustainable construction. All sites allocated through the Local Plan will be expected to exceed the minimum standards as with larger sites, the potential to exploit renewable energy sources is generally greater.
- 4.21 In West Oxfordshire, where water scarcity, surface water run-off, ecology and the aim of achieving low carbon and renewable energy are important issues, particular emphasis in achieving these elements of the Code/BREEAM will be required. The use of local sustainability targets has been trialled since summer 2010 and these targets will be reviewed in the light of experience, government advice and the adoption of Core Policy 3. Further local sustainable construction planning guidance will also be published.

Core Policy 3 – Prudent Use of Natural Resources

All development proposals (including new buildings, conversions and the refurbishment of existing building stock) will be required to show consideration of the efficient and prudent use and management of natural resources, including:

- making the most efficient use of land and buildings, whilst having regard to the character of the locality
- minimising use of non-renewable resources, including land and energy, and maximising opportunities for travel by sustainable means
- minimising their impact on the soil resource*
- minimising energy demands and energy loss through design, layout, orientation, landscaping, materials and the use of technology;
- maximising passive solar heating, lighting, natural ventilation, energy and water efficiency and reuse of materials;
- minimising risk of flooding;
- making use of appropriate sustainable drainage systems;
- using recycled and energy efficient materials;
- minimising waste and making adequate provision for the re-use and recycling of waste; and
- causing no deterioration and, where possible, achieving improvements in water or air quality

All development proposals will be required to achieve high standards of sustainable design and construction. In particular:

- new dwellings will be expected to achieve at least Code for Sustainable Homes (or equivalent) Level 3 with immediate effect, Code Level 4 from 2013 and Code Level 6 from 2016;
- on strategic development areas, at least Code Level 4 will need to be achieved with immediate effect;
- all non-domestic developments will be expected to achieve at least BREEAM 'very good' from 2013 and BREEAM 'excellent' from 2016;
- all larger non-domestic developments (over 1000 m² floorspace) will be expected to meet BREEAM 'very good' or equivalent with immediate effect;
- within strategic development areas emphasis will be given to those elements/themes of the Code for Sustainable Homes/BREEAM which relate to water consumption, surface water run-off and ecology

Where developers cannot meet the above requirements, they will need to provide a robust assessment that has been independently validated, to demonstrate why it is not feasible, viable and deliverable.

* Guidance includes the 2011 DEFRA publication: Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites

High Quality Design

- 4.22 West Oxfordshire's towns, villages and countryside have a distinctive character that is worthy of special protection. River valleys and wet meadows, historic parkland, ancient forest remnants, and undulating wolds landscape are important features. One third of the District has national protection through its inclusion within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Government's objective for the planning system is to promote good design that ensures attractive, usable and durable places. This is a key element in achieving sustainable development and is of particular relevance to West Oxfordshire which is characterised by a high-quality and distinctive environment much valued by all those who visit, work and live in the District.
- 4.23 In 2006 the District Council adopted the West Oxfordshire Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) within the Local Development Framework. The purpose of the guide is to describe the qualities and characteristics that make West Oxfordshire special, and to describe the ways in which good design can protect and enrich the distinctive character of the District. In particular the guide seeks to:
- provide an analysis of the historic variations that exist in the landscapes, settlements and buildings of the District, in order to provide a sound foundation for design guidance that respects these variations;
 - describes strategies for how new development can best respond to these contexts; and
 - provide detailed guidance on a range of design issues relevant to existing and future development.
- 4.24 We will expect all development to have regard to the guide. Reference should also be made to more specific design advice contained in other supplementary planning guidance covering the District including Landscape Assessments, Conservation Area Appraisals and Cotswolds AONB guidance documents which are key tools for interpreting local distinctiveness and informing high design quality.

Core Policy 4 – High Quality Design

High design quality is central to the strategy for West Oxfordshire. New development should respect and contribute to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhance the character and quality of the surroundings and should:

- demonstrate high quality, inclusive and sustainable design with the provision of a safe, pleasant, convenient and interesting environment where the quality of the public realm is enhanced and the likelihood of crime and fear of crime is reduced; and
- not harm the use or enjoyment of land and buildings nearby including living conditions in residential properties; and
- demonstrate resilience to future climate change, particularly increasing temperatures and flood risk, and the use of water conservation and management measures; and
- preserve or enhance areas, buildings and features of historic, architectural and environmental importance, including unlisted vernacular buildings and habitats of biodiversity value; and
- enhance local green infrastructure and its biodiversity, including the provision of attractive, safe and convenient amenity open space commensurate with the scale and type of development, with play space where appropriate.

Designers of new development will be expected to provide supporting evidence for their design approach. They should have regard to specific design advice contained in supplementary planning guidance covering the District. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide, Landscape Assessments, Conservation Area Appraisals and Cotswolds AONB guidance documents are key tools for interpreting local distinctiveness and informing high design quality.

Supporting Infrastructure

- 4.25 All new development, even a single new home puts existing services and facilities under pressure and we need to make sure that where new development is proposed, it is supported by the right level of infrastructure investment. There are three broad categories of infrastructure; physical, social and green infrastructure. Physical infrastructure includes items such as roads, cycle routes, water, gas and electricity supply and waste management. Social infrastructure includes healthcare, education, emergency services and community facilities such as libraries, community centres and sports halls, whilst green infrastructure includes open space, allotments, woodland and other types and networks of green space.
- 4.26 Infrastructure has been traditionally provided or funded by developers through legal agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). However, this system is being largely replaced by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This is essentially a tariff or charge that local authorities can impose on new

development. CIL has a number of potential advantages including greater transparency and certainty and it is the District Council's intention to introduce CIL into West Oxfordshire before April 2014.

- 4.27 The first step in the process of introducing CIL is to identify the infrastructure that is needed to support future growth and how much it is likely to cost. A draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared in support of this draft Local Plan. The IDP has been prepared in partnership with a range of organisations including Oxfordshire County Council and will be refined and updated as more information becomes available.
- 4.28 The Council recognises that the requirement to provide new or enhanced infrastructure must not be so onerous as to render development unviable. Viability testing will therefore be carried out to help inform the preparation of a preliminary draft CIL charging schedule which will be published alongside the proposed submission draft Local Plan in spring 2013.

Core Policy 5 – Supporting Infrastructure

Where necessary and viable, development will be required to deliver, or contribute towards the provision of appropriate supporting infrastructure.

This will include, where applicable the strategic infrastructure items identified within the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) as well as non-strategic infrastructure requirements including those associated with individual development proposals.

Such provision will be secured through mechanisms including conditions on planning permissions, planning obligations and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Key Evidence

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report
Previous consultation responses
Settlement Sustainability Report (December 2010)
West Oxfordshire Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) 2012
West Oxfordshire Design Guide (2006)
Renewable Energy and Sustainable Construction Study (2009)
Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan (2010)
Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (April 2011)
West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (1998)
Witney Landscape Assessment (2007)
Carterton Landscape Assessment (2009)
Chipping Norton Landscape Assessment (2009)
Landscape Planning Review of Strategic Development Options (2012)

Providing New Homes



5. PROVIDING NEW HOMES

Our housing related objectives include:

- CO2 Locate new residential development where it will best help to meet local housing needs.
- CO3 Ensure the timely delivery of new housing to meet forecast needs and support sustainable economic growth.
- CO4 Plan for an appropriate mix of new residential accommodation which provides a variety of sizes, types and affordability with special emphasis on the provision of homes for local people in housing need who cannot afford to buy or rent at market prices, including those wishing to self-build as well as homes to meet the needs of older people, newly forming households and travelling communities.

- 5.1 The provision of new housing is a critically important issue for West Oxfordshire. New housing is vital to economic growth and as an attractive and well-located place, people want to live here, however because house prices are high, many people cannot afford suitable accommodation. The plan therefore seeks to meet identified housing needs through the provision of a sufficient number of new market and affordable homes.
- 5.2 The population of the District is getting bigger. It is also changing, with a forecast increase in the number of older people. More people are also choosing to live on their own with average household sizes continuing to fall. The draft Local Plan therefore identifies how much new housing is needed, where it will be located (having regard to the overall strategy) and what type of new housing should be built. These and a number of other key housing issues are addressed below.

Amount and Distribution of Housing

Amount of Housing

- 5.3 West Oxfordshire has accommodated high levels of growth over the last 30 years particularly Witney which was earmarked for expansion under various county and regional plans. With the proposed abolition of regional planning, it is for the Local Plan to determine how much new housing is needed in West Oxfordshire. The draft Core Strategy (2011) identified a requirement for at least 4,300 new homes in the period 2011 – 2026. However, because the plan period has been rolled forward to 2029 it is necessary to revisit this target.
- 5.4 Updated housing projections have been prepared which identify three different scenarios; a lower level of growth (4,000 homes) based on ‘natural change’ in the District’s population post-2016, a medium level of growth (5,500 homes) based on the South East Plan applied on a pro-rata basis post-2016 and a higher level of growth (6,700 homes) which identifies the number of homes needed to maintain the predicted peak in the District’s economic workforce post-2016.

- 5.5 Whilst local housing projections such as these provide an indication of the number of homes likely to be needed in the future, there are a number of other factors that must also be taken into account including evidence of housing need and demand, national household projections, economic needs, the availability of suitable land for housing, the need to improve affordability and increase housing supply, the need for sustainable development and the availability of and need for infrastructure such as roads and schools.
- 5.6 West Oxfordshire falls within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Areas (HMA) and it is also important to consider the level of housing being planned for in the other Oxfordshire Districts. Notably, all other Oxfordshire Districts are basing their housing requirement on the South East Plan, which remains a material consideration and has been subject to independent scrutiny by way of an examination in public.
- 5.7 Taking into account all of the considerations outlined above, the proposed level of housing for West Oxfordshire is 5,500 new homes in the period 1st April 2011 – 31st March 2029. This level of growth is in line with the South East Plan, takes account of the need to increase housing supply to provide for economic growth and tackle housing affordability, but is balanced with the likely capacity of existing and planned infrastructure, the availability of suitable housing sites and the need to achieve a ‘sustainable’ level of development for the District. The housing target is not however a ‘ceiling’ and may be exceeded.
- 5.8 A lower target of 4,000 homes would be below previous trends of housing delivery in the District and would fall well short of identified housing need and demand. It would not be as effective in boosting housing supply and addressing affordability and would limit the opportunity to provide new or enhanced infrastructure. Importantly it would be inconsistent with the South East Plan. A higher target of 6,700 new homes, whilst presenting the opportunity to boost housing supply and meet a greater proportion of identified housing need and demand, would put existing and planned infrastructure under greater pressure and is likely to have potentially negative sustainability impacts with the release of more Greenfield land.
- 5.9 Of the 5,500 new homes that are needed, 359 were built in the period 2011/12 leaving a remaining requirement of almost 5,150 new homes. Of these, 1,197 are already committed through existing planning permissions and previous adopted local plan allocations². The housing trajectory at Appendix 2 shows the likely rate of delivery on an annual basis from 1st April 2011 until 31st March 2029.

² Allowing for a discount of 10.5% non-implementation for unidentified sites with planning permission that have not yet commenced.

Distribution of Housing

- 5.10 In accordance with the overall strategy, the majority of new housing will be located in the Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton sub-areas with a particular focus on the three main towns. This strategy has been tested extensively through consultation and sustainability appraisal (SA) and is considered to represent the most appropriate and sustainable strategy for West Oxfordshire. It also ensures that in accordance with national policy, at least 10 years worth of 'deliverable' housing sites have been identified with Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) proposed at Witney and Carterton.
- 5.11 The remaining housing requirement will be met in the Eynsham – Woodstock and Burford – Charlbury sub-areas, with a particular focus on the main rural service centres. The Council will work with the towns, parishes and local communities to identify suitable and deliverable sites for housing including through Neighbourhood Plans and/or a separate site allocations document.
- 5.12 The proposed approach is summarised in Core Policy 6. It should be noted that the housing figures for each sub-area are indicative and should not be taken as absolute requirements or targets. It should also be noted that housing land supply will be calculated on a district-wide basis rather than individually for each sub-area. Further detail on each sub-area is set out at Section 9. A small allowance has been made for future windfall sites yet to come forward, excluding 'garden land' development in line with the NPPF.

Core Policy 6 – Amount and Distribution of Housing

West Oxfordshire will provide at least 5,500 new homes between 1st April 2011 and 31st March 2029. Taking account of houses already built (359) the remainder will be distributed as follows:

Witney Sub-Area

Around 1,900 new homes - to be focused on Witney including Strategic Development Areas to the west of Witney (1,000) and to the east of Witney (300) with the remainder provided through existing commitments (368) and other sites (250).

Carterton Sub-Area

Around 1,850 new homes – to be focused on Carterton including Strategic Development Areas to the east of Carterton (700) and at REEMA North and Central (400) with the remainder provided through existing commitments (315) and other sites (440).

Chipping Norton Sub-Area

Around 600 new homes – to be focused on Chipping Norton including existing commitments (226) with the remainder (375) delivered through the Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan and other sites.

Eynsham – Woodstock Sub-Area

Around 450 new homes – to include existing commitments (172) with the remainder (280) provided on other sites, with a particular focus on the rural service centres of Eynsham, Woodstock and Long Hanborough and the larger villages.

Burford – Charlbury Sub-Area

Around 350 new homes – to include existing commitments (116) with the remainder (235) provided on other sites, with a particular focus on the rural service centres of Burford and Charlbury and the larger villages.

Development will be monitored to ensure that the overall strategy is being delivered. Sites for new housing will be identified through partnership working with local communities, landowners and self-build groups, particularly through the use of parish or neighbourhood plans and/or preparation of a separate site allocations document.

Type and Mix of New Homes

- 5.13 Having considered the amount and distribution of housing, we need to identify what types of new homes are needed. West Oxfordshire's housing stock has traditionally been dominated by larger detached and semi-detached family houses. Whilst recent developments at Witney (Madley Park) and Carterton (Shilton Park) have helped to increase the stock of smaller properties available, the overall imbalance of larger properties remains. Our housing needs evidence (2011) for example identifies that over 80% of the owner occupied stock in West Oxfordshire is 3+ bedroom houses with 35% four and five bedrooms or more, with less than 20% of the stock comprising one and two bedroom properties.
- 5.14 Importantly, household sizes are falling as more and more people live on their own. This is a national trend that is being mirrored within the District. The latest demographic projections suggest that the average household size in West Oxfordshire will decrease from 2.37 in 2011 to 2.26 in 2029. This is a key consideration for the type of new homes that should be built in the future.
- 5.15 At the same time as household sizes are falling, the population of West Oxfordshire is ageing and we need to consider the implications in terms of the type of housing available. Older people may need smaller properties that are easier to manage than their original home, with people often looking to 'downsize' to a smaller property. Existing properties can sometimes be adapted to meet the occupant's changing needs and new properties can be built with flexibility in mind.
- 5.16 A wider choice of types of accommodation for older people is required in both the market and affordable housing sectors. For some older people, some form of 'supported accommodation' may be needed, with particular emphasis currently being placed on 'extra care' housing together with the improvement or redevelopment of some existing nursing homes. With extra care housing, people are able to live independently but enjoy access to communal facilities and care provision if needed. A challenging target for West Oxfordshire of 940 extra care homes within an 'extra care' scheme for the years up to 2031 has been set by Oxfordshire County Council through its Extra Care Strategy, to comprise a mixture of affordable and market sale units. At least 500 units of this target are required to meet current needs.
- 5.17 We also need to take into account the accommodation needs of those with other specific needs. PANSI (Projecting Adults Needs & Service Information System) data estimates there will be 40,537 people with a serious and moderate physical disability aged between 18-64 in Oxfordshire by 2015. In West Oxfordshire, there will be 6,698 residents (17%) with a serious and moderate physical disability. The countywide Housing and Physical Disability Strategy 2011 identifies a need for more general needs wheelchair accessible units as well as for supported housing provision. Around 281 additional wheelchair accessible properties across all client groups are required in the county by 2015. The County Council has also identified a need for supported housing provision to move people out of, or prevent moving into residential settings where appropriate and to meet specific client group needs such as Acquired Brain Injury and Learning Disabilities. Local authorities are encouraged to include wheelchair accessible housing in all new developments that are suitably located and provide reasonable access to local amenities.

- 5.18 Given these different trends, there is a general need to shift the nature of West Oxfordshire's housing stock away from larger properties and towards smaller properties that better meet the needs of smaller households and older people. This must however be balanced with the needs of others including families with children.
- 5.19 Our housing needs evidence (2011) suggests in relation to market housing, that to create a more balanced housing stock, future development should be based on a split of 60% 1 and 2-bed properties and 40% 3-bed and 4+ bed properties. We will consider this evidence as a starting point in relation to negotiations over housing mix taking into account the need to provide an appropriate balance of dwelling types and for development to be of a character that is appropriate for its location, in the interests of creating sustainable communities.

Core Policy 7 – Type and Mix of New Homes

A wide choice and mix of housing will be provided with a particular emphasis on meeting the needs of older people, newly forming households and families, including those wishing to self-build.

Developers will be required to demonstrate how their proposal would help to meet the needs of these particular groups through an appropriate mix of dwelling types having regard to specific local needs and the need to create a more balanced housing stock within the District.

Particular support will be given to proposals for 'extra-care' housing to meet the needs of older people. Provision will be made for at least one extra care housing scheme at Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton.

Where viable, new extra-care housing will be sought as an integral part of all Strategic Development Areas at Witney and Carterton. Elsewhere, opportunities for extra care will be sought in service centres and other locations with good access to services and facilities for older people.

New homes should be designed so they can be readily adapted to meet changing needs including the needs of people with disabilities.

Affordable Housing

- 5.20 Whilst there is some variation across the District, house prices in West Oxfordshire are much higher than the national average. Our housing needs evidence (2011) suggests that in some parts of the District, even relatively small, modest properties are beyond the reach of most single income households. The cost of renting is also high with district-wide rents having increased by 7% since 2008.
- 5.21 As a result, there are around 2,000 households on the waiting list for affordable housing in West Oxfordshire. We define 'affordable housing' as that which is affordable to those who cannot afford market priced housing locally to rent or purchase. It is housing provided with either public or private subsidy for people who would otherwise be unable to resolve their housing requirements in the local

housing market because of the relationship between housing cost and local incomes. Such housing should remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, the subsidy should be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

- 5.22 Increasing the number, type and distribution of affordable housing for both rent and subsidised sale is a key priority for West Oxfordshire. This includes the delivery of new affordable housing through market housing schemes as well as the provision of small scale affordable housing schemes in villages where there is housing need which is best met locally.
- 5.23 Taking account of the priority need for affordable housing in West Oxfordshire, a contribution towards affordable housing will be sought from all new additions to the stock of market housing i.e. any scheme involving a net gain of one or more dwellings.
- 5.24 In terms of the amount of affordable housing to be provided, the Council wishes to achieve at least 35% of all new homes built in West Oxfordshire during the plan period as affordable homes (equivalent to at least 100 additional affordable homes a year). Whilst the housing needs assessment justifies a higher target than this, the 35% overall target is considered to be a pragmatic response to recent delivery levels as well as future delivery and funding challenges.
- 5.25 As some new housing sites will only be viable at a low level of affordable housing provision, other sites will need to deliver affordable housing at a level higher than 35% in order to achieve the overall target. Viability evidence and past delivery has identified that 50% affordable housing is viable in much of the District although lower proportions are viable in Witney and Carterton. For this reason, the Council will adopt a differential approach whereby in Carterton the proportion of affordable housing sought will be 35%, in Witney 40% and across the rest of the District 50%. It is acknowledged that proposals need to be economically viable and the Council will reassess these requirements where this is demonstrated to be necessary by a viability assessment that has been independently validated.
- 5.26 With regard to the type and size of affordable homes, this will need to reflect the current housing strategy, local housing need and relevant site constraints. Based on local needs, the Council is seeking, as a guide, an overall mix of affordable housing in the following proportions:
- 65% to be one and two bedroom homes to meet the needs of younger single and couple households, older people and small family households;
 - 35% to be three and four bedroom homes.
- 5.27 In terms of tenure, there is a significantly greater need for rented accommodation than for the various forms of intermediate housing therefore a ratio of 2:1 in favour of rented homes will be generally sought.

- 5.28 In line with national policy, the priority is for new affordable housing to be provided on-site so that it contributes towards creating a mix of housing. However, the Council recognises that for very small developments, the provision of affordable housing on-site may not always be possible and can lead to lengthy negotiations in relation to viability and delivery. For this reason, the Council will be prepared to accept a financial contribution towards affordable housing from schemes of 1-5 dwellings (net) rather than requiring on-site provision. This approach will have the advantage of providing greater certainty to all parties from the outset and will also reduce the length of time spent in negotiations.
- 5.29 In line with the NPPF, the Council will seek to ensure that, having regard to issues of viability, any commuted sum paid by a developer or landowner is of 'broadly equivalent value' to that which would have been provided on site. Commuted sums received from developers will be used by the Council to subsidise provision of affordable housing throughout the District including the potential acquisition of land to facilitate the delivery of community self-build schemes in appropriate locations. Further information on the potential calculation of financial contributions is set out as part of the consultation in a separate background paper and the Council's approach will be developed further prior to the Local Plan being formally published in spring 2013.
- 5.30 For larger residential schemes of 6 or more dwellings (net) the Council will expect new affordable housing to be provided on-site. Only where it can be robustly justified, will provision on a separate site or through a financial contribution (of broadly equivalent value) be potentially considered as acceptable. This could include circumstances where it may not be physically possible or feasible to provide affordable housing on the application site or where there is evidence that a separate site would more satisfactorily meet local housing need. In some instances, a combination of on-site provision and a financial contribution may be considered appropriate.
- 5.31 In addition to securing new affordable housing through market housing schemes, the Council will welcome in principle other solutions to meeting the District's affordable housing need such as self-build. New build affordable homes contributing towards the District target will include those provided as an element of new residential development and additional homes proposed and built by housing associations or community trusts on other land. The Council will also continue to identify suitable sites for affordable housing through rural exception sites (RES). This approach has been in operation throughout West Oxfordshire (outside Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton) for over 20 years and has delivered over 350 new homes to meet needs which were not otherwise being met within the local community. This exception approach will remain available for 100% affordable housing schemes to meet specific local needs on land which would not be released for market housing.
- 5.32 The NPPF refers to the possibility of allowing some market housing in rural areas where this would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs. Any such proposal will be considered against the relevant policies of the Local Plan including in particular Core Policy 2 – Locating Development in the Right Places. Where the site is in a location that would not normally be considered appropriate for new housing, it will be for the developer or landowner to

demonstrate not only why the site is suitable for housing, but also why a traditional rural exception site approach (i.e. 100% affordable housing) is not appropriate or achievable. In other words, they will need to demonstrate why the market housing is needed to subsidise the delivery of the affordable housing. In such cases, any market housing would be expected to be a subsidiary element of a predominantly affordable housing scheme.

- 5.33 The Council has in place an existing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Affordable Housing (2007). This will be updated upon adoption of the Local Plan including further advice on the issue of self-build.

Core Policy 8 – Affordable Housing

Taking into account the housing needs of the area and subject to the economic viability of the specific development proposals, a contribution to affordable housing provision will be sought where a net gain of one or more market homes is proposed. The required level of affordable housing provision will be as follows:

- Carterton - 35%
- Witney - 40%
- Elsewhere in the District - 50%

In circumstances where it can be demonstrated that the level of affordable housing being sought would make a scheme unviable, a revised mix and type of housing will be considered before a lower level of affordable housing provision is accepted. Where external funding is available it may be applied to schemes to ensure affordability of rental levels or to increase the number or to change tenure or type of homes to meet priority needs.

For residential schemes of 1 – 5 dwellings (net) the Council will be prepared to accept an appropriate financial contribution towards off-site provision of affordable housing. Subject to viability considerations, any contribution should be of 'broadly equivalent value' to that which would have been provided on-site.

For residential schemes of 6 or more dwellings (net) the Council will require the provision of affordable housing on-site. Affordable housing mix and tenure will be responsive to identified local needs and site specific opportunities. An equivalent financial contribution for the provision of affordable housing on other sites in West Oxfordshire in lieu of on-site provision may be appropriate if it can be demonstrated that:

- It is not physically possible or feasible to provide affordable housing on the application site; or
- There is evidence that a separate site would more satisfactorily meet local housing need and contribute to the creation of mixed communities.

In some instances, a combination of on-site provision and a financial contribution may be appropriate.

West Oxfordshire District Council and its partners will work with Parish Councils, Registered Providers of affordable housing and local housing, community land and self build trusts to identify additional suitable rural sites for small scale affordable housing schemes to meet specific local housing needs which cannot be met in any other way. All new homes on these sites will remain affordable in perpetuity to people in housing need who have a local connection with the parish or appropriate adjoining parishes. Sites will be well-related to the existing built-up areas of towns and villages. Where family homes are proposed priority will be given to locations within a reasonable walking distance of a primary school.

Existing Housing

- 5.34 Opportunities to provide sustainable new housing can be constrained, especially outside the towns, so it is important to protect the existing housing stock and its character at the same time as accommodating sympathetic change to meet residents' needs through adaptation. Alterations, extensions and sub-division of existing housing remain a significant source of new homes.
- 5.35 In some instances, existing dwellings may come under pressure for redevelopment to alternative uses. In such cases the loss of a dwelling will only be supported where there is an overriding community benefit and/or the existing living accommodation is unsatisfactory. Given the attraction of a rural home within commuting distance of London and more restrictive planning policies on new housing in small villages, hamlets and open countryside in particular, existing modest properties are invariably the subject of proposals for substantial extension or rebuild.
- 5.36 A large country house is a traditional feature of our countryside. However it is essential that the addition of substantial new buildings and associated activity creates a positive addition to the landscape and meets sustainability objectives in order to outweigh the loss of existing smaller homes. Replacement dwellings in small villages, hamlets or open countryside should be on a one for one basis only.
- 5.37 Consideration also needs to be given to the issue of 'empty homes' in particular properties that remain vacant for more than 6-months. Whilst this is not a significant issue for West Oxfordshire with less than 1% of the existing housing stock being classified as a long-term empty home, the District Council, in appropriate circumstances works with relevant organisations and property owners to seek to bring properties back into occupation.

Core Policy 9 – Existing Housing

Changes to existing housing will be managed to maintain sustainable communities and a high quality environment in accordance with the following principles:

- the loss of existing dwellings to other uses will only be permitted where the dwelling does not provide satisfactory living accommodation or the proposed use will make a positive contribution to local services and facilities;
- alterations, extensions or sub-division of existing dwellings will respect the character of the surrounding area and will not unacceptably affect the environment of people living in or visiting that area. Sub-division of existing dwellings in the open countryside and small villages will be limited to large properties where continued residential use cannot be secured in any other way.

A new dwelling to replace an existing permanent dwelling which is not of historical or architectural value will be permitted provided the character and appearance of the surrounding area is not eroded and where there would be no harmful impact on ecology or protected species. In open countryside any replacement dwelling should make a positive contribution to the area.

The District Council, in appropriate circumstances, will work with relevant organisations and property owners to ensure the number of empty homes is kept to a minimum. Proposals to bring empty residential properties back into occupation will be favourably supported in principle.

Travelling Communities

- 5.38 There is a need to ensure the housing needs of the whole community are met including travelling communities such as Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. At present in West Oxfordshire there are ten authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites, two in the northern half of the District (at Kingham and Chadlington) and eight in the southern half (Standlake, Alvescot, Minster Lovell, Weald, Carterton, Stanton Harcourt, Barnard Gate and Eynsham).
- 5.39 Most of the sites are small, accommodating one family. The Beeches, near Chadlington, and the site at Ting Tang Lane, near Minster Lovell, are the two largest sites with in excess of 20 and 30 pitches respectively. Other than The Furlong at Standlake which is owned and managed by Oxfordshire County Council, all the sites are privately run. There are five sites for Travelling Showpeople in the District, all privately owned, at: Cassington, Witney, Shilton, Sutton and Freeland. In addition there is an unauthorised encampment of new travellers at Eynsham (for 5 families) and a currently unoccupied unauthorised development for 8 pitches for Gypsies at Tar Road, Stanton Harcourt.

- 5.40 The Government is aiming to increase the number of authorised sites in order to address under provision, maintain an appropriate level of supply and allow travellers to access education, health, welfare and employment. In terms of future requirements for travelling communities within the District, a partial review to the South East Plan recommended, in 2009, that 14 new pitches were required for Gypsies and Travellers and 12 for Travelling Showpeople in West Oxfordshire between 2006 and 2016. However some of the background evidence underpinning the requirements for Gypsies and Travellers in particular has been called into question and in light of the proposed abolition of the South East Plan, it is for West Oxfordshire District Council to determine the level of provision and where sites should be located, in consultation with the local community and having regard to historical demand.
- 5.41 The Oxfordshire Needs Assessment for Travelling Showpeople (2008) identified the need for 13 new plots in West Oxfordshire by 2018. (Six plots have since been given planning approval at Freeland.) Projecting this trend forward to 2029 (using a 3% compound growth rate to household formation), indicates the need for an additional 3 plots between 2018 and 2029; the indication is, therefore, that there is a need for the provision of a further 10 plots by 2029.
- 5.42 To obtain a more accurate and up to date assessment of Gypsies and Travellers requirements, the District Council has jointly commissioned an accommodation needs assessment (with Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire Council). This study will be published in autumn 2012 with a view to informing a partial review of the Local Plan or the preparation of a separate development plan document (DPD). In the interim, we will adopt the following criteria-based approach.

Core Policy 10 – Travelling Communities

New pitches/plots/sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be provided in accordance with identified needs by:

- safeguarding existing sites
- extending existing sites where appropriate
- bringing forward new sites if required, either through planning permission or through the development plan process.

New sites should meet the following criteria:

- be in or near existing settlements with access to local services and facilities, especially schools, shops and healthcare;
- be well located to the highway and public transport network, as well as having safe and convenient vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access;
- be of an appropriate scale not to have an adverse impact on environmental or heritage assets and the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- not conflict with the objectives of Green Belt designation;

- not be located in areas at flood risk; and
- be designed in accordance with Government's Good Practice guidance.

Key Evidence

Settlement Sustainability Report (2010)
Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
Previous consultation responses
West Oxfordshire demographic projections (2012)
Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment (2007)
Housing Land Supply Position Statement (January 2012)
West Oxfordshire Housing Needs Assessment (2008)
West Oxfordshire Housing Needs Assessment Update (2011)
Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessment for the Thames Valley region (2006)
Needs Assessment for Travelling Showpeople (2008)
Gypsy and Traveller Transit Study (2010)
Affordable Housing Viability Study (2009)
Affordable Housing Viability Study Position Statement (2011)
Affordable Housing Paper (2012)
A Framework for an Oxfordshire Extra Care Housing Strategy (2008)
Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) – various

Sustainable Economic Growth



6. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Our economic objectives include:

CO8 Achieve sustainable economic growth which improves the balance between housing and local jobs, provides a diversity of local employment opportunities, removes potential barriers to investment and provides flexibility to adapt to changing economic needs.

CO9 Achieve a prosperous and sustainable tourism economy.

CO10 Promote safe, vibrant and prosperous town centres and resist proposals that would damage their vitality and viability or adversely affect measures to improve the centres.

CO11 Maintain or improve where possible the health and wellbeing of the District's residents through increased choice and quality of shopping, leisure, recreation, arts, cultural and community facilities.

CO12 Improve access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.

- 6.1 This section sets out how we will seek to meet our economic objectives particularly through our policies on the provision of land for business, the rural economy, tourism, community facilities and town centres.
- 6.2 West Oxfordshire has a successful local economy and is weathering the recession relatively well. Current available statistics³ indicate that there are about 56,000 workers and economic activity rates are high at 85%. Unemployment has increased in recent years but at 4% (modelled) remains at about half the national average.
- 6.3 There are about 49,000 jobs in the District with significant manufacturing, engineering, retail and tourism sectors. The area has particular specialisms including biomedical equipment manufacture, engineering and motorsport, with significant employers such as Owen Mumford, Siemens MR Magnet Technology, Abbot Diabetes Care and the Lotus and Caterham F1 Teams. The District also has a long history with military aerospace and today RAF Brize Norton is seeing continued investment as the UK's main strategic military air transport base and will employ up to 6,000 personnel.

³ Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics www.nomisweb.co.uk

- 6.4 The District's town centres are vibrant with vacancy rates much lower than national averages, but require continued investment to face off challenges in the future as shopping habits change and competition increases. The attractive environment of the District, including the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, River Thames and its tributaries, historic market towns and villages, and Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site are also significant economic assets for the visitor economy. Employment in agriculture provides fewer than 2% of jobs but remains an important sector economically and for landscape management.
- 6.5 Many businesses are located within or next to one of the larger towns and villages where the largest business sites are generally located but there is also a diversity of mainly smaller business sites and businesses in the rural area. 70% of businesses employ less than 5 workers. The formation of new businesses is steady but survival rates are strong.
- 6.6 The District is surrounded by strong and growing economic areas with better strategic transport links – notably Oxford, Swindon, Banbury, Bicester and Science Vale, an area of high technology science related business and research around Didcot and Abingdon. These areas attract significant numbers of workers from the District which leads to congestion on major roads - the Census 2001 identifying 18,000 out-commuting workers although 10,000 also commuted into the District. Up to date 2011 Census commuting data is yet to be released.
- 6.7 There are several challenges to delivering sustainable economic growth which need to be tackled. Traffic congestion within towns and major routes such as the A40 impacts on commuters and businesses alike. The availability of high speed broadband is critical to future economic success but there is likely to be a market failure in its delivery to rural areas which needs to be addressed. There is a continuing need for modern, good quality business premises and the amount of available business development land will need to be increased to meet longer term needs.
- 6.8 The skill base of the workforce is good but there is a shortage of workers with technical skills across the area and employers seek improved 'work readiness' from school leavers. Population projections indicate that our workforce is ageing and will increase to 2016 before declining slightly over the remainder of the plan period.
- 6.9 In accordance with national policy, we must plan for sustainable economic growth to meet the needs of business and address barriers to growth. To achieve our objectives the strategy is to:
- Maintain a flexible supply of land for businesses in accessible locations adjacent to the main towns to support key industrial, manufacturing, and engineering sectors, the Oxford Bioscience Cluster, aviation businesses related to RAF Brize Norton and facilitate investment in the stock of business premises.
 - Address transport congestion in towns and on major routes - notably the A40. Although there are proposals to address traffic congestion in Witney addressing wider access issues including the A40 will not be a quick fix. We will continue to lobby for wider network improvements and investigate longer term options to improve access to Oxford along the A40 corridor.

- Improve the availability of high speed broadband and mobile connectivity through working in partnership with providers and ensuring new development is 'broadband ready'.
 - Maintain a labour supply with appropriate skills and 'work readiness' with a level of housing which broadly maintains the labour supply at 2011 levels whilst continuing to monitor commuting levels and the impacts of changes to pension and retirement ages.
 - Invest in our town and village centres as the first choice for shopping and leisure development to reinforce their role, enhance their environments and manage car parking to ensure they remain accessible and attractive to shoppers and visitors.
 - Promote a successful visitor economy which benefits visitors and local communities alike whilst protecting and enhancing the attractive environment of the District – itself a key economic asset.
 - Support a vibrant rural economy through tackling broadband roll out, facilitating homeworking, small rural business premises and diversified farming and land based sectors.
- 6.10 The strategy provides potential for up to 10,000 jobs whilst broadly maintaining the labour supply at 2011 levels and as such provides significant potential to improve the balance of labour and jobs. This will need to continue to be monitored and meeting the objective of reduced commuting will be achieved through a combination of factors including supporting home working, improved broadband and rural business opportunities.
- 6.11 To fully deliver our economic objectives and strategy, the Council will continue to work in partnership, including with the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to ensure businesses have the support, skills, transport, ICT and other infrastructure they need to grow sustainably. The following policies set out our approach to land for business, the rural economy, tourism, town centres and community facilities. Other relevant issues are addressed in the housing, infrastructure and transport policies as well as the sub area strategies.

Land for Business

- 6.12 For the purposes of this section, Business Development Land and Business Sites include land and sites with office-based, industrial and warehouse/storage uses (known as the B-use classes). Business uses under this section do not include housing, care homes, retail or leisure uses which are considered elsewhere in the strategy.
- 6.13 Our evidence indicates the need for more business development land to allow for the movement and expansion of business, start ups and inward investment. Based on past take up rates, the evidence suggests a need for around 60ha of business development land over the plan period focussed on the main towns where it can be best served by transport and communications infrastructure, and support a range of businesses including larger scale businesses and high technology sectors. About 25ha of this additional land is already identified within existing planning permissions and

remaining adopted local plan allocations particularly at Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton.

- 6.14 Provision of a further 10ha is identified as part of the West Witney Strategic Development Area (see Core Policy 27). The remainder is not allocated, as small scale schemes and business extensions have accounted for a significant proportion (about 25%) of business land supply in the past and will continue in towns, villages and the countryside. The uptake of land and need for further allocations will continue to be monitored.
- 6.15 There are many business sites already throughout the District and the loss of such sites would undermine the sustainability of our market towns and rural communities and the economic diversity of West Oxfordshire. The Council will therefore seek the retention of all business sites where there is an ongoing prospect of a suitable business use and will support the expansion and redevelopment of sites of an appropriate scale to enable businesses to expand, adapt and make the most efficient use of this resource. The scale of new business expansion or redevelopment will need to reflect the character of the area and access opportunities.
- 6.16 In some cases, a continuing business use may not be suitable or economically viable and in these circumstances non-business uses will be acceptable. Where the issue is one of viability the Council will require robust evidence, including evidence of a robust marketing campaign, to demonstrate that continuing business use has been fully tested before non-business uses are permitted. Further guidance will be issued by the Council on the marketing evidence that will be expected. In considering the loss of existing business sites the Council will also take account of prevailing economic conditions. During economic downturns the retention of business sites will be important to aid long term recovery.
- 6.17 In limited circumstances non-business uses may also be allowed on business sites where they offer community benefits which cannot otherwise be achieved. Some small scale retail and other uses such as cafés, crèches, or trade counters, may improve the functionality and attractiveness of a business site and help to facilitate the refurbishment and regeneration of premises. This will be supported although retail and leisure proposals on business sites, unless ancillary, will be considered in the light of the town centre first approach (See Core Policy 16).

Core Policy 11 – Land for Business

Business Development Land and Business Sites are those which include predominantly office-based, industrial or storage and distribution activities (B class uses) or related sui generis uses. Including existing commitments, the following Business Development Land provision is identified to meet business needs:

Witney - 20ha to the west of Witney including 10ha as part of the West Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA).

Carterton - 5ha primarily at West Oxon Business Park and Land at Ventura Park with a further 2.5ha on land with recently built premises.

Chipping Norton - 5ha to the east of the town including, the Former highways depot (1ha), former Parker Knoll factory site (2ha) and potential for a further 2ha of land as part of the previous mixed use local plan allocation north of London Road.

Other Towns Villages and Rural Areas – At least 5ha within existing commitments with 2ha at Lakeside Standlake (previous Local Plan allocation).

The take up of land for businesses will continue to be monitored and the need for further provision considered through Neighbourhood Plans and/or a separate site allocations document.

Existing Business Sites

Proposals to improve the effectiveness of business operations on existing business sites will be supported where commensurate with the scale and character of the area. This may include redevelopment, replacement buildings or the expansion of existing business uses.

Non-business uses will only be allowed on business sites where any of the following criteria are met:

- it can be demonstrated that the site or premises are not reasonably capable of being used or redeveloped for business purposes; or
- the site or premises are considered unsuitable on amenity, environmental or highway safety grounds for business uses; or
- the use includes community, leisure, or retail uses which are complementary and compatible to the functioning of the business site and the local community, and conform with Core Policy 16 – Town Centres
- substantial community benefits would be achieved by allowing alternative forms of development.

Supporting the Rural Economy

- 6.18 Our rural areas are attractive places to live but we must seek to ensure that they remain attractive places to work so that rural communities remain vibrant. Our evidence indicates that businesses in rural areas are typically engaged in similar activities to our urban areas with a high proportion of service based activities, although businesses tend to be smaller and there is more home working and self employment. High speed broadband and mobile telecommunications will be crucial to the success of such businesses.
- 6.19 In the interest of sustainable development, our strategy directs larger businesses and employers to the main towns which have generally better transport connections, but continues to support the rural economy through a positive approach towards homeworking, flexible working practices, tourism, small rural business premises and diversifying the land based sector. The land based sector remains important to protecting home food production and reducing food miles and also plays an essential role in shaping and maintaining the character of the countryside. The prospects of the sector are good but there is a continuing need to adapt to changing subsidy regimes, emerging markets, environmental, hygiene and animal welfare standards as well as climate change.
- 6.20 Diversification into non-agricultural activities can be vital to the continuing viability of many farm businesses. The need to protect home food production is important to reduce food miles and profitable farming is also the most cost effective means of delivering environmental and landscape management benefits. Farm diversification may include bed and breakfast/self catering units, equestrian development, farm shops, processing farm produce, and the letting of existing buildings for office space, or industrial and commercial uses.
- 6.21 The Council is generally supportive of well-conceived farm diversification schemes which secure long term benefits for farming and the local economy. New activities should not conflict with agricultural operations, which should remain the dominant land use. Farm diversification is not an opportunity for asset stripping to raise short term revenues and new economic activities should remain part of the farm business to provide an ongoing additional farm income. Existing buildings should be reused where feasible and proposals should conform to Core Policy 13. New buildings will only be allowed where they are required for a diversification proposal which is a genuine extension of and fully integrated with the existing farm business (e.g. buildings necessary for processing of farm produce, farm shops selling local farm produce) or to meet a specific economic need which cannot otherwise be met in the locality including within or on the edge of a nearby village or town.
- 6.22 All proposals should be consistent in scale with a rural location and not result in the loss of amenity to other local businesses or residents, or spoil the enjoyment of other users of the countryside. New buildings will be preferably located within or adjacent to a group of existing farm buildings and be located and designed to integrate with the landscape having regard to local landscape appraisals, policy areas and guidance in the Cotswolds AONB management plan (see Core Policy 17). Proposals for farm shops will be assessed to ensure that they are proposed to be a genuine retail outlet of agricultural produce from the local area and in terms of their

impact on existing village or town centre shops serving the local community. Conditions will be applied limiting the type of goods sold and proportion of externally sourced goods. A farm business plan should accompany applications for farm diversification so that the proposal can be properly assessed. The Council will issue further guidance on the content of farm business plans.

- 6.23 There are many large country estates in the District including Blenheim, Cornbury, Heythrop and Ditchley. Such estates manage a variety of natural, historic and cultural assets of importance locally, nationally or internationally, often in addition to a farming enterprise, business premises and tourist facilities. These estates continue to seek to diversify their incomes in a similar way to farm diversification. The diversification of an estate economy will be supported where it provides a sustainable approach to balancing economic activity with the conservation and enhancement of natural and built assets. This should be demonstrated through an estate management plan which follows the same principles set out above for farm diversification proposals.

Core Policy 12 - Supporting the Rural Economy

The Council will work in partnership to promote improved broadband and mobile telecommunications in rural areas and adopt a positive approach to well designed proposals to facilitate homeworking and flexible working practices (such as live-work) which maintain the amenity of existing residents. Any proposals involving new housing will also be considered against other relevant policies.

New small business sites in or adjacent to towns and villages identified in Core Policy 2 will be supported where they are commensurate with the scale and character of the area and would meet a business need which cannot otherwise be met in the locality.

Development proposals which make a positive contribution to farm or country estate diversification will be supported where they:

- operate as part of and will continue to add value to the core farm/estate business
- remain compatible and consistent in scale with the farm/estate operation and a countryside location
- re-use existing buildings where feasible in accordance with Core Policy 13
- are supported by a farm business plan or estate management plan

Proposals involving new and replacement buildings will be allowed where required for diversification proposals which are fully integrated with an existing farm business or where they meet a specific economic need which cannot otherwise be met in the locality, including within or on the edge of a nearby village or town.

Proposals for farm shops will be permitted where they form part of a diversification scheme to sell produce from the farm or farms in the immediate vicinity and do not seriously undermine the viability and vitality of shopping provision in existing villages. Conditions will be imposed to limit the proportion of ancillary goods.

Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings

- 6.24 Many existing buildings throughout West Oxfordshire, such as barns, mills, schools and chapels, are built in the vernacular style (using local building styles and materials). These buildings are a key part of the character and history of settlements and of the wider landscape and many are listed for their architectural or historic interest. Many are no longer needed for their original purpose due to changing farming techniques, school and church closures. The best way to secure the upkeep of such buildings and their contribution to the character of the area is to keep them in active use. Re-using buildings also reduces the need for new building and creates the opportunity to provide unobtrusive economic activities, community facilities and housing. Re-use of existing buildings will continue to help deliver local housing and economic objectives, particularly in the rural areas.
- 6.25 In accordance with the overall strategy, conversion to residential use is more appropriate within towns and villages with services and facilities. Elsewhere, priority will be given to re-use for business, tourism or community uses where non-residential uses would be viable and suitable for the location. Suitable buildings for re-use will be of substantial and permanent construction and the Council may require structural surveys to demonstrate buildings are capable of conversion. Ecological surveys are also likely to be required as many redundant buildings provide habitats for protected species such as Barn Owls and bats.
- 6.26 It is not the objective to prolong the life of buildings (such as modern farm buildings) that are harmful to the high visual quality of the area. There are a large number of modern, mainly agricultural, buildings scattered throughout the District. Whilst necessary for modern agriculture, many detract from the visual quality of the countryside and their general re-use, particularly for business use, could lead to a very dispersed pattern of development contrary to the overall strategy and having an adverse impact on the character and tranquillity of rural areas. Opportunities for the re-use of non-vernacular buildings, particularly modern farm buildings, will therefore be limited to more sustainable locations and where they contribute to farm diversification.
- 6.27 The visual impacts of a proposed building conversion (including light pollution), accessibility and traffic impacts will need to be weighed alongside the contribution of the building to the character and architectural history of the area, or the potential for the building to meet local economic or social needs. In some cases a building may be so isolated and inaccessible, or harmful to the character of the surrounding area, that re-use is not appropriate, particularly in the Cotswolds AONB.
- 6.28 If the principle of conversion is accepted it is important that detailed proposals respect or improve the original character of the building and its setting. Further guidance is available in the West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD.

Core Policy 13 - Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings

The re-use of existing non-residential buildings will be supported where all of the following criteria are met:

- the form and design of the building(s) are in keeping with the surroundings prior to conversion.
- the building(s) are capable of conversion to the proposed use without excessive alteration or extension and without removing features of architectural or nature conservation interest.
- the building(s) are suitably located for the scale and type of the proposed use, having regard to the level of accessibility to settlements, facilities and services and impact on the character and amenity of the area.

The re-use of non-vernacular buildings, including modern farm buildings, will only be allowed within or adjoining service centres or villages* or where it forms part of a farm diversification scheme (see Core Policy 12) unless the proposed re-use will address a specific local need which would not otherwise be met.

Outside service centres and villages*, conversion to new dwellings will only be allowed where the existing building is not suitable or reasonably capable of re-use for business, recreational or community uses, tourist accommodation or visitor facilities or where the proposal will address a specific local housing need which would not otherwise be met.

* as defined in Core Policy 2

A Sustainable Tourism Economy

- 6.29 Tourism is an important and growing economic sector in West Oxfordshire estimated to be worth over £250 million to the local economy each year. This reflects the area's attractive countryside, including the Cotswolds AONB, historic Cotswold market towns and villages and a range of visitor attractions, including the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site. The District also has considerable water assets including the River Thames and its tributaries and the Oxford Canal on the District's eastern boundary. Most of these attractions have a cultural or historic affinity with the area and its rural character.
- 6.30 Through the Oxfordshire Cotswolds brand, the local tourism strategy seeks to capitalise on West Oxfordshire's inherent assets and promotes tourism development which complements and enhances them. The Council will continue the long held approach of seeking the optimum use of existing tourist facilities and encouraging small scale new tourist facilities and attractions which can be more easily assimilated into the landscape and local communities.

- 6.31 Larger new attractions, which generate significant visitor numbers, are more appropriate in or adjacent to the main towns, where there are public transport opportunities and traffic impact on rural roads can be minimised. For some facilities, such as hotels and restaurants, a town centre location will be most appropriate although other locations may be acceptable taking into account both the town centre first approach and specific locational and functional requirements.
- 6.32 Tourism investment and visitor spending can support the management and conservation of historic and natural sites, local traditions, events and the distinctive features of the Cotswolds AONB and other designated areas. Tourism enterprises and visitors are encouraged to support practical conservation initiatives, some of which are highlighted in Section 7 - Environmental and Heritage Assets.
- 6.33 Visitor-related facilities may offer benefits to existing local communities, such as supporting local food producers, shops and pubs or new recreational opportunities. Locating new visitor related development within or close to existing settlements will enable the potential wider community benefits to be realised whilst minimising the spread of development into the open countryside. In some cases tourism development in the open countryside may be justified if associated with a particular countryside attraction or a farm diversification scheme. Existing buildings should be utilised wherever possible although replacement buildings should be considered where this would result in a more sustainable development.
- 6.34 Camping and touring caravan sites are scattered throughout the District and many are small in size and of limited visual or environmental impact. The siting and screening of new sites will need careful consideration, particularly in the Cotswolds AONB, and appropriate existing buildings should be used for associated facilities where possible. Additional sites for static holiday caravans are not generally considered appropriate in West Oxfordshire because of the landscape quality and special character of the built environment. Well designed (non-caravan) holiday units are more appropriate. The intensification or extension of existing sites camping or caravan sites should achieve positive environmental improvements.
- 6.35 The location, scale and design of any new visitor related development must be appropriate to the area and its environmental impact will be carefully assessed and weighed against any economic and community benefits. Where tourist accommodation is proposed in locations where new dwellings would not normally be permitted the Council will impose planning conditions or require legal agreements restricting buildings to holiday accommodation use.
- 6.36 The after-use of former mineral workings in the Lower Windrush Valley may offer particular opportunities for leisure and tourism development. Existing recreational uses include walking, fishing, horse riding, windsurfing, sailing, banger racing, power boating and water skiing. The after-use strategy established in the County Minerals and Waste Local Plan has been for the more intensive water based recreation to be focussed in the Standlake area with lower key recreation uses such as angling, walking and non-intrusive leisure uses and provision for nature conservation elsewhere in the valley. This strategy continues to be appropriate, notably as the more intensive leisure uses are likely to be incompatible with nature conservation if in close proximity.

- 6.37 The Lower Windrush Valley Project was set up to co-ordinate habitat creation and conservation alongside achieving leisure opportunities – such as the Windrush Path. The work of the project has also identified opportunities to improve recreational access in the area by creating connections between existing rights of way. The Council will continue to work with the Project and County Minerals Authority to determine suitable after-uses. After-use proposals which offer a positive and comprehensive legacy for local communities and nature conservation interests will be supported.
- 6.38 The River Thames on the District's southern boundary is a significant asset in terms of its environmental quality and as a recreational resource. The Thames in West Oxfordshire flows through remote and tranquil open countryside. The Council will support low key tourism and leisure proposals along the Thames which are sensitive to and enhance where appropriate its ecological, landscape and heritage value.
- 6.39 In accordance with this approach and The Thames Waterway Plan, the further provision or extension of permanent base moorings and associated facilities will only be allowed in suitable locations off the main river channel. There is a suggested need for further overnight public visitor mooring facilities. Such moorings will be best located where there is access to facilities and services such as nearby local shops or pubs. Given the rural nature of the Thames in West Oxfordshire appropriate locations will be limited but the potential for further visitor moorings and associated facilities will be investigated.

Core Policy 14 - Sustainable Tourism

Tourism and leisure development which utilises and enriches the natural and built environment and existing attractions of West Oxfordshire to the benefit of visitors and local communities will be supported.

New tourist and visitor facilities will be located within or close to existing settlements and reuse of appropriate existing buildings wherever possible. In the open countryside new tourism and visitor facilities may be justified where there is a functional linkage with a particular countryside attraction or to secure the diversification of a farm enterprise or Country Estate.

Subject to specific locational or functional requirements, the town centre first approach will be applied to tourism and leisure development including hotels and conference facilities, theatres, museums, galleries, cinemas, restaurants, bars, pubs, nightclubs and more intensive sport and recreational uses.

Proposals in the Cotswolds AONB should maintain and enhance the landscape quality and biodiversity of the area and where possible support the objectives of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

In the Lower Windrush Valley the Council will continue to work with the Lower Windrush Valley Project and County Minerals Authority to identify appropriate opportunities for tourism and leisure development. Proposals which complement the rural character of the area and deliver comprehensive long term recreational access, community or nature conservation benefits will be supported.

The Council, working with the River Thames Alliance, will support tourism and leisure proposals which are sensitive to and where appropriate enhance the ecological, landscape and heritage value of the River Thames. The further provision or extension of permanent base moorings and associated facilities will only be allowed in suitable locations off the main river channel.

Retention and Development of Local Services and Community Facilities

- 6.40 Local services and community facilities include village and neighbourhood shops, post offices, pubs, community/youth centres and halls, theatres and museums, indoor and outdoor sports and leisure facilities, schools, education and training centres, libraries, doctor's surgeries and health centres, public toilets, crèches and children's nurseries, places of worship and other facilities which meet people day to day needs.
- 6.41 These facilities continue to be important in meeting the day to day needs of residents providing social meeting places, sports venues and essential local services to maintain healthy and inclusive communities. Surveys of parish facilities in our Settlement Sustainability reports have indicated that many settlements have seen the closure of schools, shops, post offices, public houses and other facilities. This is in part due to changing social and economic circumstances including the ways we now access many services using the internet or telephone. Economies of scale and public

service budget cuts are also leading to public services being concentrated in the larger centres of population. In other cases the high residential land values in the District make the closure and conversion of facilities such as shops and pubs attractive to investors. This is a threat to the sustainability of our communities particularly in the rural areas where such facilities can form the hub of social life.

- 6.42 Through the Localism Act the Government is implementing provisions to ensure that when important local services, buildings and amenity land (e.g. community halls, village shops, local pubs, community open space) come up for sale, local communities have an increased opportunity to bid to buy and take over the running of such assets that are deemed of value to the local community. Communities can nominate a wide range of assets that can be in either public or private ownership. The relevant provisions are known as the Community Right to Bid which gives local communities a legal right to nominate a local amenity as an asset of community value. This action then requires the local authority to maintain a list of assets of community value that have been nominated. When listed assets come up for sale or change of ownership, the Community Right to Bid then provides for a delay in the disposal process that will give community groups the time to develop a bid and seek to buy the asset when it comes on the open market. The Council is working to implement the new Community Right and will give further guidance on how it works and what support is available to local communities seeking to use this new opportunity.
- 6.43 The Council will continue its approach of resisting the loss of community facilities and services which meet the day to day needs of local communities. In considering proposals involving the potential loss or change of use of such facilities the Council, in consultation with the local community, will take into account the importance of the facility to the local community particularly in meeting day to day needs. To justify the loss of facilities it will need to be demonstrated that they are no longer viable (through a robust marketing exercise where possible) or are no longer required because equivalent or alternative provision will remain or will be provided to meet local needs.

Core Policy 15 - Local Services and Community Facilities

The Council will promote the development and retention of local services and community facilities to promote social interaction and healthy inclusive communities.

Proposals that would result in the loss of community facilities and services will only be supported where it can be clearly shown that appropriate alternative provision of at least equivalent suitability and accessibility, particularly by foot, will remain or that the existing use is no longer required or viable and is incapable of being made viable or adapted for other community uses. Where possible a robust marketing exercise will be required to demonstrate a lack of commercial or community interest in continuing the community facility or service.

Town Centres

- 6.44 Town centre uses include retail development, offices, leisure, entertainment, arts, culture and tourism development and intensive sport and recreation uses. The evidence in our retail needs assessment and town centre surveys has identified that the main town centres of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton, Burford and Woodstock are generally vibrant with low vacancy rates. The 'high street' however faces a number of challenges in future not least from tightening of consumer spending and changing consumer behaviour including increasing competition posed by the internet and competing centres such as Oxford. Strategies which support our high streets are even more vital.
- 6.45 Witney is the largest and strongest performing town centre. It has a strong convenience goods (e.g. food and groceries) and comparison goods (e.g. clothes, jewellery and electrical items) offer that attracts shoppers and visitors from a wide area. Recent developments including the construction of Marriotts Walk and extension of the Woolgate centre have further enhanced the role of Witney town centre as the primary shopping and leisure destination. Carterton town centre acts as an important centre serving the south of the District, particularly providing a convenience and service offer. It has been a long term aim to improve Carterton's shopping and leisure offer and this is now being progressed. Chipping Norton, serves the north of the District, and whilst it is performing reasonably well for a centre of its size it has been highlighted as benefiting from further foodstore provision and proposals are also well advanced to achieve this with the expansion of the Co-op in the town centre.
- 6.46 The main centres are supported by a number of smaller town, village and neighbourhood shopping centres. The historic market towns of Burford and Woodstock have a relatively large number of shops and facilities for their size reflecting their historic and tourist roles.
- 6.47 All of these centres are potentially vulnerable to out of centre proposals and our objective is to ensure continued investment in the town centres to enhance their shopping and leisure offer to meet residents' and visitor needs. The Retail Needs Assessment Update 2012 examines the consumer spending capacity to support significant additional shopping development over the plan period. Although well served at present the assessment identifies capacity to support additional shopping floorspace in Witney in the medium and longer term and recommends that this strategy starts to plan for phased extension to the town centre to accommodate new investment.
- 6.48 In Carterton there is significant capacity to 'claw back' trade that is leaking to other town centres, and with current proposals for a foodstore, the likely main future need will be to enhance the centre's comparison shopping and leisure offer. In Chipping Norton, limited capacity to support additional shopping floorspace was identified and not sufficient to support large scale retail development. Recognising their ability to support significant new town centre development, town centre development strategies have been prepared for Witney and Carterton (see Section 9). The Council will continue to work with these and other communities including through the Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan to promote and enhance the

attractiveness of all town centres addressing where possible issues of publicity, security, parking and accessibility, and improvements to the public realm.

- 6.49 To support our town centres we will seek to direct significant proposals for new shopping and town centre development, which provides for more than day to day needs, to our town centres wherever possible. Such proposals must follow the 'town centre first' approach established through national planning policy whereby the availability, suitability and viability of town centre sites to accommodate new town centre development should be fully explored, before edge of centre sites, and lastly out-of-centre sites are considered. New town centre development should be in accessible locations and appropriate in nature and scale to the role of the centre where it is located. Developments which are likely to attract customers from a significantly wider area than the centre's existing catchment may be considered out of scale with the role of that centre and may be better located within or adjacent to a larger centre.
- 6.50 The impact of proposed new town centre uses on the vitality of existing town centres and planned measures to improve them must also be fully considered. Impact assessments will be required for significant proposals (over 500m² net sales floorspace) where they are not in a centre or in accordance with a local or neighbourhood development plan and will be expected to be proportionate to the scale and type of development proposed. This threshold will help protect the town centres from medium and large out of centre foodstores and other shops which could have significant impacts. Proposals which will have a significant negative impact on the vitality and viability of town centres will not be supported.
- 6.51 Primary and secondary shopping frontages have been defined in Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. Primary shopping frontages have a high proportion of shops and are core frontages to protect to maintain the attractiveness and coherence of the centres. We will resist the loss of shops in these areas. Within the secondary shopping frontages, shops and other uses which complement the shopping and leisure role of town centres will be permitted including cafes, restaurants and other leisure and cultural uses, although care will be taken to avoid excessive concentrations of single uses that could cause amenity issues and affect the vitality of the area. Together these frontages form the primary shopping area.
- 6.52 Burford and Woodstock are smaller centres where the defined town centres encapsulate the primary shopping area and the definition of primary and secondary frontages is not appropriate. The loss of shops and other town centre uses will be resisted throughout these town centres.
- 6.53 The Council's current policy approach of providing free parking is a significant attraction to shoppers and assists in maintaining the vitality and viability of the town centres. The application of time management controls and enforcement seek to ensure that adequate levels of short-stay spaces are available to meet the needs of shoppers and other visitors to the area and helps to support retailers and the local economy. Car parking capacity is however nearing capacity in the town centres.

- 6.54 As a predominantly rural area where our town centres attract shoppers from a wide area, a continuing supply of available car parking space will remain of importance if the shopping centres are to continue to flourish in the face of competition from internet retailing and larger centres out of the District. Opportunities to increase car parking in our town centres are however limited and solutions such as decking may be required. Development proposals which will significantly increase car parking demand in town centres will be expected to make appropriate provision for increased public car parking whether through direct provision or financial contributions.
- 6.55 There are several garden centres and farm shops within the District which also provide shopping facilities to which our town centre policy will apply. The impact of the expansion or new provision of such shopping facilities on our town and village centres needs to be considered. Farm shops should be a genuine outlet of local farm produce and our approach is set out in Core Policy 12. Garden centres do not need to be located in open countryside and the most suitable locations will be adjacent to medium or larger settlements where traffic generated can be more easily absorbed by the road network. The goods to be sold should be genuinely associated with horticulture and gardening and planning conditions will be applied limiting the amount of sales floorspace and type of goods sold.

Core Policy 16 - Town Centres

Town, village and neighbourhood centres will be supported as the focus for shopping, leisure, community facilities and services. The Council will work with local businesses, residents, parish and town councils to ensure town, village and neighbourhood centres remain vibrant, accessible and meet local needs.

The following town centres are defined on the proposals map:

Principal town centre	–	Witney
Primary town centres	–	Carterton, Chipping Norton
Town centres with a significant tourist role	–	Burford, Woodstock

The Council will apply the sequential and impact tests set out in the National Planning Policy Framework to new shopping and other town centre development. Impact assessments will be required for significant proposals (over 500m² net sales floorspace) where they are not in a centre or in accordance with a local or neighbourhood development plan.

Primary and secondary shopping frontages are defined on the proposals map in Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton.

Within primary shopping frontages the loss of shops (A1 use) will be resisted.

Within secondary shopping frontages, shops and other town centre uses, such as restaurants or cafes, will be allowed where they would complement and enhance the shopping offer of the defined shopping frontage. The loss of town centre uses in these frontages will be resisted and excessive concentrations of single uses will not be allowed where this would be likely to cause issues of amenity or affect the vitality of the area.

In the town centres of Burford and Woodstock the loss of shops and other town centre uses will be resisted.

Where the loss of shops or town centre uses is proposed contrary to this policy it will need to be demonstrated through a robust marketing exercise that the site or premises are not reasonably capable of being used or redeveloped for these uses.

The Council will work in partnership to promote and enhance the attractiveness of all town centres addressing where possible issues of publicity, security, parking and accessibility, and improvements to the public realm. Development proposals which significantly increase car parking demand in our town centres will be expected to make appropriate public car parking provision or provide equivalent financial contributions.

Key Evidence

Economy Study 2007

Economy Study Update 2012

Retail Needs Assessment Update 2012

Settlement Sustainability Report (Updated December 2010)

Oxfordshire Cotswolds Tourism Strategy 2009-2012

Lower Windrush Valley Project

The River Thames Waterway Plan 2006-2011

Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan

A Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 2011 – 2016

West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD

Environmental & Heritage Assets



7. ENVIRONMENTAL AND HERITAGE ASSETS

Our environmental objectives include:

- CO5 Promote inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free communities.
- CO13 Conserve and enhance the high environmental quality of West Oxfordshire with protection and promotion of its diverse landscape, biodiversity and geological conservation interests, and its local cultural, heritage and environmental assets.
- CO14 Reduce the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.
- CO15 Achieve improvements in water and air quality.
- CO16 Minimise use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.

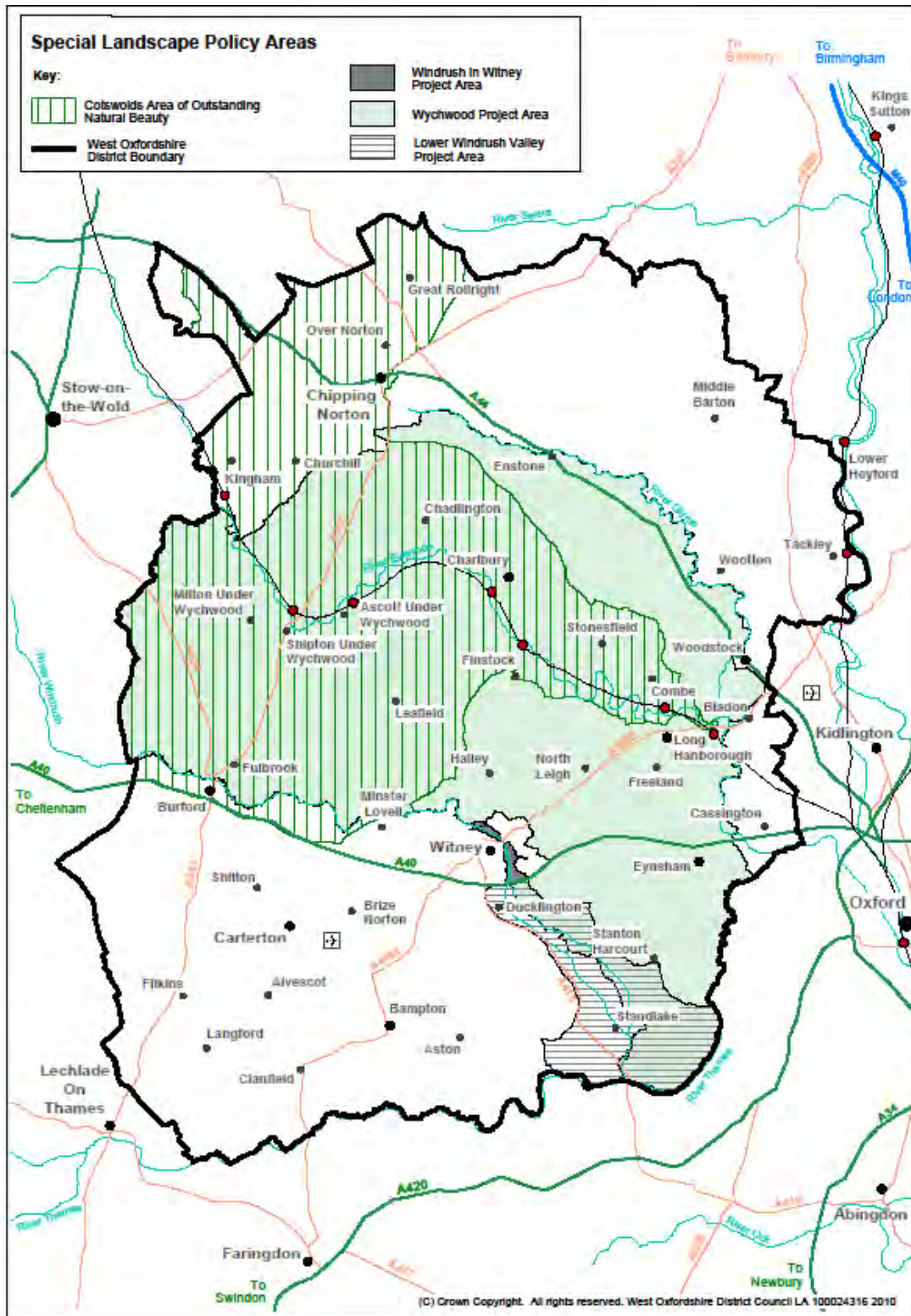
- 7.1 A key characteristic of West Oxfordshire is the quality and diversity of its natural and historic environment. One of the biggest challenges for the Local Plan is to protect, sustain and enhance this environment, while at the same time accommodating necessary development. This section sets out how this objective will be pursued locally through our approach to the conservation and enhancement of the District's environmental assets – its landscape character, biodiversity, green infrastructure, public realm, natural resources (water, waste, minerals) and the historic environment.

Landscape Character

- 7.2 West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district which embraces large areas of relatively unspoilt countryside and a diverse pattern of landscapes, including rolling uplands, river valleys, historic parkland, remnants of ancient forests, low-lying farmland and riverside meadows. The local distinctiveness and intrinsic quality of the landscape helps to define the sense of place, has been instrumental in shaping settlement patterns and provides an important resource, attracting people to live and work in the area, as well as contributing to the tourist economy. West Oxfordshire is renowned for its gentle scenic beauty, about a third of which has national recognition as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – part of the Cotswolds AONB.
- 7.3 Conserving and enhancing the quality of our landscape - whilst supporting suitably located and designed development necessary to promote the economic and social well-being of the area and its communities - are important objectives. Within the Cotswolds, great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, landscape and countryside, not just within the AONB but also where

- 7.5 This, together with guidance in the West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD, the more detailed appraisals of the landscape setting of the main towns (undertaken to inform strategic site allocations) and the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS), should be used to inform development proposals and to ensure they respect the distinctive landscape character areas.
- 7.6 A fundamental influence upon the landscape is the underlying geology and soil which in turn affect biodiversity, agricultural land quality and productivity and water management. Protecting and enhancing our soil resources is particularly important in a predominantly rural area such as West Oxfordshire, is an essential element of sustainable development and is advocated by Government (for example, in its 'Safeguarding our Soils – A Strategy for England' and through the NPPF).
- 7.7 As one of the most wooded areas of Oxfordshire, groups and individual trees (including aged and veteran trees, often associated with historic parkland), hedgerows, coppices and woodlands make a fundamental contribution to the landscape and character of West Oxfordshire, as well as having their own intrinsic beauty and value. They add to the area's biodiversity, provide historic continuity and psychological wellbeing, soften the built environment and perform a useful role for the micro and macro climate and ecosystem, including contributing to the water and carbon cycles. It is important that these existing natural features and their settings are protected, managed and, where appropriate, supplemented by new planting, at the individual site-scale through to the wider landscape-scale.
- 7.8 It is not just physical features which affect landscape character; large parts of rural West Oxfordshire are noted for their peace and tranquillity. Pollution, especially noise and light, can undermine this 'unspoilt' character. Any development should maintain or improve the existing level of tranquillity. A more detailed assessment of tranquillity will be undertaken as part of the further work on West Oxfordshire's Green Infrastructure resource.
- 7.9 In addition to more general district-wide landscape considerations, there are three areas in West Oxfordshire that are given special policy attention: the Lower Windrush Valley Project Area (an area of major landscape change associated with mineral extraction and after-uses, especially for recreation, tourism and nature conservation); the Windrush in Witney Project Area (a fundamental component of the town's attractive character); and the Wychwood Project Area (a project that aims to revive the landscape character and mix of habitats found in the area during the Middle Ages). These three areas, together with the Cotswolds AONB, will continue to be identified for special landscape protection and enhancement (see Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2 - Special Landscape Policy Areas



Core Policy 17 - Landscape Character

The quality, character and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's natural environment, including its landscape, tranquillity, geology, countryside, soil, and biodiversity, will be conserved and enhanced.

New development should respect and, where possible, enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive natural and man-made features of the local landscape, including individual or groups of features such as stonewalls, trees, hedges, woodlands, rivers, streams and ponds.

New development should not result in the loss of trees, woodlands or hedgerows, or their settings, which are important for their visual, amenity, historic or biodiversity value.

When determining development proposals within or impacting upon the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, high priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the area's landscape and scenic beauty.

Special attention and protection will be given to the landscape and biodiversity of the Lower Windrush Valley Project, the Windrush in Witney Project Area and the Wychwood Forest Area.

Biodiversity

- 7.10 The landscape and biodiversity of an area are inter-related. In the same way as West Oxfordshire has a rich and diverse landscape, so too does it contain a rich variety of habitats, supporting a wide range of wildlife and legally protected species. Both reflect the underlying soils and geological diversity of the area. About 4% of the District's countryside falls within sites identified for their biodiversity or geological importance, including 29 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the internationally important Cassington Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC), part of the Oxford Meadows SAC⁴. However, the bulk of our wildlife lives outside nature reserves and specifically protected areas so, in order to meet the Government's aim of minimising impacts on biodiversity and achieving net gains and improvements for nature (helping to meet the international commitment of halting and reversing the

⁴ The Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC), part of which is within West Oxfordshire's boundary, is designated by the European Commission as being of European importance for its biodiversity interest. A Habitat Regulations Assessment (add weblink) concluded that the Local Plan will have no likely significant adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC. Two key issues were, however, identified: air quality and recreational pressure. Further assessment of these issues will need to be made if more detailed proposals (for example through neighbourhood plans or a planning application) are likely to have a significant impact, in particular to ensure that there will not be any localised adverse effects resultant from construction or increased road trips within 200m of the European sites.

decline of biodiversity by 2020), it is important that biodiversity is carefully considered in relation to all development proposals.

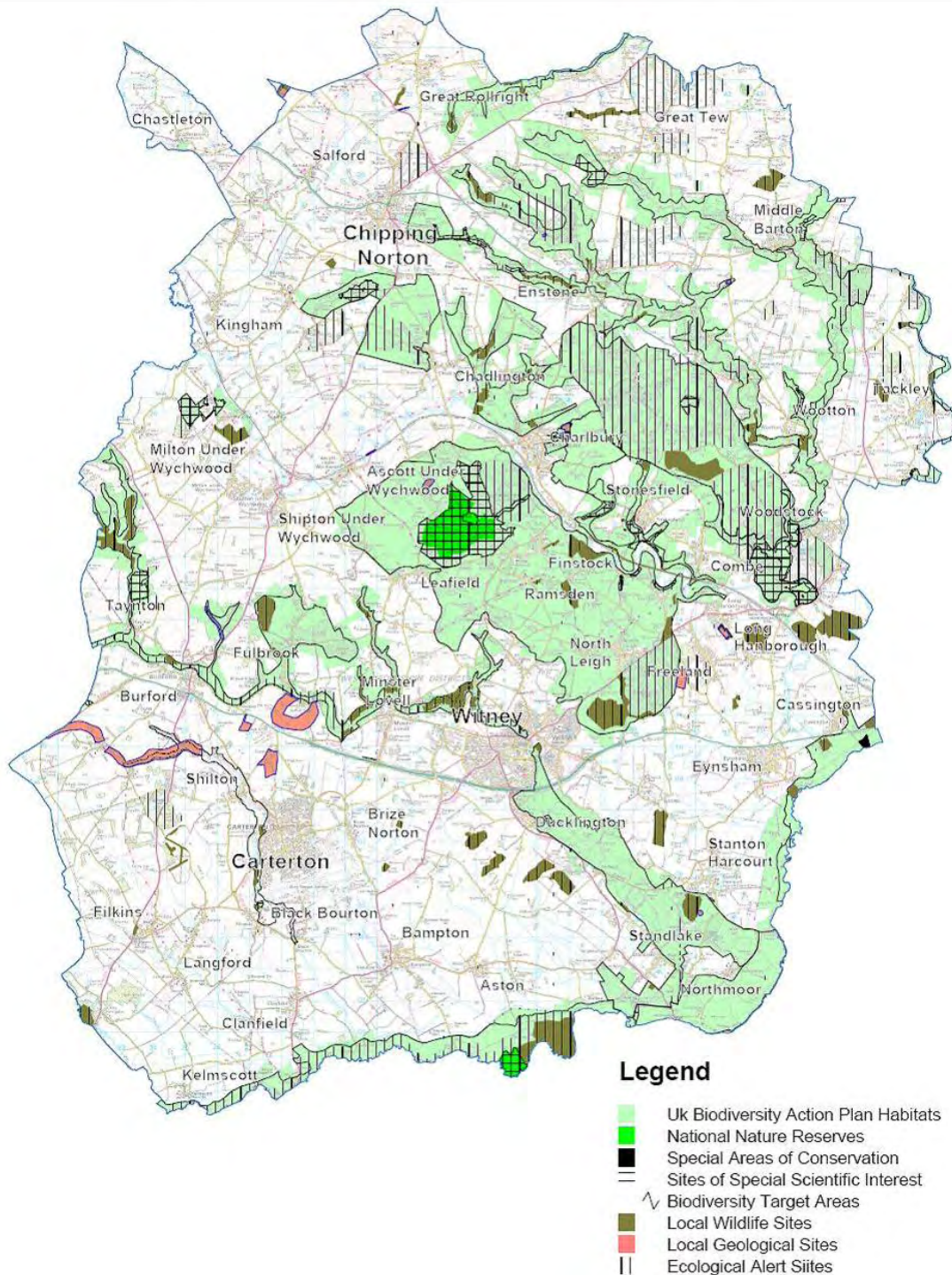
- 7.11 Biodiversity protection and enhancement provides clear benefits to nature but the benefits are far wider than this alone. Nature's services – using the ecosystem services approach advocated by the Government through the Natural Environment White Paper – include: cultural services to people and the economy (such as the role fulfilled by the Wychwood National Nature Reserve in terms of sense of place, recreation, tourism and education); regulating services (e.g. the water meadows along the River Thames and its tributaries providing natural flood relief and water purification and improving water quality); and provisioning services (ranging from wine and cider to food and timber production from our countryside).
- 7.12 In recognition of their wide ranging benefits, the protection of West Oxfordshire's wildlife and the conservation, enhancement and restoration of its biodiversity and geodiversity are promoted. A strategic approach is advocated, giving recognition to the contributions made by sites, areas and features, individually (following the national hierarchical approach to site and species protection⁵) and in combination.
- 7.13 Networks of natural habitats provide a particularly valuable resource and need protection and, where possible, reinforcement, integration and expansion, creating links between fragmented habitats to create greater coherence and resilience, not least because this will increase the opportunity for species and habitats to adapt to climate change and other pressures. Landscape features such as hedgerows, woods, rivers, ponds and flood plains can be invaluable components of these networks, providing wildlife corridors and stepping-stones in both urban and rural areas. The early identification of features of value is needed in any development proposal to ensure adequate measures are taken for their incorporation, enhancement and protection.
- 7.14 A partnership of conservation bodies in Oxfordshire (the Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum) has assessed the county's key strategic habitats and devised Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) (see Figure 7.3). These are the most important areas for wildlife conservation where targeted conservation action will have the greatest benefit. The main aim within CTAs is to restore biodiversity at a landscape-scale through maintenance, restoration and creation of Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats. In planning terms, they can be considered as potential areas of ecological constraint but, more positively, as areas of ecological opportunity. West Oxfordshire target areas include the Upper Windrush and Wychwood Forest.
- 7.15 The creation of coherent and resilient large scale ecological networks is being encouraged by the Government through the establishment of Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs), where the aim is to achieve significant and demonstrable enhancement

⁵ ** Circular 06/2005 provides guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biological conservation and their impact within the planning system. Section 11 of the NPPF is also of particular relevance.

through partnership working. The Cotswolds Ecological Networks Partnership have identified two Cotswolds NIAs; extensive parts of West Oxfordshire are covered by their Cotswolds Valleys NIA.

7.16 Figure 7.3 shows the key components of the local ecological networks, including: international, national and local sites of importance for biodiversity and geological conservation interest, and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration and creation.

Figure 7.3 - Local Ecological Networks



- 7.17 Development proposals affecting or related to these and other ecologically important areas will be expected to ensure that any potential harm is fully mitigated and where appropriate will be expected to contribute towards their enhancement. Some potential areas of improvement are identified in the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
- 7.18 In addition to the more strategic approach to habitat enhancement and creation, there are relatively small measures that can be undertaken through the development process that cumulatively will bring benefits for biodiversity, including incorporating bird boxes and bat boxes and providing wildlife friendly landscaping, green walls, balconies and roofs. The Code for Sustainable Homes includes specific credits for addressing ecology in developments. We will encourage this approach especially for larger development proposals (see Core Policy 3).

Core Policy 18 - Biodiversity

The overall biodiversity of West Oxfordshire shall be protected and opportunities to achieve a net gain actively pursued, including:

- giving sites of international nature conservation importance and nationally important sites of special scientific interest the highest level of protection from any development that will have an adverse impact
- requiring a Habitats Regulation Assessment to be undertaken of any development proposal that is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the Oxford Meadows SAC, particularly in relation to air quality and nitrogen deposition
- avoiding harm to locally important wildlife and geological sites and sites supporting irreplaceable habitats (including ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees), Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats or legally protected, notable or BAP priority species, other than in exceptional circumstances where the importance of the development significantly and demonstrably outweighs the harm and the harm can be mitigated through appropriate measures (for example, through the reinstatement of features or, as last resort, compensatory work) to achieve a net gain in biodiversity
- requiring all developments to enhance the biodiversity of the site or the locality, especially where this will help deliver networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure and BAP targets and meet the aims of Conservation Target Areas

Where appropriate, development will be expected to provide or contribute towards the provision of necessary enhancements to areas of biodiversity importance.

Public Realm and Green Infrastructure

- 7.19 High quality, accessible space is highly valued by the public. The condition of the public realm (which includes areas as diverse as Burford High Street and Langel Common in Witney) has a significant impact on the street scene and quality of life and is an important component of the visual, spatial and historic qualities that make an area special. Often no single authority, agency or owner has control over – or responsibility for – the management of such areas. Their maintenance and enhancement forms a fundamental aspect of good design. Such areas can be further enhanced by the introduction of Public Art (usually created by visual artists and craftspeople for a specific site).
- 7.20 Many areas within the public realm perform a wide variety of functions. This multi-functionality of space occurs especially with green space: for example by providing a wide range of ecosystem services, helping to enhance biodiversity through improved connectivity, linking urban areas to their rural hinterlands, contributing to water management, creating a sense of place, providing opportunities for exercise, active recreation and healthy living, enhancing image, and creating places where people want to invest, generating jobs and businesses. It therefore has economic and social benefits and mitigates the impact of climate change.
- 7.21 As a predominantly rural district, it is not surprising that West Oxfordshire has a wide variety of green space, albeit not all publicly accessible or only accessible along public rights of way. In order to achieve the widest range of linked environmental and social benefits, green infrastructure networks need to be planned and managed – More, Bigger, Better Managed and Joined. This will be particularly important for those areas of greatest potential change, e.g. the main towns (where an accessible, green infrastructure network, close to where people live, needs to be treated as integral to the design and planning of new development), and where existing projects are already underway or emerging, e.g. the Lower Windrush Valley Project, the Chimney Meadows Living Landscape Project and Conservation Target Areas.
- 7.22 The draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) identifies some potential improvements to the District's network of Green Infrastructure and where appropriate, development will be required to provide or contribute towards the provision of necessary improvements.

Core Policy 19 – Public Realm and Green Infrastructure

The existing green infrastructure assets* of West Oxfordshire will be protected and enhanced and new multi-functional areas of green space will be created to achieve improvements to the network (through extending areas and/or better management), particularly in areas of new development and/or where stakeholder/partnership projects already exist or are emerging.

New development should not result in the loss of existing green infrastructure unless replacement provision is made and is demonstrably better for the green infrastructure network in terms of quantity, quality, accessibility and management arrangements. Where appropriate, development will be expected to provide or contribute towards the provision of necessary improvements to the District's network of green infrastructure.

New development should not result in the loss of open space, sports and recreational buildings and land unless up to date assessment shows the asset is surplus to requirements or the need for and benefits of the alternative land use clearly outweigh the loss and equivalent replacement provision is made. Where appropriate, development will be expected to provide or contribute towards the provision of necessary improvements to open space, sports and recreational buildings and land.

*A Green Infrastructure Study (2011) has been undertaken for West Oxfordshire. Further guidance on green infrastructure will be published, including identifying opportunities for partnership working, strengthening and reinforcing networks, enhancing connectivity and achieving long term management.

Sport, Recreation and Children's Play

- 7.23 Play parks, playing fields, country parks, sailing lakes, golf courses, allotments and the like, while primarily designed for formal and/or informal recreation purposes, all contribute to the District's open space provision and fulfil the multi-functionality of green infrastructure. Recreational open space and built facilities, such as the Carterton Leisure Centre, are also fundamental to the quality of life and wellbeing of West Oxfordshire's residents, contributing to community-life and bringing health and social benefits.
- 7.24 Local assessments of recreation provision show some inconsistency in the quantity and quality of facilities within West Oxfordshire. Given the aim of raising recreation participation levels, especially amongst young people, combined with a growing population, there is likely to be greater demand and pressure on existing facilities, giving added emphasis to the need for their retention. The general principle of protecting existing facilities is especially relevant for open spaces with recreational value in built-up areas, where demand is greatest and replacement space can be difficult to provide (see Core Policy 19 - Public Realm and Green Infrastructure and Core Policy 5 - Supporting Infrastructure).

- 7.25 Additional provision will need to be made, both through new facilities and maximising the use of existing facilities such as in schools and village halls. We will work in partnership with schools and other organisations to make facilities available to the wider community by maximising the range, quality and effectiveness of joint use provision. The draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) identifies a number of necessary improvements to sport, recreation and play facilities across the District. New development will be expected to provide or contribute towards the provision of enhancements where appropriate.

Decentralised, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development

- 7.26 We have already explained how as part of the overall strategy all development will be expected to give explicit consideration to the efficient, prudent use and management of natural resources including the use of sustainable construction, minimisation of waste and recycling of waste. In line with the three-step 'energy hierarchy' (lean, clean, green) we also need to give consideration to specific proposals relating to decentralised energy supply and the use of renewable and low carbon energy.
- 7.27 As part of its response to the challenges of both climate change and the security of energy supply, the Government is committed to increasing the use and supply of renewable and low-carbon energy, emphasising the responsibility on all communities to contribute towards energy generation from such sources. Community-led initiatives have begun to emerge locally, for example the Community Renewable Energy Strategy for Chipping Norton and Eynsham's People Power Station Project. The Council encourages and supports such schemes.
- 7.28 A study into renewable energy in West Oxfordshire (the CAG Study) identified opportunities for renewable energy technologies that generate electricity (wind, solar PV, small scale hydro) or heat (biomass, solar thermal, heat pumps) or both e.g. biomass/wood fuel Combined Heat and Power (CHP). However, the District's high-valued landscape and historic environment impose significant constraints on large scale stand-alone renewable energy development. While in relation to wind development there may be some potential for larger, commercial, wind turbines, the development pattern is more likely to be one of single turbines and small scale community-owned clusters (e.g. connected through schools or village halls), scattered rather than being grouped in a particular part of the District. Similarly, the opportunities for large scale solar farms appear limited, whereas community solar clubs are becoming increasingly popular. The constraints – especially the AONB, landscape character, airfields and widely distributed settlement pattern – means each scheme will need a high level of testing.
- 7.29 Environmental and technical constraints on wind and solar power in the District, mean that to achieve significant levels of renewable energy generation, the development of biomass as a fuel source will need to play a crucial role. Biomass might be used in small scale power stations or District Energy Schemes. Biomass is a good, viable option for new build development (and existing buildings) where the necessary infrastructure such as underground pipework can be laid whilst major construction is underway. The County has a large number of small woodlands. These, together with larger woodlands and estates in West Oxfordshire and the

growing of short rotation coppice, should be capable of producing enough biomass to expand the existing but small local wood fuel industry. Not only will this provide renewable, low carbon energy, there will also be local environmental and economic benefits. Further work is underway to stimulate demand and develop local, sustainable supply chains through a West Oxfordshire Wood Fuel Network and a countywide Community Woodfuel Initiative.

- 7.30 When assessing applications for renewable/low carbon energy, the potential local environmental, economic and community benefits will be important considerations. Regard will also be given to scale, design, location, technology type and cumulative impact. The aim will be to minimise adverse impacts on landscape, biodiversity, heritage assets, highways and residential amenity.
- 7.31 In the Cotswolds AONB small scale renewable energy development is encouraged both by the Council and by the Cotswolds Conservation Board. As a result of a specific assessment of wind development in the Cotswolds AONB, the Board's definition of 'small scale' is the one that will be used in West Oxfordshire i.e. acceptable turbines serving individual businesses and communities are likely to be in the 2-50 kW range of capacity with overall heights to tip of, approximately, 15-20m.
- 7.32 Given the limited opportunities in West Oxfordshire for large stand-alone renewable energy schemes, there is a strong need to maximise the opportunities to incorporate decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy generation within non-energy developments. Planned tightening of the Building Regulations, with rising energy efficiency and carbon standards, means new development will be moving towards zero carbon from 2016. This will help to drive decentralised energy. In the meantime, on larger developments, where the density, layout and mix of uses, plus economies of scale, generally make decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources more feasible and viable, 10% of the predicted energy demand for a proposed development will be sought from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources.
- 7.33 The CAG Study highlighted the potential benefits of encouraging greater use of medium and large scale decentralised energy systems to reduce local CO₂ emissions. Such systems can either provide heat and power (CHP) or just heat (DH), the infrastructure for which can be installed at the same time as other services (water and drainage systems, etc), meaning new developments offer an ideal opportunity for such systems. With challenging renewable electricity and heat targets, CHP/DH schemes will become increasingly important, especially within the Strategic Development Areas. A feasibility assessment will be required for such sites (through the Master Planning/SPD process). Given the wider local benefits, the use of biomass CHP/DH will, in particular, need to be investigated.

Core Policy 20 - Decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy development

In principle, renewable and low-carbon energy developments will be supported, especially small-scale community-led initiatives for wind schemes, solar clubs and the use of biomass.

Renewable or low-carbon energy development should be located and designed to minimise any adverse impacts. In assessing proposals, the following local issues will need to be considered and satisfactorily addressed:

- impacts on landscape, biodiversity, historic environment, residential amenity, aviation activities, highway safety and fuel/energy security, including their cumulative and visual impacts
- opportunities for environmental enhancement
- potential benefits to host communities (including job creation and income generation).

New developments of 10 or more dwellings or 1000m² of non-residential floorspace should secure at least 10% of their energy from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources (including the use of Combined Heat and Power or District Heating where appropriate) unless, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, this is not feasible or viable.

The use of Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and District Heating (DH), especially biomass fuelled, will be encouraged in all developments.

A feasibility assessment for CHP/DH, including consideration of the use of local wood fuel biomass, will be required for:

- proposals on strategic development sites
- all non-domestic developments above 1000m² floorspace
- all residential developments in off-gas areas for 50 dwellings or more.

Water and Flood Risk

7.34 Water is a precious and finite resource. There is a need to protect not only the sources of water (both surface and underground) and the quality of water, but also the general environment associated with the water system. The use of policies in this Local Plan (e.g. on environmental protection, green infrastructure, biodiversity and sustainable construction) and adherence to national guidance and policy will assist in achieving the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and actions of the Thames River Basin Management Plan, particularly the requirement to protect and improve the status of water bodies, including their ecological value.

7.35 The River Thames and its tributaries contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the District and provide a valuable resource for wildlife, fisheries, landscape, tourism, public access and water related activities. Development that would have an adverse impact on this resource will be resisted.

- 7.36 Historically, settlements have tended to locate within river corridors, using the river as a source of water, food, transport and energy (the River Windrush, for example, was fundamental to Witney's blanket industry). After heavy rain, however, many of these water courses flood. Flooding from surface water drainage, ground water and sewers also occurs. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been prepared in conjunction with the Environment Agency to update the information on flooding in West Oxfordshire and includes an assessment of the likelihood of additional flooding as a result of climate change. A countywide study has also been undertaken into flooding from surface runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses: the Oxfordshire Flood Risk Assessment.
- 7.37 In terms of development in flood risk areas, a sequential, risk-based approach will be followed, steering vulnerable development to areas at lower risk of flooding. (The Government has published technical guidance, alongside the NPPF, giving further advice on flood risk.) Inappropriate development will not be allocated or permitted in flood risk zones 2 and 3 (which have higher probability of flooding), areas at risk of surface water flooding or areas with a history of groundwater flooding, or where it would increase flood risk elsewhere, unless there is over-riding need, an absence of suitable alternatives and flood risk can be satisfactorily addressed. All development at risk of flooding will require a flood risk assessment and must be designed to be flood resilient and resistant, for example, through raising floor levels, designing buildings to withstand the effects of flooding and achieve safe access and escape routes.
- 7.38 National advice, the SFRA and the West Oxfordshire Design Guide provide guidance on the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): drainage systems that mimic natural patterns and can ease surface water run-off, helping to avoid soil erosion, control pollution and enhance biodiversity. The use of SuDS will be required as part of any new development. Advice should be sought from the Environment Agency or the SuDS approval body.
- 7.39 The need for water management is especially relevant for West Oxfordshire, not just associated with the issue of flood risk (as exemplified by the summer floods of 2007) but equally water scarcity at times of drought. The District lies within an area of 'serious' water stress where there are limited water resources and yet a high and growing demand for water. Core Policy 3 - Prudent Use of Natural Resources seeks to maximise the efficient use of water.

Core Policy 21 – Flood Risk

Flood risk will be managed using the sequential, risk-based approach, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, of avoiding flood risk to people and property where possible and managing any residual risk (taking account of the impacts of climate change). In assessing proposals for development:

- the Sequential Test* and, if necessary, the Exception Test** will be applied
- all sources of flooding will need to be addressed and measures to manage or reduce their impacts, onsite and elsewhere, incorporated into the development proposal
- appropriate flood resilient and resistant measures should be used
- sustainable drainage systems to limit run-off will be integrated into the site design, maximising their habitat value and ensuring their long term maintenance
- a site-specific flood risk assessment will be required for all proposals of 1ha or more and for any proposal in Flood Zone 2 and 3 and Critical Drainage Areas
- only water compatible uses and essential infrastructure will be allowed in a functional flood plain (Flood Zone 3b)
- land required for flood management will be safeguarded from development and, where applicable, managed as part of the green infrastructure network, including maximising its biodiversity value.

* The aim of the Sequential Test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. Development should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding.

** If, following application of the Sequential Test, it is not possible, consistent with wider sustainability objectives, for the development to be located in zones with a lower probability of flooding, the Exception Test can be applied if appropriate. For the Exception Test to be passed:

- a) it must be demonstrated that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, informed by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; and
- b) a site-specific flood risk assessment must demonstrate that the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

Both elements of the test will have to be passed for development to be allocated or permitted.

Environmental Protection

- 7.40 Protection of the area's high environmental quality is an important objective of the Local Plan. Overall, air and water quality are generally good in West Oxfordshire and land contamination limited. In addition, the rural nature of the District means there are still areas of relative tranquillity and low levels of light pollution. Development has, however, the potential to affect the quality of land, soil health, air and water which, in turn, can impact upon public health and quality of life. New development, therefore, needs to be appropriate for its location and take into account known risks and the effects of pollution on health, the natural environment and general amenity.

Air Quality

- 7.41 While in general West Oxfordshire's air quality is good, there are specific areas experiencing problems, mainly attributable to road transport. Addressing air quality issues is, therefore, complementary to the aim of reducing the need to travel, achieving a reduction in transport emissions and addressing climate change. Poor air quality is linked to respiratory illness, heart disease and asthma.
- 7.42 When assessing development proposals, consideration will be given to the impact of the development on the air quality by both the operational characteristics of the development (industrial, commercial and domestic) and the traffic generated by it. The cumulative impact of development will also need to be assessed. Regard will be had to the National Air Quality Strategy objectives. Local air quality reviews have resulted in the designation of two Air Quality Management Areas in the District, each with an Action Plan: one at Chipping Norton and one at Witney. The Habitats Regulation assessment for the Local Plan has identified air quality as a significant issue in relation to the internationally important Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (see also Core Policy 18 - Biodiversity).

Contaminated Land

- 7.43 As West Oxfordshire was not an area of widespread heavy industry, contamination of land is not a major issue. In the few areas where contamination has occurred (for example associated with the former blanket industry and landfill sites), it could pose a threat both to the health of future users of the site and to the surrounding environment, especially if redevelopment takes place. Few sites are so badly contaminated that they cannot be reused. The level of remedial action required for such sites needs to be sufficient to overcome any acceptable risks to health or the environment, taking into account the actual or intended use of the site.
- 7.44 Contamination of land can also have an impact on water quality. The Environment Agency will seek appropriate controls to protect the water environment. Where development is proposed on contaminated land, the Agency will expect the developer to undertake site investigations to assess the nature and extent of contamination and cover the costs of any appropriate sustainable mitigation or remedial measures.

Soil

- 7.45 As a largely rural district, the sustainable management of our soils is especially pertinent. Soil is a fundamental natural resource, providing many essential services, including food production, water management and support for valuable biodiversity and ecosystems. It also plays a vital role in climate change, storing carbon. The NPPF and Core Policy 3 advocate the prudent use of natural resources including soils. In addition, Core Policy 22, in addressing pollution, also relates to the need to consider soil pollution. New and existing development should not contribute to or be put at unacceptable risk from, or be adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil pollution.

Hazardous substances, installations and airfields

- 7.46 West Oxfordshire has a number of installations handling notifiable substances, including high-pressure natural gas transmission pipelines. They are subject to stringent controls under Health and Safety legislation. New development will be carefully controlled in the vicinity of these installations, taking full consideration of advice from the Health and Safety Executive.
- 7.47 There are a number of existing airfields within and adjoining West Oxfordshire. The Civil Aviation Authority (for Oxford Airfield at Kidlington) and the Ministry of Defence (for RAF Brize Norton) have identified safeguarding areas around the airfields and provide advice on the types of development which might have an adverse effect upon aviation operations, such as wind turbines (an Airport Wind Turbine Safeguarding Zone covers the whole of West Oxfordshire), high buildings, increased lighting and developments which have the potential to increase the bird hazard risk.

Artificial Light

- 7.48 External lighting can perform a wide variety of functions ranging from floodlighting of sporting activities, to illuminating important buildings, to improving highway safety. These needs for lighting should be balanced, particularly in rural areas, against any adverse impact lights might have on the visual character of the area, the 'night sky', nature conservation or the reasonable living conditions of local residents.

Noise

- 7.49 Noise can have an adverse effect on the environment and on the health and quality of life enjoyed by individuals and communities. Although West Oxfordshire is a largely rural area, noise pollution is still an issue locally. For example, the active military airport of RAF Brize Norton and busy roads, such as the A40, are two sources of significant noise disturbance. Wherever possible, significant and intrusive sources of noise should be kept away from property and areas sensitive to noise. Where segregation is not possible, noise nuisance can be reduced through mitigation measures (e.g. bunding is proposed between the West Witney Strategic Development Area and the A40).

Water Resources

- 7.50 Rivers, lakes and ponds are sources of water supply but also important resources for nature conservation, fisheries, navigation, amenity and leisure. All these uses can be seriously affected by pollution. The environment associated with water bodies can be a sensitive area where the harmful effects of development are usually irreversible. In such areas, development which would have an adverse impact upon the environment will not be acceptable.
- 7.51 The geology of West Oxfordshire means that, in addition to surface water bodies, large areas of the District contain aquifers which are especially important in terms of groundwater as a source of drinking water, but also for their role in supporting surface water flows and wetland ecosystems. The threats to groundwater can be particularly severe. The Environment Agency publishes maps showing the Aquifer and Groundwater Protection areas and their vulnerability to contamination. The protection of these sensitive aquifers needs to be achieved at all times.

Core Policy 22 - Environmental Protection

Proposals which are likely to cause pollution or likely to result in exposure to sources of pollution or risk to safety, will only be permitted if measures can be implemented to minimise pollution and risk to a level that provides a high standard of protection for health, environmental quality and amenity. The following issues require particular attention:

Air quality

The air quality within West Oxfordshire will be managed and improved in line with National Air Quality Standards, the principles of best practice and the Air Quality Management Area Action Plans for Witney and Chipping Norton.

Contaminated land

Proposals for development of land which may be contaminated must incorporate appropriate investigation into the quality of the land. Where there is evidence of contamination, remedial measures must be identified and satisfactorily implemented.

Hazardous substances, installations and airfields

Development should not adversely affect safety near notifiable installations and safeguarded airfields.

Artificial light

The installation of external lighting and proposals for remote rural buildings will only be permitted where:

- i) the means of lighting is appropriate, unobtrusively sited and would not result in excessive levels of light;
- ii) elevation of buildings, particularly roofs, are designed to limit light spill;
- ii) the proposal would not have a detrimental effect on local amenity, character of a settlement or wider countryside, intrinsically dark landscapes or nature conservation

Noise

Housing and other noise sensitive development should not take place in areas where the occupants would experience significant noise disturbance from existing or proposed development.

New development should not take place in areas where it would cause unacceptable nuisance to the occupants of nearby land and buildings from noise or disturbance.

Water resources

Proposals for development will only be acceptable provided there is no adverse impact on water bodies and groundwater resources, in terms of their quantity, quality and important ecological features they support.

Waste

Planning permission will be granted for appropriately located development that makes provision for the management and treatment of waste and recycling, in accordance with the Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Strategy and local waste management strategy.

Minerals

- 7.52 The Upper Thames Valley and its tributaries, particularly the Lower Windrush Valley, has been a major producer of sharp sand and gravel. Elsewhere in the District quarrying of rock takes place. Extensive areas of sand and gravel remain but, as a finite resource, it is essential these minerals are used efficiently, especially as, lying within historically important and biodiversity rich areas their exploitation has a major impact upon the quality of life of local communities and the environment in general. Increased emphasis must be placed upon more sustainable construction methods than use of primary land-won aggregates.
- 7.53 The future minerals strategy for Oxfordshire is being pursued by the County Council through its Minerals and Waste Development Framework. West Oxfordshire District Council has concerns about the continued working of sand and gravel within the District. Whilst it is accepted that minerals can only be worked where they are found, it is considered that there are other options closer to major planned growth outside the District which should be more fully explored and tested. We will continue to engage with the County Council in relation to this issue.
- 7.54 In accordance with national policy, we will consult Oxfordshire County Council in relation to development proposals within the defined 'Mineral Consultation Area' that runs across the south of the District. This is shown on the Key Diagram and Proposals Map.

Waste

- 7.55 The national strategy for waste management is that, in order of preference, waste should be reduced, re-used, recycled, recovered and lastly disposed of through landfill. As part of sustainable construction, considerations should be given to the waste hierarchy during the design and construction of new development, for example, waste minimisation and re-use and recycling of waste materials, and when the site is occupied, making space available for home-composting and storage of recycling bins (Core Policy 3).
- 7.56 There is a significant need for expanded reuse, recycling and composting facilities to reduce the quantities of waste disposed through landfill. Waste management facilities outside the main landfill site in the District (Dean Pit) and the anaerobic digestion facility at Cassington (where bacteria breaks down organic material, such as householder food-waste, into constituent parts, the gaseous component of which is captured and burnt for energy, whilst the remaining solid organics are utilised as fertiliser) are expected to be small-medium in scale providing local facilities only, such as proposed recycling facilities at Greystones, Chipping Norton. The need for and location of new waste management facilities will be covered in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework and Waste Sites DPD being prepared by Oxfordshire County Council. Some new facilities may be satisfactorily accommodated on existing employment sites.

Historic Environment

- 7.57 West Oxfordshire is fortunate to benefit from a rich and varied historic environment. This plays a key role in defining the distinctive character of the District and the individuality of its settlements, strengthening the area's economic, cultural and tourism role and contributing to the overall quality of life enjoyed by current and future generations. The historic environment is not limited to the built environment and archaeological sites, but includes landscapes, both rural and urban, identified as having a degree of significance by virtue of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest: all contribute to local identity. Features – buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and landscapes and their settings - are referred to as 'heritage assets'. These may be classed as 'designated', e.g. Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, or 'non-designated', e.g. locally listed buildings.
- 7.58 The heritage assets of West Oxfordshire are highly distinctive, possessing characteristics deriving from the history, geology and landform of the District, and together contributing to a strong and tangible sense of place. The assets take many forms: buildings and areas of built development, constructed of local limestone or ironstone and following local vernacular traditions; Conservation Areas, from well-preserved 'wool' market towns to small, dispersed villages; historic parks and gardens including nationally important 18th-century landscapes; and both above and below ground archaeological remains. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide, Landscape Assessment and Conservation Area Appraisals provide further analysis of the District's character.
- 7.59 Designated heritage assets in West Oxfordshire include the Blenheim World Heritage Site, in excess of 3,200 Listed Buildings (Grades I, II* and II), 50 Conservation Areas, 149 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 12 Historic Parks and Gardens (Grades I, II* and II). The significance of these assets is inherent in their designation, and some features of the assets form part of the designation record. Further information on the Blenheim World Heritage Site is set out in Section 9.
- 7.60 Non-designated heritage assets are features of the historic environment that make a positive contribution to the distinctive character and appearance of the area in which they are located (in terms of their siting, design, or use of materials), but that are not covered by a statutory designation. Non-designated heritage assets contribute both individually and collectively to the special character and appearance of West Oxfordshire. Some will have been identified as locally listed buildings within conservation areas as part of Conservation Area Appraisals.
- 7.61 Heritage assets such as those described above are irreplaceable. At the national level there is a presumption that such assets will be protected and enhanced in a manner that is appropriate to their significance and also enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to current and future generations⁶. This general principle will apply in West

⁶ Section 12 of the NPPF and national guidance, for example, from English Heritage, Natural England and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, are particularly relevant.

Oxfordshire. There will therefore be a presumption in favour of protecting, sustaining and enhancing our heritage assets and their setting. The weight to be attached to that presumption, when assessed against meeting other needs, will be dependent on:

- The significance of the asset: whether it is a designated asset (and its position in the hierarchy of designated assets) or a non-designated asset and on its value in terms of its historic and architectural interest and appearance.
- The significance of that part of the asset to be affected by the proposed development to the historic and architectural interest, appearance and setting of the asset as a whole.

7.62 To enable the Council to positively manage change by determining the appropriate balance between the need for any proposed development and the need to safeguard the heritage asset, a developer will be required to analyse the significance of the asset, and of that part to be affected, and to provide detailed evidence to show:

- That the proposals have been formulated and any works designed with a proper understanding of the significance of the heritage asset.
- That the heritage asset is being put to a viable use consistent with its conservation
- That opportunities to enhance, to better reveal or minimise harm to the significance of the asset have been taken, and
- That the need to be met by the development could not be met in a more beneficial or less harmful way.

7.63 Information submitted in support of development proposals affecting heritage assets in West Oxfordshire should include reference, where available, to the 'historic environment record': statutory designations; the Council's Conservation Area Appraisals; records kept by the County Archaeologist; local consultations, and detailed exploratory and survey work, including archaeological field evaluations, as appropriate. The amount of information to be provided should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and the degree of impact of the proposed development on that significance.

7.64 Where permission is granted for development that would affect a heritage asset, conditions may be imposed to require a record to be made of the part of the asset to be destroyed or altered and of any archaeology revealed in the course of development. The record and any recovered archaeological artefacts will be required to be preserved and maintained to contribute to knowledge and understanding of the asset.

7.65 Core Policy 23 summarises the Council's approach. Sustainable development means safeguarding and seeking improvements to the quality of the historic environment and its heritage assets for this and future generations. Development that fulfils the requirements of this policy will be regarded as sustainable and will therefore be considered favourably.

Core Policy 23 – Historic Environment

All development proposals will be expected to respect, protect and enhance the special character and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's historic environment and its heritage assets and their setting.

Development must not result in loss or damage to important heritage assets, or their settings, particularly those of national importance.

Development should make a positive contribution to the historic environment's local character and distinctiveness, especially where this will address local issues identified in, for example, Conservation Area appraisals.

Key Evidence

West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD
West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment 1998
Carterton Landscape Assessment 2009
Witney Landscape Assessment 2007
Landscape Planning Review of Strategic Development Options (2012)
Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)
Lower Windrush Valley Project
Windrush in Witney Project
Wychwood Forest Project
Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2008-2013
Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statements (especially: Setting of the AONB; and Tranquillity and Dark Skies) and Landscape publications
Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Preservation and Enhancement documents
Greener Historic Buildings
Natural England's Standing Advice for Protected Species and for Ancient Woodland
Biodiversity Action Plans
River Basin Management Plan: Thames River Basin District (2009)
Conservation Target Areas Mapping Project
Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire (published by Oxfordshire County Council, BBOWT and TVERC)
South East Green Infrastructure Framework – From Policy into Practice.
West Oxfordshire Open Space Strategy
West Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Study (2011)
Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre (TVERC)
Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire
West Oxfordshire PPG17 Study
Open space study of the main towns in West Oxfordshire
Natural England database
West Oxfordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)
Oxfordshire Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (2011)
West Oxfordshire sustainable construction interim planning advice 2010
Air Quality Management Plans
The West Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy and Action Plan
West Oxfordshire Health and Well-being Strategy and Action Plan
Oxfordshire Play Strategy and Action Plan 2009/11 and Play Policy
West Oxfordshire Built Leisure Facilities Study

Transport & Movement



8. TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

Our transport related objectives include:

- CO1 Provide new development, services and facilities of an appropriate scale and type in locations which will help improve the quality of life of local communities and where the need to travel, particularly by car, can be minimised.
- CO6 Ensure that land is not released for new development until the supporting infrastructure and facilities are secured.
- CO7 Maximise the opportunity for walking, cycling and use of public transport.
- CO12 Improve access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.
- CO14 Reduce the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.
- CO15 Achieve improvements in water and air quality.
- CO16 Minimise use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.

- 8.1 Transport is a key issue for West Oxfordshire. Although there are opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport, as a rural area, there is a general reliance on the private car which contributes towards traffic congestion and poor air quality in some areas as well as climate change more generally.
- 8.2 The overall transport strategy for Oxfordshire is contained in the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2030 (LTP3) approved by the County Council in April 2011. LTP3 aims to deliver four local transport goals:
- supporting local economic growth;
 - making it easier to get around the county;
 - reducing the impact of transport on the environment; and
 - promoting healthy, safe and sustainable travel.
- 8.3 LTP3 contains broad strategies for the three main towns of West Oxfordshire and the rural areas. Opportunities for increased walking, cycling and use of bus services will be promoted alongside making the best use of existing road space through appropriate traffic management measures and developing highway improvement schemes to help reduce congestion. These will contribute to reducing the need to travel by car by providing greater transport choice.
- 8.4 In accordance with LTP3 and national policy and in the interest of reducing the impacts on climate change, as a general principle, the Local Plan seeks to minimise the need to travel, particularly by private car and maximise the use of sustainable

modes of transport including walking, cycling, public and community transport. This must however be seen in the context of West Oxfordshire where in some areas there is no safe or convenient alternative form of transport to the private car. Many towns and villages are not served by railway stations and in some instances have few or no bus services available.

- 8.5 There are a number of ways through which we can seek to influence travel patterns and choice of transport modes and these are outlined below.

Location and Design of Development

- 8.6 As we have already explained, the location of development has a direct impact on how often people need to travel and how they choose to travel. This has been a key consideration in the development of the overall strategy which focuses most growth at Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton, where there are the best opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport. Ensuring that new development is located where a good range of services and facilities are accessible, means people are more likely to walk, cycle or use public transport in preference to using their car.
- 8.7 The design of development can also influence travel choices. Good quality pedestrian and cycle routes to key destinations and the provision of cycle parking can for example enable more people to walk or cycle, whilst the provision of a high frequency bus service, with good quality waiting facilities including real-time passenger information can encourage greater use of bus services. Other, broader measures such as the provision of high-speed broadband and the promotion of more flexible, home working also have the potential to help reduce the need to travel and will be favourably supported where appropriate.
- 8.8 In accordance with the overall strategy, we will as a priority seek to locate new development in areas that benefit from convenient access to a range of services and facilities and where the need to travel, particularly by private car is minimised. We will also favourably support design solutions that maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport as well as home working through measures such as high speed broadband. Where appropriate, developments will be required to monitor the levels of travel by all modes through the use of a Travel Plan.

Highways

- 8.9 As a largely rural district the highway network plays a key role in West Oxfordshire. The main routes include the A40 Cheltenham to Oxford, the A44 through Woodstock and Chipping Norton, the A361 Swindon to Banbury and the A4260 from Banbury through the eastern part of the District. These are shown on the Key Diagram (Figure 4.1). The provision of a good, reliable and congestion free highway network has a number of benefits including the provision of convenient access to jobs, services and facilities and the potential to unlock and support economic growth. Under the draft Local Plan, the importance of the highway network will continue to be recognised with necessary improvements to be sought where appropriate. This will include the delivery of strategic highway improvements necessary to support growth.

- 8.10 The A40 is the main east-west transport route with congestion on the section between Witney and Oxford being amongst the most severe transport problems in Oxfordshire and acting as a potential constraint to economic growth. One cause of the congestion is insufficient capacity at the Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts (outside the District) with the traffic lights and junctions at Eynsham and Cassington (inside the District) adding to the problem. Severe congestion is also experienced on the A44 at the Bladon roundabout, particularly during the morning peak. Further development in the District will put additional pressure on these highly trafficked routes.
- 8.11 In light of these problems, Oxfordshire County Council developed its 'Access to Oxford' project and although Government funding has been withdrawn, the County Council is continuing to seek alternative funding for schemes to improve the northern approaches to Oxford, including where appropriate from new development. Given the significance of this issue for the District we will continue to work in partnership with the County Council to deliver improvements to the A40 including where appropriate, seeking contributions from new development towards developing the Oxford northern approaches highway schemes.
- 8.12 At Witney, traffic congestion has long been a serious concern with an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) having been designated at Bridge Street. Other areas suffering from congestion include the Ducklington Lane junction with Station Lane and Thorney Leys and Witan Way.
- 8.13 Witney's traffic congestion problems are in large part due to there being only one crossing point across the River Windrush at Bridge Street which acts as a bottleneck to traffic travelling east – west across the town. For some time the proposed solution was the Cogges Link Road (CLR) which would have provided a new link road around the south-eastern edge of Witney and a second river crossing. However, in June 2012 the Compulsory Purchase Order needed for the scheme to go ahead, was rejected by the Secretary of State for Transport, meaning that the scheme is now unlikely to happen.
- 8.14 Since the CLR decision was received, the District Council has been working closely with the County Council to identify an appropriate alternative transport strategy for Witney and to assess the implications for future growth. Transport modelling has been undertaken the findings of which are available in a separate background paper.
- 8.15 The modelling work undertaken identifies the following key strategic transport measures at Witney as being necessary to support the level and location of growth identified in the draft Local Plan:
- Shore's Green Slip Roads (SGSR) – the provision of west facing slip roads at the Shore's Green junction onto the A40
 - Down's Road Junction – the provision of a new all movements, at grade junction on the A40 at Down's Road; and
 - Improvements to the Ducklington Lane/Station Lane area

- 8.16 A number of potential improvements are also likely to be needed in the central area of Witney to help facilitate the movement of vehicles including buses through the town. To accommodate potential longer-term growth at Witney, the modelling work undertaken indicates that the route of the West End Link (WEL2) should continue to be safeguarded through the Local Plan. Further information on these various proposals and how they will be delivered is set out in the Witney Sub-Area Strategy (Section 9).
- 8.17 At Carterton, although the road network is not congested, there is no 'A' road access to the town from the A40 or the A361 and it remains an aspiration of the District and County Councils to deliver A-road access to the town in order to improve access to the strategic road network. A new link between the B4477 Brize Norton Road and the Witney Road has been identified as being of potential benefit to the residents of Brize Norton Village in removing unnecessary through traffic. Feasibility work into the provision of A-road access and a new link road north of Brize Norton will be explored together and the route of the potential link will be safeguarded through the local plan. The provision of the new Shilton Road Link from Elmhurst Way to Shilton Road has been identified as a key priority to serve housing growth. Further information is set out in the Carterton Sub-Area Strategy (Section 9).
- 8.18 Chipping Norton sits astride the crossing of the A44 and A36, with the heavily used lorry route to and from the Evesham area passing through the Town Centre. As a result, an Air Quality Management Area has been designated on Horsefair and Banbury Road. An Action Plan was approved in 2008 containing a range of measures aimed at improving air quality, primarily through reduction of HGV movements. We will continue to work with the County Council to deliver these objectives.
- 8.19 Elsewhere, the District is largely served by a rural road network which in some instances has limited capacity for a significant increase in traffic. Particular constraints are the limited number of river crossings and the capacity of the bridges at these crossings, many of which are single vehicle width with traffic light controls. This is especially so over the river Thames on the southern boundary of the District, where the road crossings are mainly historic bridges of single vehicle width. One of these, on the A415 at Newbridge, is a Scheduled Monument, is deteriorating and is the subject of a weight restriction order. There is also congestion at the crossing of the River Windrush at Burford.
- 8.20 As technologies develop, the role alternative fuels will play in both public transport and private vehicles such as hybrid, electric, and other types of low emission vehicles, is likely to increase nationally. Such changes in how transport is fuelled, is likely to have positive effects on the environment. Locally, these may be witnessed within the air quality management areas in Chipping Norton and Witney.

Bus Services

- 8.21 Parts of West Oxfordshire are well-served by bus services including premium services between Carterton, Witney and Oxford. However, journey times between Witney and Oxford are unreliable because of congestion within Witney, at Eynsham and approaching Oxford. Furthermore, links to the south of Carterton especially Swindon, west (Cirencester) and north (Burford) are limited. Following the

subsidised bus service review in 2010 Oxfordshire County Council has continued to support bus services in West Oxfordshire. The network of buses is so well used that the review resulted in all services being continued. Providing high quality, frequent bus services, good waiting facilities and up to date service information is critical to encouraging greater passenger use by making public transport an attractive travel choice and easy to use.

- 8.22 Discussions have been held with Oxfordshire County Council through the preparation of the draft Local Plan and IDP and a number of potential enhancements to bus services and facilities within West Oxfordshire have been identified. These include improvements to bus stops to install real time information and improved waiting and boarding facilities, improved bus journey times (e.g. the S1 premium route between Carterton and Oxford) and increased frequencies of services (e.g. between Carterton and Swindon). The County Council have also identified the potential provision of a new park and ride site at Eynsham which would serve Witney and Oxford.
- 8.23 These and other potential schemes are set out in the draft IDP. We will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and the bus operators to secure new and improved bus services and facilities in West Oxfordshire. In particular, where necessary we will ensure that new development is supported by improvements to bus services and facilities.

Rail Services

- 8.24 West Oxfordshire is reasonably well-served by passenger rail services although not at the main towns. There are two mainline railways shown on the Key Diagram, the Cotswolds and Malvern line and the Oxford/Birmingham line, the former having benefited from the redoubling of 20 miles of track between Charlbury and Evesham. This included new platforms at Charlbury and Ascott under Wychwood.
- 8.25 There are eight passenger stations, Tackley on the Oxford/Birmingham line and the seven others on the Cotswolds and Malvern line including Long Hanborough, Combe, Finstock, Charlbury, Ascott under Wychwood, Shipton under Wychwood and Kingham. The largest stations used by most passengers and served by the greatest number of train services are Charlbury, Kingham, Long Hanborough and Tackley. Notably, none of the three main towns (Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton) is directly served by rail although there is a bus-link to Kingham station from Chipping Norton.
- 8.26 Oxfordshire County Council published a draft rail strategy and delivery plan for consultation in January 2012. The strategy identifies a number of potential improvements to rail services within West Oxfordshire. The District Council will continue to work in partnership with the County Council and rail providers to further investigate the potential delivery of the various schemes and aspirations that have been identified.

Walking and Cycling

- 8.27 The provision of high quality, well-designed and well-maintained pedestrian and cycle links and facilities is critical to encouraging more walking and cycling. Increases in walking and cycling may reduce traffic congestion and carbon emissions. At present, West Oxfordshire is reasonably well-served in terms of walking and cycling facilities although most of these are focused on the three main towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton including in particular recent routes installed as part of the Madley Park (Witney) and Shilton Park (Carterton) developments. Outside the main towns although there are a number of national cycle network routes running through the District, most pedestrian and cycle opportunities involve the use of 'quiet roads' rather than dedicated pedestrian and cycle links.
- 8.28 Oxfordshire County Council as highway authority have identified a number of general and specific improvements to pedestrian and cycle infrastructure needed to accommodate future growth in the District. These include the provision of additional footways and paths and improvements to existing routes, with a particular focus on improving accessibility to key locations and encouraging greater use of public transport (e.g. walking routes to bus stops and provision of cycle parking at bus stops). They have also identified the provision of a new cycleway between Carterton and Witney, as well as a number of specific improvements in Witney and the need for improved cycle parking at key destinations and employment sites in Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton, Eynsham and Woodstock.
- 8.29 We will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, developers and other relevant partners to deliver new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes and facilities within the District including through new development.

Community Transport

- 8.30 Community transport schemes are vital for people who do not have access to a car and are unable to use public transport, walk or cycle to their destination, usually due to disability, age-related frailty, or mobility problems. There are a number of community transport schemes in West Oxfordshire including a dial-a-ride scheme, community buses and volunteer car schemes. These receive advice and practical support from Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC). We will continue to work in partnership with ORCC, Oxfordshire County Council and the other District Councils in order to develop the community transport sector in West Oxfordshire, to increase capacity and improve the coverage of the district.

Car Clubs and Car Sharing

- 8.31 Car Clubs are suitable for people who want occasional access to a car without the costs of owning or renting their own vehicle. They essentially involve a pool of shared hire cars kept at a designated location that members of the car club can book in advance online or over the telephone for a set period of time (typically charged at an hourly or daily rate). Locally there is a car club scheme in operation in Oxford and the potential to set one up in Witney is being explored by a commercial operator.

- 8.32 Car sharing is where two or more people choose to travel together by car rather than individually, thereby reducing the number of vehicles on the road and helping those people to save money and wear and tear on their car. This is often most feasible for people that live and work in similar areas and the Oxfordshire car share scheme has been set up to help introduce individuals. A website is available at www.oxfordshire.liftshare.com

Parking

- 8.33 The amount of parking provided can also have a direct impact on people's travel choices and the District Council can influence the amount of parking available in two ways. Firstly we can determine how much parking is provided as part of new development such as housing, shops and offices. In particular we will determine the level of provision in accordance with the residential, non-residential and cycle parking standards adopted by Oxfordshire County Council as highway authority. The residential parking standards are based on the provision of an 'optimum' number of spaces rather than a 'maximum' or 'minimum' and are based on the provision of a mix of allocated and unallocated spaces.
- 8.34 With regard to off-street public car parking, there are 16 car parks in West Oxfordshire and the Council's long standing position has been not to charge for parking to maintain the attractiveness of local centres. Car parking is managed through time restrictions, the effectiveness of which is kept under review. Sufficient and convenient parking provision can make a significant contribution to the continued viability of our town centres and main employment areas. In Chipping Norton public car parking spaces in the town centre are insufficient to meet current needs and in Witney although public car parking spaces in the town centre are considered adequate to meet current needs, the Woolgate and Woodford Way car parks operate at a high level of usage. Car parking is also under pressure in popular tourist towns such as Burford and Woodstock particularly at weekends and there is a need to continue to review car and coach parking arrangements to ensure available spaces are efficiently used and provide additional car parking where capacity is being exceeded.
- 8.35 We will continue to monitor car parking requirements and parking management whilst promoting alternative means of travel. We will also seek improvements and capacity increases to public parking as appropriate including through new development. Further detail is provided in the Sub-Area Strategies (Section 9).

Core Policy 24 – Transport and Movement

Priority will be given to locating new development in areas with convenient access to a reasonable range of services and facilities and where the need to travel by private car can be minimised, particularly where this would help to reduce traffic congestion around Oxford and the Air Quality Management Areas at Witney and Chipping Norton.

All new development will be designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport, ensure the safe movement of vehicles and minimise the impact of parked and moving vehicles on local residents, business and the environment.

West Oxfordshire District Council will continue to work in partnership with the highway authority, developers, local councils and other organisations, including the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, bus and rail operators, to:

- secure and safeguard appropriate improvements to the road network including specific schemes identified in LTP3 and the draft IDP in order to reduce congestion and accommodate the safe movement of people and goods whilst minimising adverse impacts on the environment.
- increase the use of bus, rail and community transport through the provision of improved services, facilities and information including specific schemes identified in LTP3, the draft IDP and the draft Rail Strategy for Oxfordshire;
- provide safe and convenient travel within and between the network of towns and villages in West Oxfordshire, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and users of public and community transport including specific schemes identified in LTP3 and the draft IDP;
- secure traffic management and environmental improvement schemes to help improve the attractiveness of the area and quality of life, especially in terms of air quality and safety for all residents and visitors;
- promote improvement and extension of electronic communications (e.g. high-speed broadband) to support local businesses and services and help reduce the need to travel; and
- provide, maintain and manage an appropriate amount of off-street public car parking, particularly to support our town and village centres.

Proposals for new developments that have significant transport implications either in themselves or with other proposals will be required to include a transport assessment. In accordance with County Council requirements, travel plans will be required for development proposals that have the potential to attract significant numbers of traffic movements. Parking in new developments will be provided in accordance with the County Council's adopted parking standards.

Key Evidence

Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2030 (LTP3)

Transport Investment Programme

Area Transport Strategies

Residential Design Guide

West Oxfordshire Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) 2012

Summary of Development and Infrastructure Strategic Modelling (2012)

Oxfordshire County Council Draft Rail Strategy (January 2012)

Oxfordshire County Council Parking Standards (residential, non-residential and cycle parking)

Strategy at the Local Level



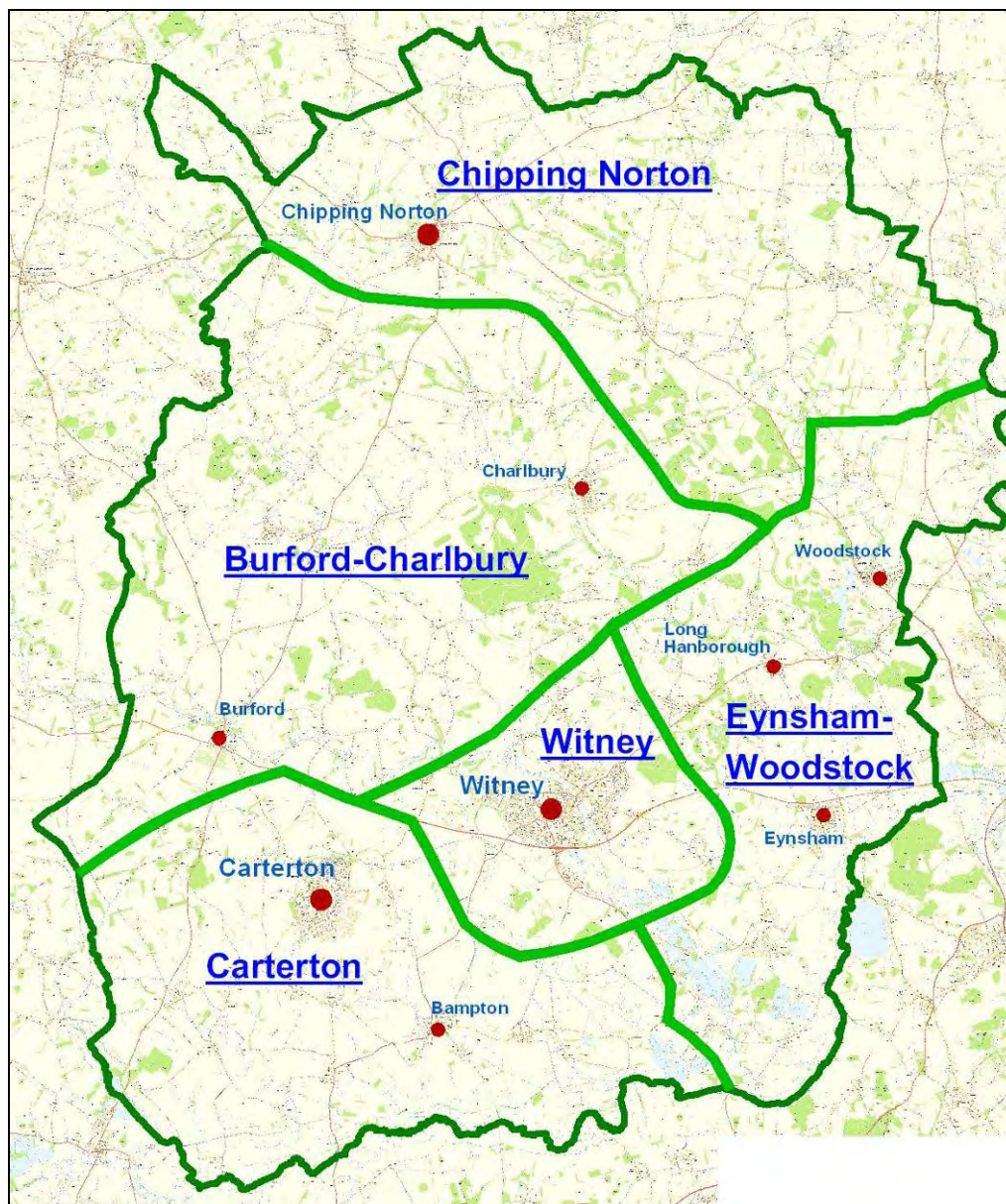
9. STRATEGY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

9.1 This section sets out how the overall strategy will be applied at the local level. We have identified five sub-areas based on landscape characteristics and local catchment areas for key services and facilities. These are:

- Witney Sub-Area
- Carterton Sub-Area
- Chipping Norton Sub-Area
- Eynsham – Woodstock Sub-Area
- Burford – Charlbury Sub-Area

9.2 The five sub-areas are illustrated on the map below.

Figure 9.1 - Sub-Area Plan



Witney Sub-Area

Description

- 9.3 The Witney sub-area has a population of about 34,000. Most people (28,000) live in Witney itself, a vibrant and historic market town famed for its association with the blanket industry. Witney is the District's largest town and acts as the main service centre, offering a broad range of housing and employment opportunities as well as key services and facilities including retailing, health care, leisure and culture. There are a number of villages and hamlets on the fringes of Witney including Crawley, Hailey, Ducklington and Curbridge. Although these places offer some local facilities they naturally look to Witney for most essential services.

Housing

- 9.4 As the largest settlement, most of the housing in this sub-area is located in Witney which has experienced major growth over the last 30 years, more than doubling its population. Much of this growth has been accommodated through successive urban extensions in the post-war era, to the north, west and east of the town. Property prices are high and there is considerable housing need (people who cannot afford to buy or rent a suitable property at market prices) with about 900 households on the housing waiting list with Witney as a preferred location.
- 9.5 In accordance with the overall strategy, Witney will be the focus of future housing growth in this sub-area, however further housing opportunities within the built up area of the town are relatively limited and to accommodate the level of growth identified, there is a need to develop on the fringes of the town on Greenfield land. Two strategic allocations are proposed including West Witney (1,000) and East Witney (300). Further information on these and the alternative options that have been considered is provided below. New housing in the rest of the sub-area will be generally limited to meeting local community and business needs and in accordance with Core Policy 2 will be steered towards the larger villages.

Employment

- 9.6 Witney is the main economic centre in the District and its role as a centre for blanket manufacturing was important in the town's expansion. Today the economy is diverse with a range of shopping, leisure and tourist facilities and accommodation, several small employment sites throughout the town and large employment estates on the southern and western edges. The town retains a strong manufacturing and engineering presence, and the availability of good quality employment sites on the western side of the town has attracted significant investment, including some high technology manufacturers linked to the Oxford Bioscience Cluster.

- 9.7 It is essential that Witney continues to provide a range of high quality employment sites so that it is able to compete effectively with major growth areas such as Swindon and Science Vale UK. Providing good employment opportunities could also help reduce the currently high level of 'out-commuting'. In accordance with the overall strategy, Witney will be the main focus for additional employment land provision within the District.
- 9.8 Around 10ha of land remains on several sites within the large employment area to the west of the town. There are good prospects for this land to be developed, with much of it subject to current business interest. It will therefore be retained in the strategy and supplemented by at least 10ha of new employment land to be provided as part of the West Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA). The provision of new employment land will also facilitate the upgrading of Witney's existing employment stock through the provision of modern business premises enabling businesses to move and expand. There is for example considerable potential for redevelopment of the Station Lane employment estates in the medium to longer term.
- 9.9 Employment provision in the rest of the sub-area will generally be limited to meeting local community and business needs. Rural diversification projects will be supported in principle.

Retail & Leisure

- 9.10 Witney is the primary shopping and a key leisure destination serving West Oxfordshire and beyond. With the historic Market Place and High Street at its core, the centre retains its market town character and has a large number of independent and national multiple retailers and service uses. The town centre is performing well, maintaining a strong market share with low vacancy rates. Major developments including the Marriott's Walk town centre expansion and the extension to the Woolgate Centre have enhanced the shopping and leisure offer of the town. The availability of free car parking is a significant attraction over competing centres but car park capacity is already under pressure.
- 9.11 In accordance with the overall strategy Witney will be a focus for new retail and leisure provision. Our retail assessment has identified capacity for additional shopping provision in the medium and longer term and recommends a strategy of phased development to reinforce the role of the town centre in the context of increasing competition elsewhere, such as Oxford. In accordance with national policy and Core Policy 16, new town centre development in Witney will follow the 'town centre first approach'.
- 9.12 A strong and diverse town centre will be maintained with a good mix of independent and national multiple retailers. Further town centre development will be accommodated through phased and organic extension of the Woolgate shopping centre and at Welch Way, opposite Marriott's Walk, and in a way which strengthens the connecting High Street as the primary pedestrian route and strong shopping core reinforcing the town centre as a whole. A primary shopping frontage, where the loss of shops will be resisted, is defined linking Marriott's Walk and Woolgate. Elsewhere, such as at the Market Square and Corn Street, there are opportunities to

continue to promote these areas for shopping, leisure and cultural uses, including the Corn Exchange, hotels, restaurants, performing arts, and the historic Buttercross and Church Green. These areas are designated secondary shopping frontages.

- 9.13 We will also seek to raise the profile of Witney as a visitor destination investigating opportunities for additional accommodation and visitor related facilities such as coach drop off and waiting facilities. There is a need to enhance the market town character and ensure that the centre remains attractive and accessible to all through investment in the public realm, particularly in the Market Square and Corn Street. This will be enabled by developer contributions or other funding and may include opportunities for public art. The provision and management of free car parking is significant to the attractiveness of the town centre. Significant new development which creates additional car parking demands in the town centre will need to contribute to increasing public car parking provision alongside improvements to the bus, pedestrian and cycle infrastructure.
- 9.14 In the remainder of the sub-area, existing retail and leisure facilities will be safeguarded and any new facilities will be modest in scale and appropriate to the function and setting of the village in which they are proposed to be located.

Transport

- 9.15 Transport is a key issue for Witney. Although the town has the best road connections and bus services in the District context, traffic congestion is a significant problem particularly in the historic central area. Relieving congestion through investment in transport infrastructure is not only important in terms of public amenity and air quality it is also essential to sustainable economic growth.
- 9.16 Oxfordshire County Council had previously identified the Cogges Link Road on the eastern side of Witney as the most effective scheme, with planning permission having been granted in 2009, however in June 2012, the Secretary of State for Transport rejected the Compulsory Purchase Order needed for the scheme to go ahead, meaning it is now unlikely to happen. In light of this decision, the Council has been working closely with Oxfordshire County Council to consider the most appropriate alternative options for the town. The transport modelling work that has been undertaken suggests that several strategic highway improvements are needed to support the proposed level and location of growth identified at Witney through the draft Local Plan. The improvements include:
- Shore's Green Slip Roads (SGSR) – the provision of west facing slip roads at the Shore's Green junction onto the A40
 - Down's Road Junction – the provision of a new all movements, at grade junction on the A40 at Down's Road; and
 - Improvements to the Ducklington Lane/Station Lane area
- 9.17 It is proposed through the draft Local Plan that the Shore's Green Slip Roads scheme is delivered by the proposed Strategic Development Area (SDA) at East Witney and that the Down's Road/A40 junction is delivered by the proposed Strategic Development Area (SDA) at West Witney. The necessary improvements to the

Ducklington Lane/Station Lane area are likely to be funded through a combination of sources including developer contributions, where appropriate.

- 9.18 These strategic measures will need to be supported by various local improvements in order to better facilitate the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles throughout the town including public transport. A number of potential improvements are identified in the draft IDP and will be developed further as additional transport work is undertaken in support of the emerging Local Plan.
- 9.19 To cater for potential long-term growth at Witney the route of the West End Link (WEL2) will continue to be safeguarded through the Local Plan and is identified as a safeguarded highway scheme on the Proposals Map.
- 9.20 The provision and management of car parking is essential to maintaining the vitality of the town, facilitating the use of more sustainable modes of transport and reducing car use for short journeys.

The Environment

- 9.21 Witney grew up as a valley settlement near crossing points of the River Windrush. The river and associated floodplain forms a significant green corridor that is an important part of the character of the town and its historic setting as well as an ecological and recreational resource. The Windrush is a Conservation Target Area and includes the Windrush in Witney Project Area (a management strategy for which was agreed by the Council in 2005) and the Lower Windrush Valley Project Area. (Figure 7.3)
- 9.22 Whilst representing a significant asset, the river and its tributaries create a flood risk and there have been several flood instances in the Witney area with particularly severe flooding in July 2007. The Council has been working with the Environment Agency and other partners to identify and address flooding issues⁷. Any significant new development in the town will need to ensure that adequate drainage and flood mitigation measures are implemented.
- 9.23 The landscape surrounding the town is a mix of valley floor, valley side and open ridge and is generally sensitive to new development⁸. Land to the north and east rises to form a prominent ridge which is a backdrop in many views to and from the town and where there are remnants of the ancient landscape of the Wychwood Forest. In terms of the wider sub-area, a notable environmental feature is the extensive area of sand and gravel working to the south of Witney, which forms part of the Lower Windrush Valley.

⁷ Witney Flood Report May 2008

⁸ Witney Landscape Assessment 2007

- 9.24 As Witney has grown so the town's setting and the separate identity of nearby villages needs special protection. Development that would compromise the open character of the town will be resisted in order to prevent urban sprawl, the further intensification of existing loose-knit development and coalescence of neighbouring settlements. This is particularly important for the narrow gap between Witney and Ducklington which has long experienced development pressures and is vulnerable to change.

Infrastructure

- 9.25 Having accommodated major growth over the last 30 years, careful consideration must be given to the implications of further growth at Witney in terms of the impact on existing infrastructure and the need for any additional infrastructure that is needed to support growth.
- 9.26 In addition to the transport infrastructure requirements outlined above, further growth at Witney must be supported by a number of other improvements. These are set out in the draft IDP and include the need for a new primary school at West Witney and the need for increased primary school capacity elsewhere with contributions to be sought as appropriate including from the proposed development at East Witney. Further secondary school provision and continued investment at Abingdon and Witney College is also likely to be needed. Similarly there is an ongoing need for further investment in Witney's built sports facilities including the Leisure Centre to meet increasing demand. There is a specific need for further allotments – with a current waiting list of around 2 years. There is also a need for more affordable housing and housing for older people including 'extra care' accommodation.

Scope for Further Expansion

- 9.27 Witney continues to be a sustainable location for further development although there are significant issues and challenges to address including the infrastructure requirements outlined above. Because there is relatively limited capacity within the existing built up area⁹ any further significant growth of Witney must take place on land adjoining the town. Throughout the evolution of the draft Local Plan, several strategic site options have been considered through consultation and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) including land to the north, east, south and west of the town.
- 9.28 In light of the decision on the Cogges Link Road (CLR) and the associated transport implications for the town, a more detailed assessment of land to the west, east and north of Witney has been undertaken alongside an updated Sustainability Appraisal (SA). Land to the south of Witney has not been assessed in detail as it is considered that the CLR decision has no direct bearing on the previous reasons for rejecting this option.

⁹ SHLAA <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning/SHLAA.cfm>

- 9.29 The detailed site assessment is available as a separate background paper alongside the updated Sustainability Appraisal (SA). Having regard to a broad range of considerations, these demonstrate that the most suitable locations for growth are land to the west of Witney and land to the east of Witney.
- 9.30 Development to the west of the town is close to existing employment areas and provides the opportunity for additional provision of business land, puts less pressure on the most sensitive areas of the highway network (Bridge Street and the Air Quality Management Area) and with the incorporation of significant green infrastructure, will have an acceptable degree of landscape impact. There will be good highway connections with the construction of the A40/Downs Road junction with access to both east and west, being a prerequisite of further significant development in this area.
- 9.31 Development to the east of the town will be close to the town centre, providing good opportunities for walking and cycling, has the potential to integrate well with existing residential development at Cogges and provided development is kept to below the 95m contour, is likely to have an acceptable degree of impact in landscape terms. There will be good highway connections with the construction of west facing slip roads at the Shore's Green junction onto the A40 being a prerequisite of strategic development in this area.
- 9.32 Development to the north of Witney, whilst reasonably close to some existing services and facilities is some way distant from the town's main employment areas. Importantly parts of the site are within the floodplain and the site is therefore sequentially less preferable to other site options that are not affected by flooding. Recent landscape evidence also suggests there are concerns in relation to the scale of development that has been proposed and there are inherent complexities surrounding the delivery of the major transport infrastructure needed to bring the site forward.
- 9.33 Development to the south of Witney, as stated in previous consultation documents would result in unsustainable urban sprawl, would be dependent on car travel and would create a poor level of residential amenity.
- 9.34 In the wider sub-area, in accordance with the overall strategy, further growth will be limited to meeting local community and business needs and will be steered towards the larger villages.

Core Policy 25 – Witney Sub-Area Strategy

The focus of new housing, supporting facilities and additional employment opportunities will be Witney. New development in the rest of the sub-area will be limited to meeting local community and business needs and will be steered towards the larger villages.

Proposals for development in the sub-area should be consistent with the strategy which includes:

- delivery of around 1,900 new homes to be focused on Witney and to include affordable housing and homes for older people and newly forming households. At least one Extra Care scheme will be required.
- a Strategic Development Area of around 1,000 dwellings on the western side of Witney (see Core Policy 27)
- a Strategic Development Area of around 300 dwellings on the eastern side of Witney (see Core Policy 28)
- expansion of employment opportunities in the town through the retention and modernisation of existing sites, development of remaining available employment land (10ha) and the provision of further employment land (at least 10ha) on the western edge of Witney to provide sufficient space for business expansion, relocation and inward investment
- continuing to work with Oxfordshire County Council to deliver improvements to the highway infrastructure, with priority on delivering the A40/Downs Road junction (all traffic movements), Shore's Green junction (west facing slip roads) plus necessary, associated improvements in the Ducklington Lane/Station Lane area
- highway schemes to reduce traffic and pollution in the historic core and to improve the general flow of traffic and access to primary transport routes
- enhancing public transport, and pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure together with managing car parking to reduce car use for short journeys
- avoiding development which will be at risk of or increase the risk of flooding and working with partners such as the Environment Agency to deliver flood mitigation measures
- protection and enhancement of the market town character and setting of Witney, neighbouring villages and the Windrush Valley, including the particularly vulnerable gap between Witney and Ducklington
- development on land within or where it would be visible from the Windrush in Witney Policy Area should protect and enhance the intrinsic landscape, character, ecology and cultural value of the valley
- protection of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- ensuring that new development makes appropriate and timely provision for necessary supporting infrastructure, including new education, health, green infrastructure and other community facilities

- new development and investment in the public realm to improve the vibrancy of the town centre as a whole in accordance with Core Policy 26.
- Protect and enhance the character of Church Green (south of Corn Street and Langdale Gate) where development for shopping/commercial use or intensification of existing shopping/commercial uses will not be allowed (Church Green Policy Area)

Progress in the delivery of transport schemes will be monitored, with the need for alternative or additional schemes kept under review alongside the longer term development requirements of the town.

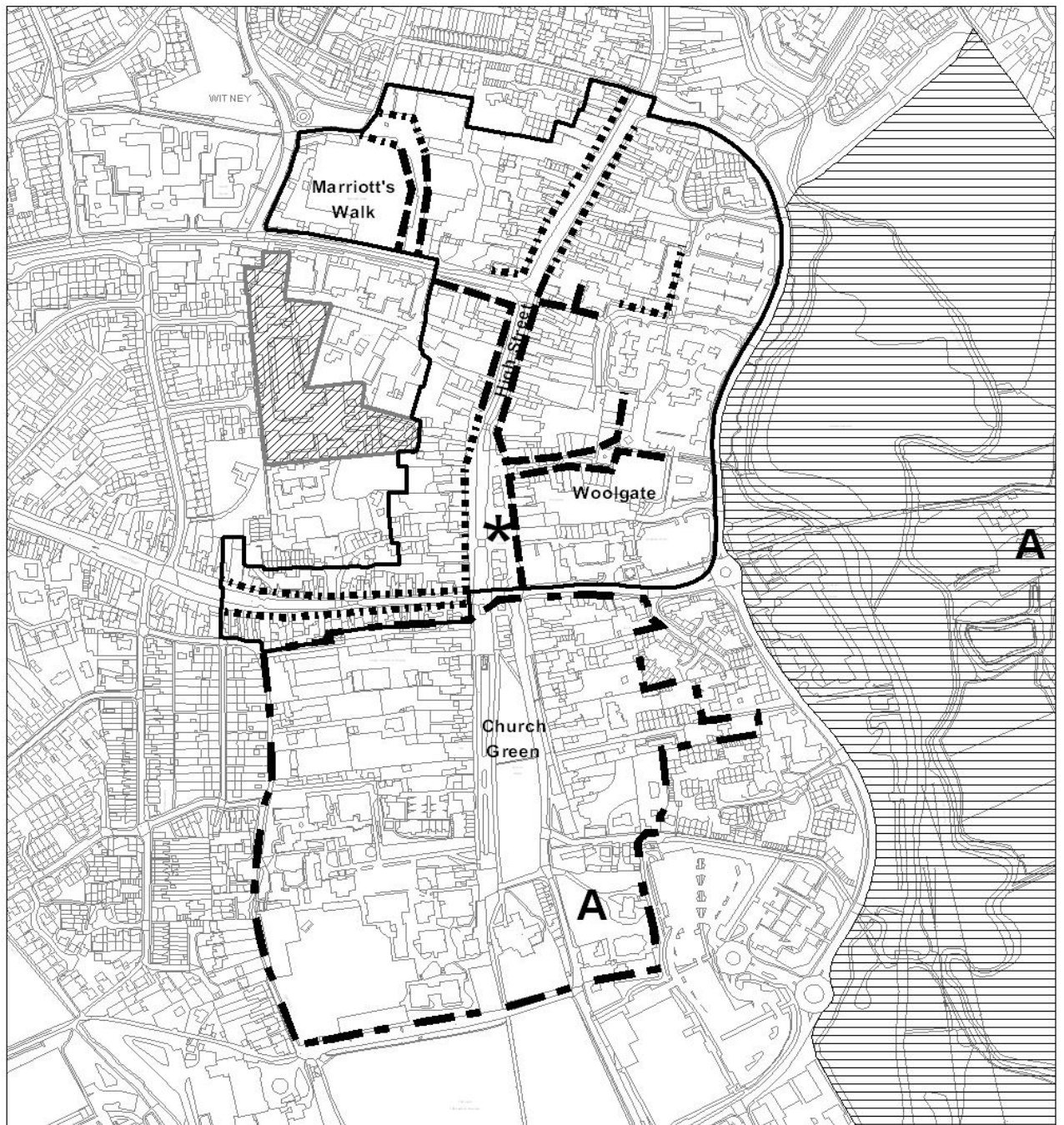
In the Lower Windrush Valley the Council will continue to work with the Lower Windrush Valley Project and County Minerals Authority to identify appropriate opportunities for tourism and leisure development. Proposals which complement the rural character of the area will be supported and where possible deliver comprehensive long term recreational access, community or nature conservation benefits.

Core Policy 26 – Witney Town Centre Strategy

Maintain and enhance Witney Town Centre with an accessible, attractive and diverse shopping, visitor and evening economy offer and the principal shopping and leisure destination for West Oxfordshire and surrounding area:


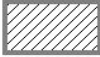

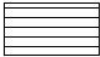




- Maintain a strong and diverse shopping core with a good mix of retailers, and focused on the High Street as the main pedestrian route and connector between the Woolgate and Marriotts Walk shopping centres. A primary shopping frontage is defined between these shopping centres and along the High Street where the loss of shops will be resisted.
- Promote the Market Square and Corn Street areas as shopping, leisure and cultural quarters, whilst avoiding excessive concentrations of uses that could impact on amenity or vitality. Secondary shopping frontages are defined in these and other areas (See Core Policy 16). The loss of town centre uses from shopping frontages will be resisted.
- Investigate opportunities for phased, organic extension of the Woolgate shopping centre and at Welch Way to meet retailer needs, well connected to and strengthening the High Street.
- Maintain and enhance the Market Square as an attractive public space which can be used for other purposes at other times
- Seek to raise the profile of Witney as a visitor destination, investigating opportunities for additional accommodation and improved visitor facilities such as coach drop off/waiting areas.
- Enhance the historic market town character and public realm by seeking to ensure investment in paved areas, street furniture, signage and shop fronts and through the provision of appropriate servicing and waste collection arrangements
- Ensure the town centre, as a key destination, remains accessible, through the provision and management of car parking and through enhancing public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure. Development proposals which significantly increase car parking demand will be expected to make appropriate public car parking provision or provide equivalent financial contributions.

Figure 9.3 - Witney Town Centre



WITNEY Town Centre

Figure 9.3

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|  | Town Centre Boundary |  | College Redevelopment |
|  | Primary Shopping Frontage |  | Windrush in Witney Policy Area |
|  | Secondary Shopping Frontage |  | Church Green Policy Area |
|  | Market Square |  | Scheduled Ancient Monument |

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Core Policy 27 – West Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)

Proposals for development should be consistent with the following:

- a) land north of Range Road and east of Downs Road – primarily employment uses, including the development of remaining land and redevelopment/refurbishment of older buildings.
- b) land west of Downs Road – leisure/recreation and employment development/redevelopment appropriate for the town fringe;
- c) land south of Range Road and east of Downs Road – to accommodate a comprehensive mixed use community to form a positive addition to Witney, including:
 - i. about 1,000 homes with a mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including affordable housing and homes specifically for older people. At least one Extra Care scheme will be required
 - ii. new employment opportunities to maximise job creation, including a minimum of 10 hectares of land primarily for business and general industrial uses with emphasis on creating a high quality business park environment suitable for high technology and larger employers
 - iii. a primary school and provision for secondary education
 - iv. local shopping, community and leisure facilities
 - v. provision for green space, including allotments, public playing fields and associated changing room facilities
 - vi. supporting transport infrastructure, including proposals to mitigate the impact of traffic associated with the development, and incorporating a comprehensive network for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport with links to adjoining areas
 - vii. appropriate measures to mitigate traffic noise
 - viii. measures to mitigate the impact of the development upon the environment, including the planting of new areas of woodland and the protection and enhancement of features of nature conservation and landscape value.
- d) development to be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities, with priority given to early provision of a new A40 junction at Downs Road to accommodate all traffic movements.
- e) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings including the achievement of at least Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Core Policy 28 – East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)

Land to the east of Witney to accommodate a sustainable, integrated community that forms a positive addition to Witney, including:

- a) about 300 homes with a mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including affordable housing and homes specifically for older people;
- b) development to be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities with the necessary improvements to the Shore's Green junction onto the A40 to be delivered prior to the completion of any housing on the site;
- c) the provision of other supporting transport infrastructure, including proposals to mitigate the impact of traffic associated with the development, and incorporating a comprehensive network for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport with links to adjoining areas, including a particular emphasis on improving the linkages across the Windrush Valley into the town centre;
- d) the provision of appropriate landscape improvements to mitigate the potential impact of development, with no built development to take place above the 95m AOD contour;
- e) land to be reserved for a potential park and ride scheme to allow Oxfordshire County Council the opportunity to consider the most appropriate location for a park and ride scheme serving Witney and Oxford;
- f) the provision of appropriate financial contributions towards primary and secondary education capacity enhancements;
- g) biodiversity enhancements including arrangements for future maintenance;
- h) provision of appropriate greenspace including allotments;
- i) appropriate measures to mitigate traffic noise
- j) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings including the achievement of at least Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Carterton Sub-Area

Description

- 9.35 The Carterton sub-area has a population of about 25,000. Most people live in Carterton itself (16,000) a relatively modern town which during the last 100 years has grown from an area of small holdings to become the second largest town in West Oxfordshire, offering a good range of services and facilities including a country park, leisure centre, employment, housing and retail. Part of Carterton's rapid growth has been associated with the nearby airfield, now the country's main RAF transport base (RAF Brize Norton) and an integral part of the local community employing up to 6,000 personnel of which approximately 2,000 live on the base.
- 9.36 There are a scattering of villages outside of Carterton, the largest being Bampton (2,500) which despite its relatively small size enjoys a good range of community activities and available services and is a designated rural service centre.

Housing

- 9.37 Most of the existing housing within this sub-area is located in Carterton. Military housing was built in the town after the Second World War, followed by extensive areas of private housing from the 1980s to recent times. Housing was primarily built within the low density structure of the original settlement until this century when the North East Carterton Development Area (Shilton Park) extended the town onto adjoining agricultural land providing around 1,500 new homes. The low density nature of the older housing in Carterton and the relatively large plot sizes has led to pressure for infill development in recent years. House prices in Carterton are relatively low compared with other parts of the District though there is still a significant need for affordable housing.
- 9.38 Although many service personnel live on the base, there are several areas of MOD housing within Carterton including the areas around Stanmore Crescent (REEMA Central) and Northwood Crescent (REEMA North). The redevelopment of MOD housing has been highlighted as a priority through previous consultation on the Local Plan and the REEMA North site has now been cleared in anticipation of 200 new homes being built to meet the RAF's service family needs. REEMA Central has been partly cleared and will (subject to the completion of the 200 new homes on REEMA North) be made available to the open housing market, with capacity likely to be in the region of 525 – 550 new homes.
- 9.39 In accordance with the overall strategy, Carterton will be a focus for new housing provision. Two Strategic Development Areas are proposed, land to the east of Carterton (700 dwellings) and the REEMA sites in central Carterton (400). Further explanation on these proposals and the alternative options that have been considered is set out below. New housing in the rest of the sub-area will be limited to meeting local community and business needs and will be steered towards the rural service centre and the larger villages.

Employment

- 9.40 Local jobs in Carterton have been traditionally linked with RAF Brize Norton or associated with businesses on the Carterton South Industrial Estate established by the District Council in the 1970s. RAF Brize Norton is seeing continued investment as the UK's main strategic air transport base and will employ up to 6,000 personnel. New job opportunities have been created to the east of the town, at Ventura Park and West Oxfordshire Business Park and further potential remains including aviation businesses related to RAF Brize Norton to locate in this area. Some additional high quality small industrial units for start-up firms would be beneficial.
- 9.41 About 5ha of vacant employment land remains with further business units (about 2.5ha) recently built and starting to be occupied. Taking this into account there is sufficient provision identified for the foreseeable future and there may also be potential to redevelop and/or refurbish some existing employment areas. Longer-term business land needs will be kept under review.

Retail & Leisure

- 9.42 Carterton has a relatively small town centre for its size, primarily serving a convenience and service role. Whilst the range and quality of shopping facilities and the overall town centre environment has improved markedly in recent years a significant amount of shopping trade leaks to other centres such as Witney and the centre remains vulnerable to out of centre development.
- 9.43 Considerable potential remains within the centre to further enhance the shopping and leisure offer. A new Aldi store has opened and the District Council is working with the local partnership, Carterton Fast Forward, and local landowners to deliver a stronger and more attractive shopping and leisure destination. The draft Local Plan continues to promote redevelopment in the south western quarter of the town centre to accommodate new retail uses and ancillary town centre development. There are current proposals by a major foodstore retailer and it is important that such development integrates well with the rest of the centre improving the attraction of the centre as a whole and facilitates future phases of redevelopment or refurbishment to ultimately provide a more comprehensive shopping offer.
- 9.44 Should an additional foodstore be developed, this will help the town centre improve its trade retention and the priority then will be to improve the non-food shopping and leisure offer. A primary shopping frontage is defined to the south of Alvescot Road and including the Co-op to provide a focus for shopping and a core frontage to protect and maintain the coherence of the town centre as a whole. Secondary shopping frontages are also defined for a wider range of shops, leisure uses and services which complement the shopping offer of the centre. Provision will need to be retained for the market in a prominent location. Adequate car parking will need to be provided and access improved where possible, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, whilst not precluding the potential for pedestrianisation.

- 9.45 Leisure facilities in Carterton include the Carterton Leisure Centre and the Country Park running along the northern edge of the town. The leisure centre was built in 2003 and has a considerable area of land to the rear of the site earmarked for an extension although funding is required. The Country Park was established in 2005 and there is scope to further extend it.

Transport

- 9.46 Carterton is relatively remote from the primary road network and much of its traffic passes through nearby villages. The A40 is only a short distance to the north but can only be accessed via 'B' roads including the B4020 Shilton Road and B4477 Brize Norton Road. Access to Witney can be achieved via the A4095 Bampton Road but this necessitates vehicles having to travel through Brize Norton village.
- 9.47 The Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan contains a longer term aim to improve the local road network with potential upgrade to 'A' road classification and improved signage. This is identified in the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) along with several other schemes including the proposed Shilton link road and improvements to the roundabout at Carterton Road/Norton Way. Also identified is the potential provision of a new link road between the B4477 Brize Norton Road and the Witney Road and land will be safeguarded for this scheme through the Local Plan with contributions to be sought from development as appropriate.
- 9.48 The town is well served by bus services including the premium S1 and S2 services to Witney and Oxford. Oxfordshire County Council have identified a number of potential improvements to bus services in the Carterton sub-area including improvements to bus stops along the S1/S2 route, improved bus journey times on the S1 route between Carterton and Oxford and enhancing the frequency of the 64 service to Swindon. These are identified in the draft IDP and funding will be sought from development accordingly.
- 9.49 Carterton has a good pedestrian and cycle network which is well used, particularly by RAF personnel, but the links through older parts of the town and out to the countryside are incomplete. The Local Transport Plan intends this network to be improved and promoted. Oxfordshire County Council has identified the potential to provide additional cycle parking at key locations as well as a new cycleway between Carterton and Witney.

The Environment

- 9.50 There are a number of environmental considerations within this sub-area. Much of the area to the south of Carterton is designated as a 'mineral consultation area' due to the presence of sand and gravel resources. The extraction of minerals in the Lower Windrush Valley in the east of the sub-area has significantly altered the landscape with large areas of riverside pasture now used for recreation, tourism and nature conservation through the Lower Windrush Valley Project. There are also mineral resources to the north of Carterton including an active limestone quarry (Burford Quarry).

- 9.51 The River Thames runs along the southern boundary of the sub-area and whilst presenting opportunities for tourism and leisure uses must also be considered in terms of the flood risk it presents. Flood risk is also an issue for other locations within the sub-area including some of the villages which are particularly vulnerable.
- 9.52 Running along the western boundary of Carterton is the Shill Brook Valley which is a designated biodiversity conservation target area. Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) are the most important areas for wildlife conservation where targeted conservation action will have the greatest benefits. In planning terms they represent areas of ecological opportunity and potential improvements the District's CTAs are highlighted in the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
- 9.53 To the north of Carterton is the Kilkenny Lane Country Park provided as part of the Shilton Park development. It includes a popular adventure playground and offers good opportunities for walking and other forms of recreation. It is anticipated that the proposed strategic allocation of land to the east of Carterton will allow for an extension to this valuable local facility.
- 9.54 Noise from RAF Brize Norton is also an important environmental consideration in this area. Carterton and the surrounding villages are adversely affected by aircraft movement. The airbase and level of activity will continue to reflect its major contribution to global activities although it is anticipated that the replacement of the existing fleet of older aircraft will lead to a reduction in the noise footprint for the base.

Infrastructure

- 9.55 Other than the transport schemes outlined above, the main infrastructure requirements for Carterton relate to education and leisure. Carterton has spare capacity in some of its primary schools but fluctuating needs of the RAF necessitate some flexibility. The most recently built primary school, St. John the Evangelist Primary School provided as part of the Shilton Park development is rapidly filling up and does not have scope to accommodate any more children from new development. A new primary school will therefore need to be provided as part of the Strategic Development Area (SDA) at East Carterton.
- 9.56 There is a very active secondary school in Carterton but it has limited sixth form facilities and many older pupils travel to schools at Witney or Burford. The catchment of school will be extended to include the proposed strategic allocation at east Carterton which should help to support the provision of improved facilities at the school. In the villages surrounding Carterton there is limited capacity within existing schools at present. Brize Norton School is already under pressure and contributions will be sought from new development as appropriate.

- 9.57 Leisure opportunities at Carterton have received a major boost with the new country park and playground, the indoor swimming pool and gym as well as the Carterton Community Centre. However the second phase of the Leisure Centre to provide additional facilities remains largely unfunded. The town has a number of active sports club, notably the football club and also those associated with RAF Brize Norton and further pitch provision (artificial and/or grass pitches) is required to meet their needs.
- 9.58 Further information on the infrastructure requirements for this area is set out in the draft IDP.

Scope for Further Expansion

- 9.59 Carterton Town Council is keen to see further expansion of the town's population and additional improvements in local infrastructure. Unlike Witney, there is a reasonable degree of capacity for new housing within the built up area. The MOD has confirmed that it intends to build 200 new homes for RAF service families on land at Northwood Crescent (known as 'REEMA North'). Once built, the MOD would release land at Stanmore Crescent (REEMA Central) for disposal to the open market. Together, the redevelopment of the REEMA sites would represent an 'uplift' of around 400 units (net) across the two sites. In light of the MOD announcement and their intention to dispose of REEMA Central, the MOD land has been identified in the draft Local Plan as a Strategic Development Area (SDA) with a likely net gain of around 400 homes.
- 9.60 There is also some potential capacity for new housing elsewhere within the town including Milestone Road. However, in order to accommodate the level of growth identified in the draft Local Plan, it will be necessary to expand the existing urban area through development on Greenfield land. Several options have been considered through previous consultations on the draft Local Plan and have been assessed through a process of Sustainability Appraisal including land to the east, north (two options) and west of Carterton.
- 9.61 A detailed assessment of the four options has been undertaken and an updated Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been carried out. Both documents are available as separate background papers. Having regard to the SA and detailed site assessment, a Strategic Development Area (SDA) is proposed on land to the east of Carterton for around 700 dwellings. The site represents a logical extension to the existing town boundary, has relatively limited landscape impact, is extremely accessible to a range of services and facilities and presents the opportunity to extend the Kilkenny Lane Country Park through the provision of a long-term buffer to Brize Norton Village.
- 9.62 The larger site to the north of Carterton at Kilkenny Farm is not considered suitable for a number of reasons. In particular the site is relatively distant from the town centre, would require significant highway improvements to deliver satisfactory access arrangements, development would represent a major incursion into the countryside and would be poorly integrated with the existing built up area.

- 9.63 The smaller site to the north of Carterton (David Wilson Homes) does not enjoy particularly good public transport links, has potential landscape and ecological sensitivities and there are also some outstanding issues regarding land ownership and deliverability.
- 9.64 Land to the west of Carterton is not considered suitable for a number of reasons. In particular, development in this location would have a significant landscape impact, would require access to be provided via extensive built infrastructure located in an environmentally and ecologically sensitive area, part of which is in the flood plain (the Shill Brook Valley) and development would represent a major incursion into the open countryside.
- 9.65 In the remainder of the sub-area, in accordance with the overall strategy, further growth will be limited to meeting local community and business needs and will be steered towards the rural service centre and larger villages.

Core Policy 29 – Carterton Sub-Area Strategy

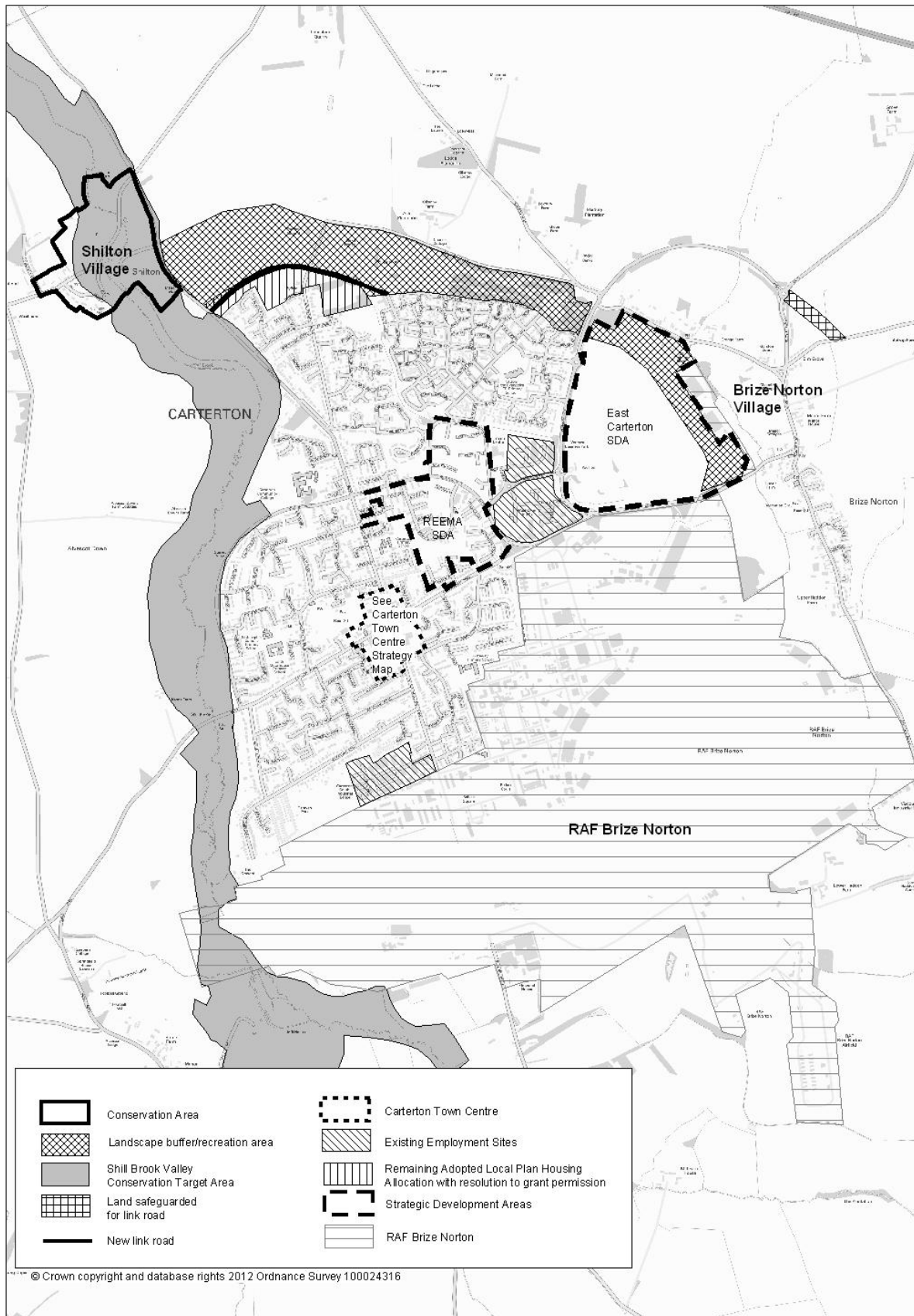
The focus of new development will be Carterton. New development in the rest of the sub-area will be limited to meeting local community and business needs and will be steered towards the rural service centre and larger villages.

Proposals for development in the sub-area should be consistent with the strategy which includes:

- delivery of around 1,850 new homes to be focused on Carterton and to include affordable housing and homes for older people and newly forming households. At least one Extra Care scheme will be required.
- a Strategic Development Area of about 700 dwellings to the east of the town (see Core Policy 31)
- redevelopment of existing sub-standard MOD housing including a Strategic Development Area of about 400 dwellings (net) at REEMA North and Central (see Core Policy 32)
- satisfactorily accommodating the needs of RAF Brize Norton and of local communities and visitors and working with RAF Brize Norton to meet their needs and ensure their impacts are mitigated wherever possible
- retention of remaining land for businesses (5ha) at West Oxfordshire Business Park and Ventura Park. The uptake of this land and the need for additional land for businesses in the longer term will be kept under review

- a stronger and more attractive town centre in accordance with the Carterton Town Centre development strategy (Core Policy 30)
- ensuring that new development makes appropriate and timely provision for necessary supporting infrastructure, including provision of new green infrastructure, community and leisure facilities
- working with the highway authority, the town council and other partners to improve connections between Carterton and the primary road network and deliver necessary strategic transport improvements including the Shilton Road Link and a potential new link road between the B4477 Brize Norton Road and the Witney Road
- continuing to improve conditions throughout the town for pedestrians and cyclists, including accessibility to a wide range of improved bus services and waiting facilities
- maintaining, enhancing and extending the green buffer on the northern edge of Carterton and between Carterton and Brize Norton village
- protection and enhancement of the biodiversity and leisure value of the Shill Brook Valley
- avoiding development which will increase the risk of flooding and working with partners such as the Environment Agency to deliver flood mitigation measures.
- Working with the River Thames Alliance, support tourism and leisure proposals which are sensitive to and where appropriate enhance the ecological, landscape and heritage value of the River Thames.

Figure 9.4 - Carterton Strategy

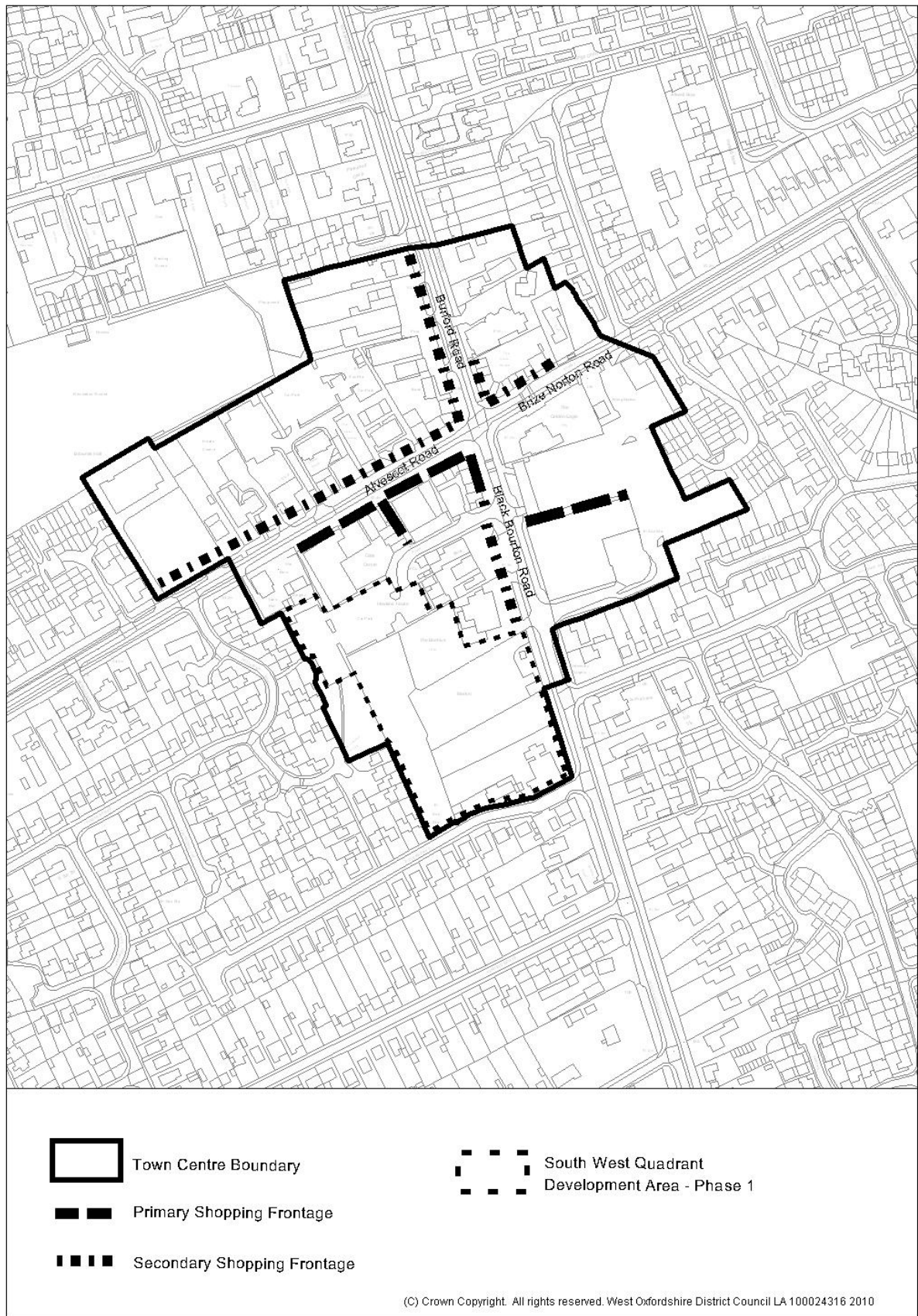


Core Policy 30 – Carterton Town Centre Strategy

Carterton Town Centre will become the local retail centre of choice for those living and working in the town and surrounding villages:

- Provide a wider range of well integrated shops, leisure opportunities, public spaces and ancillary town centre facilities including ancillary residential development
- Create distinctive and attractive shopping frontages through high quality traditional and contemporary design and landscaping, utilising high quality materials with some local references, and retaining and enhancing existing trees and planted areas where appropriate
- Maintain provision for a market in a prominent location which can be used for other purposes at other times
- Retain and provide adequate car parking and provide for improved access, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, whilst not precluding the potential for pedestrianisation
- A primary shopping frontage is defined to the south side of Alvescot Road and Brize Norton Road to provide a focal point for shopping within the centre and within which the loss of shops will be resisted. Secondary shopping frontages are defined in these and other areas (See Core Policy 16). The loss of town centre uses from shopping frontages will be resisted and excessive concentrations of uses that could affect amenity or vitality will be avoided.
- A first phase of comprehensive development/redevelopment is proposed within the south west quadrant of the town centre. Within this area additional retail development and ancillary town centre uses which are well integrated with existing facilities and facilitate future phases of redevelopment will be permitted. The potential for new vehicular access from Alvescot Road and Black Bourton Road should be explored.

Figure 9.5 - Carterton Town Centre



Core Policy 31 – East Carterton Strategic Development Area (SDA)

Proposals for development should be consistent with the following:

- a) achievement of a comprehensive, sustainable community which maximises links into the existing built-up area of Carterton and creates a positive addition to the local area
- b) about 700 homes with a range of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including affordable housing and homes specifically for older people, with at least one Extra Care scheme
- c) provision of a new primary school on-site (1.5FE (including foundation stage) with 2FE core facilities to enable future expansion of the school)
- d) provision of local shopping, community and leisure facilities through the creation of a local centre
- e) green space and biodiversity enhancements including arrangements for future maintenance. In particular the development will be required to provide a long-term buffer to Brize Norton Village to form an extension to the Kilkenny Lane Country Park and also to contribute towards the enhancement of the Shill Brook Valle
- f) provision of allotments, public playing fields and associated changing room facilities
- g) provision of appropriate flood risk mitigation measures
- h) appropriate measures to mitigate the impact of noise upon noise-sensitive uses
- i) contribution towards Carterton Leisure Centre (Phase 2)
- j) supporting transport infrastructure, including proposals to mitigate the impact of traffic associated with the development, and incorporating a comprehensive network for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport with links to adjoining areas to include a contribution towards the potential provision of a new link road between the B4477 Brize Norton Road and the Witney/Curbridge Road
- k) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings including the achievement of at least Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Core Policy 32 – REEMA North and Central Strategic Development Area (SDA)

Proposals for development should be consistent with the following:

- a) achievement of a comprehensive, sustainable community which maximises links into the existing built-up area of Carterton and creates a positive addition to the local area
- b) a net increase of about 400 homes with a range of residential accommodation to meet identified needs including affordable housing and homes specifically for older people
- c) contribution towards education and indoor and outdoor leisure provision in the local area
- d) appropriate provision for greenspace
- e) necessary supporting transport infrastructure, including proposals to mitigate the impact of traffic associated with the development
- f) contribution towards the potential provision of a new link road between the B4477 Brize Norton Road and the Witney/Curbridge Road
- g) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings including the achievement of at least Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Chipping Norton Sub-Area

Description

- 9.66 The Chipping Norton sub-area has a population of about 13,000 with half living in the hilltop town of Chipping Norton (or 'Chippy' as it is locally known). Chipping Norton is the third largest town in West Oxfordshire and occupies a prominent hill-top position on the eastern edge of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within which most of the town is situated. Lying astride the 185m contour, Chipping Norton is one of the highest settlements of its size in southern England and offers extensive views to and from the surrounding countryside.
- 9.67 It is an historic market town which gained prosperity and importance as a centre of the wool and tweed industries. Combined with a rich heritage the town continues to possess a strong and vibrant community supporting its own theatre with a wide programme of productions, a recently built leisure centre with indoor pool (alongside retaining the community run outdoor swimming pool), a golf course and numerous sports clubs and societies. A new youth centre has also opened.
- 9.68 Outside of Chipping Norton the remaining population within this sub-area live in a scattering of generally small villages and hamlets. Being surrounded by this rural hinterland and being relatively remote from larger towns, Chipping Norton acts as a service centre for residents, workers and visitors although does itself look to Banbury/Cherwell District for some services and facilities.

Housing

- 9.69 Most of the housing within this sub-area is located in Chipping Norton. New areas of Council housing were added in the post-war years on land to the south and west of the centre and private housing estates were built during the 1980s and 1990s. About 1,150 new homes have been added since 1976. Some of this has been through the redevelopment of large previously developed sites such as Parker Knoll and Bliss Mill, the former tweed mill now converted to flats. As with the rest of the District there is a significant need for affordable housing in this area.
- 9.70 Elsewhere in the sub-area, Enstone (including Church Enstone and Neat Enstone) has seen a significant increase in the amount of housing during the 20th Century, with council house developments in the 1920s and 1950s and further development of market housing over the last 20 to 30 years. Middle Barton also saw considerable expansion in the latter half of the 20th century with the creation of new private and council estates.
- 9.71 In accordance with the overall strategy, Chipping Norton will be a focus for future housing growth in the District which will be identified and delivered primarily through the Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan which is currently being prepared and when adopted, will sit alongside the Local Plan and form part of the development plan for West Oxfordshire. New housing in the rest of the sub-area will be limited to meeting local community and business needs and will be steered towards the larger villages.

Employment

- 9.72 Chipping Norton prides itself upon being a 'working town' with over 50% of its residents working within Chipping Norton at the time of the 2001 Census. There are three well-used older employment estates on the western edge (including on part of the former railway line) and a modern business park to the east. The loss at the beginning of this century of the Parker Knoll furniture factory (over 400 jobs) was a significant blow. Employment opportunities have increased in recent years with the expansion of manufacturing firm Owen Mumford on the western side of the town. Two hectares of the former Parker Knoll factory site off London Road have been reserved for new businesses. The remainder of the site has been developed for market and affordable housing. In addition a further 3ha of land remains allocated for employment in the Local Plan, including the former Highways Depot (1ha) and also land (2ha) off the London Road adjacent to the new hospital. There remains demand for additional business units, including good quality small industrial units.
- 9.73 Elsewhere in the sub area there is a large mainly industrial area at Enstone Airfield and Lotus FI has a significant facility just outside Middle Barton. In addition there are small industrial and business parks, many in converted farm buildings such as at Kiddington and Radford. In accordance with the overall strategy, additional employment provision will be focused at Chipping Norton. Proposals of an appropriate scale and type will be supported elsewhere subject to compliance with other relevant policies.

Retail & Leisure

- 9.74 Chipping Norton Town Centre contains a variety of shops and services, pubs and restaurants as well as a weekly market. These facilities primarily serve the day to day needs of residents of the town and surrounding villages but also attract passing tourist trade. The centre however has a good range of shops for a town of its size including national multiple and independent retailers. The town would benefit from improved food shopping facilities and additional car parking capacity in the town centre. Our retail assessment has identified that the town centre food shopping role is supporting the range of other shops and services as people undertake linked trips to other shops in addition to their food shopping.
- 9.75 The assessment did not identify significant capacity for further shopping provision in addition to the current proposals to extend the existing Co-op and adjacent car park which will provide the improvement needed to food shopping facilities. There may be potential for further proposals in this area although they must respect the historic burgage plots and maintain good pedestrian access to the High Street. Other shopping and leisure proposals will be supported where they further enhance the viability of the town centre as a whole and car parking will be kept under review.
- 9.76 The High Street and Market Place are designated as a primary shopping frontage where the loss of shops will be resisted to help preserve this rural market town's character and vibrancy. Elsewhere secondary shopping frontages are defined as areas appropriate for a wider range shops, leisure uses and services which complement the shopping offer of the centre.

- 9.77 At Enstone, facilities include a primary school, post office, general store, petrol filling station and two public houses. Facilities at Middle Barton include a primary school, a post office/general store, public house, three places of worship and a sports ground including a social club and tennis courts.

Transport

- 9.78 Chipping Norton sits astride the crossing of the A44 and A361, with the heavily used lorry route to and from the Evesham area passing through the town centre and detracting from the quality of the centre. This has led to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) being designated along the town centre roads and extending along Banbury Road. An Action Plan was approved in October 2008 containing a range of measures aimed at improving air quality, primarily through reduction of HGV movements through promoting alternative routes.
- 9.79 The Oxfordshire Transport Plan (LTP3) seeks to remove primary route status on the A44 between Oxford and Moreton-in-Marsh and deliver relief from lorries, including through use of HGV restrictions on Horsefair. The area strategy for Chipping Norton strategy aims to improve routes for pedestrians and cyclists from residential areas to the town centre and other services and facilities. It also seeks to enhance local bus services which connect the town with a wide area, including Oxford, Witney, Banbury and Stratford-upon-Avon and a railbus to Kingham Station.

The Environment

- 9.80 This is an area of high limestone plateau (ironstone in the north-east), with several river valleys designated for their biodiversity value (Conservation Target Areas). The western part of this sub-area including most of Chipping Norton itself falls within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A proportion of the sub-area also falls within the designated Wychwood Forest Area – a project that aims to revive the landscape character and mix of habitats found in the area during the middle ages.
- 9.81 In terms of the historic environment, Chipping Norton includes a number of listed buildings including perhaps most notably the landmark Bliss Mill, a former tweed mill (Grade 2* listed building) now converted to flats. A Conservation Area covers most of the central, northern and eastern areas of the town with a separate Conservation Area extending over open land to the south west of the town providing the setting for Bliss Mill. These designations are currently being reviewed and will be taken into account prior to the draft Local Plan being finalised.

Infrastructure

- 9.82 One of the main infrastructure considerations in this sub-area is education. There are two primary schools in Chipping Norton, both faith schools and both nearing capacity. Whilst there are other primary schools in surrounding villages that take children from Chipping Norton notably Kingham, these schools are also nearing capacity. There is reportedly an appetite in the town for a third primary school in Chipping Norton, increasing choice and diversity, however to make this viable, housing growth of 800+ homes is likely to be needed.

- 9.83 Core Policy 6 makes provision for about 600 new homes in the Chipping Norton sub-area and it is anticipated that this level of growth can be accommodated within existing schools. Growth in excess of this level is however likely to necessitate the provision of a new primary school. It will be for the Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan to determine the level of growth suitable for the town in accordance with the minimum requirement set by the Local Plan.
- 9.84 Additional affordable homes are needed but this has proved difficult to deliver in Chipping Norton. The size of the town has precluded the rural exception site approach used in villages and the former national site size threshold used in the adopted Local Plan has made most new residential schemes that come forward ineligible to contribute to affordable housing. In future, under Core Policy 8, smaller residential schemes will be required to contribute towards or provide affordable housing on-site.

Scope for Further Expansion

- 9.85 The setting and heritage of Chipping Norton influences sustainable development opportunities. The plateau to the east is the only land on the fringes of Chipping Norton which lies outside the AONB but here buildings and structures can be prominent in the wider landscape. This area has been the focus of more recent development, as well as pressures for larger scale urban extensions.
- 9.86 It will be for the Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan to consider in detail the scope for future development within and on the fringes of the town. There are already some known opportunities. Completion of a new residential care home and primary care centre on land to the north of London Road will for example lead to new development opportunities within the town as premises owned by the County Council and healthcare organisations are vacated. A key site lies to the north of the town centre off Spring Street where the old hospital, ambulance station and care home will be redeveloped to meet current needs. The Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) suggests there may be scope for new residential development on the eastern fringes of the town.
- 9.87 In addition to housing, there is a need for additional employment land/premises, primarily to accommodate small to medium sized businesses, including start-up opportunities. Two hectares of land at the former Parker Knoll site and 1 hectare within the mixed use local plan allocation to the north of London Road will be reserved to provide future job opportunities. A further 2ha is expected to be required to meet business needs, including small industrial units, and will be considered and identified through the Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 9.88 Outside Chipping Norton, opportunities for further development in the rest of the sub-area are relatively limited and will be focused on meeting local community and business needs, with a particular steer towards the larger villages.

Core Policy 33 – Chipping Norton Sub-Area Strategy

The focus for development will be Chipping Norton. New development in the rest of the sub-area will be limited to meeting local community and business needs and will be steered towards the larger villages.

Proposals for development in Chipping Norton will be taken forward through the Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan and should be consistent with the strategy which includes:

- about 600 new homes within the sub-area including affordable housing and homes for older people and newly forming households. At least one Extra Care scheme will be required.
- ensuring that new development makes appropriate and timely provision for necessary supporting infrastructure.
- conservation and enhancement of the town's landscape setting and heritage assets.
- protection of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- working with the highway authority, the town council and other partners to reduce the impact of through traffic, especially lorries, upon the town centre and its air quality.
- improving conditions throughout the town for pedestrians and cyclists, including accessibility to bus and rail services.
- a stronger town centre with new opportunities for retail and community facilities on land between High Street and Albion Street A primary shopping frontage is defined at the High Street and Market Place with secondary shopping frontages defined elsewhere other areas (see Core Policy 16).
- management of public car parking areas to help support the town centre.
- additional land to meet business needs and expand employment opportunities. About 5ha is currently identified.
- provision of new education and community facilities.
- priority will be given to reuse/redevelopment of the former health and older people's accommodation off Spring Street.

Figure 9.6 - Chipping Norton Strategy

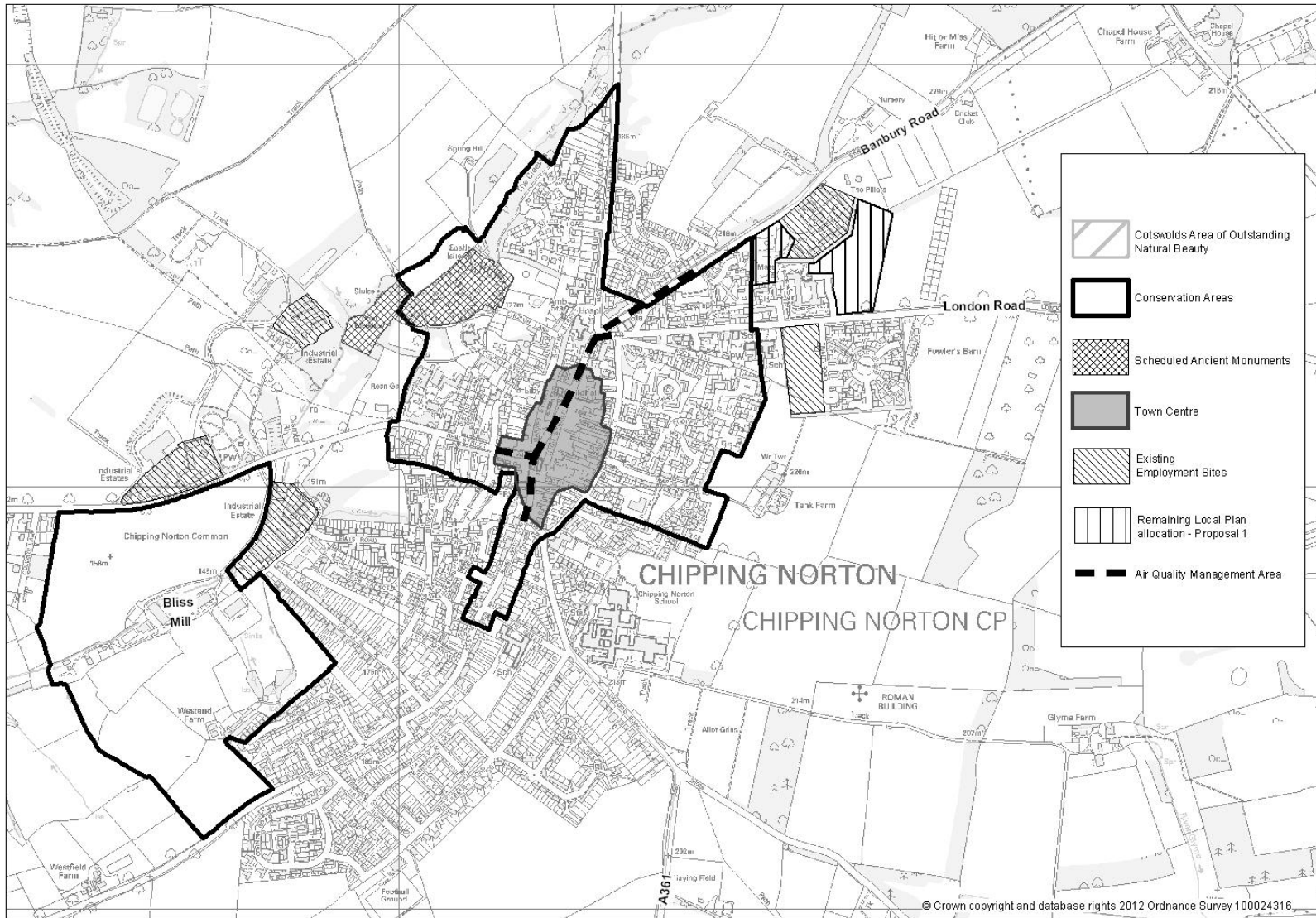
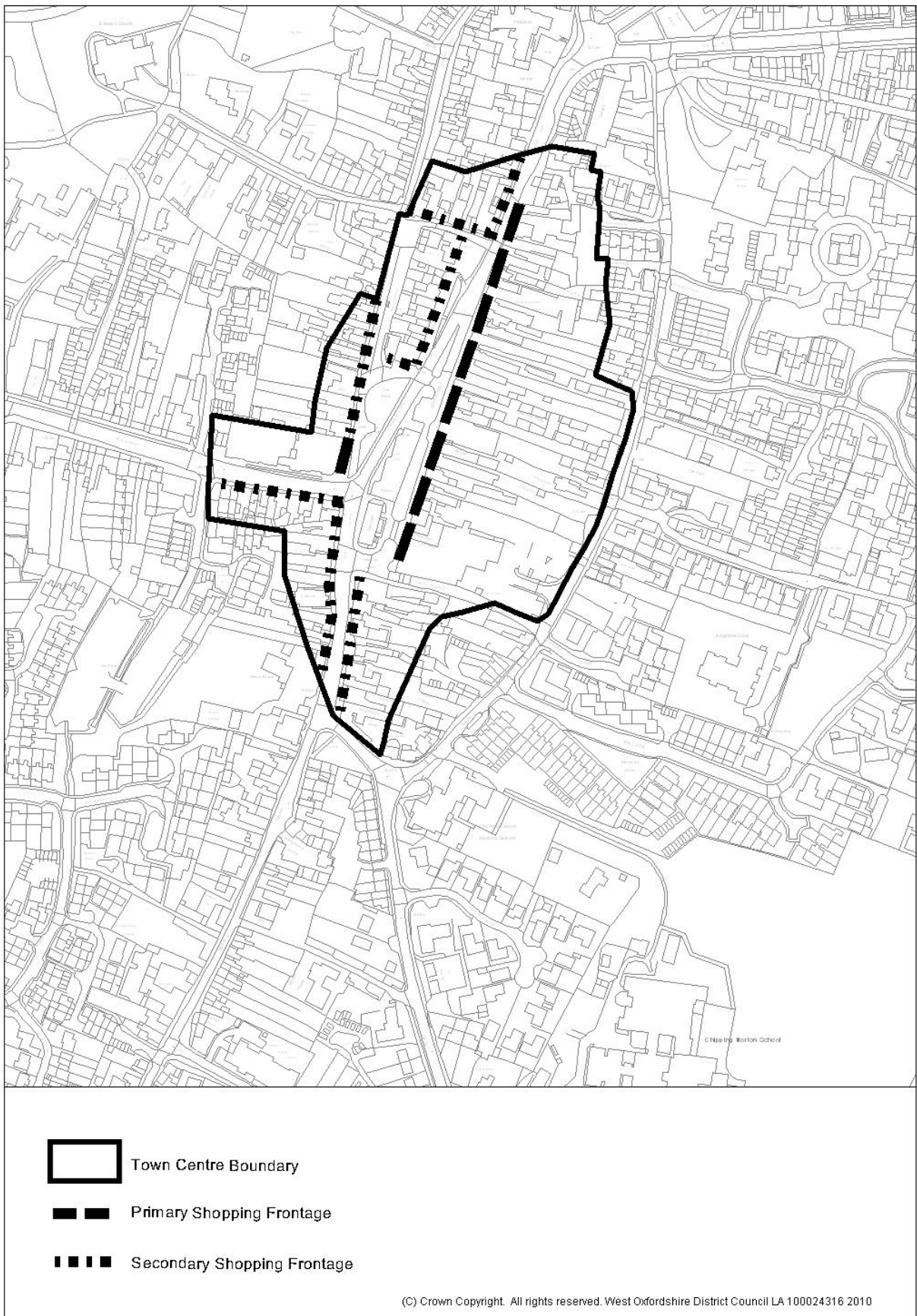


Figure 9.7 - Chipping Norton Town Centre



Eynsham – Woodstock Sub-Area

Description

- 9.89 This sub-area has a population of about 21,000. The three main settlements are Eynsham, Long Hanborough and Woodstock. With a population of around 5,000, Eynsham is the fourth largest settlement in West Oxfordshire, located just south of the A40, half-way between Oxford and Witney and just beyond the western edge of the Oxford Green Belt. Eynsham is an important local service centre offering a wide range of facilities and employment. Long Hanborough developed as a linear village along the now A4095 and is one of the smaller service centres with a population of approximately 2,400. The village has a small number of shops and a reasonable range of other services and facilities.
- 9.90 Woodstock is a historic town of national, if not international, renown. The old part of Woodstock is a well preserved example of a medieval town; a Conservation Area covers much of the central area and almost 200 listed buildings. The Blenheim World Heritage Site abuts the western boundary of the conservation area and extends to the north and south of the town along the A44. The town has a very good range of services and facilities given its size (approximately 3,000 population).
- 9.91 The other larger settlements in this area include Freeland which despite losing some its facilities in recent years retains a primary school, two places of worship, a pub and playing fields and Standlake to the south which has a population of about 1,300 and a range of local services and facilities, particularly recreational activities.

Housing

- 9.92 Eynsham experienced rapid expansion to the north after the A40 was constructed in the 1930s. Sub- division of the original burgage plots and intensification of development has also taken place within the medieval core, creating a compact and dense settlement. A development of 100 dwellings has recently been built to the east and an affordable housing development has recently been completed to the west.
- 9.93 In Long Hanborough areas of Council housing were built during the 1920s and 1930s lessening the linear form. Further estate style housing was built in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. More recently limited new housing has been added to the village. House prices here are amongst the highest in the District reflecting the good level of accessibility with a Cotswold line station just to the east of the village.
- 9.94 At Woodstock, residential estates have been added to the historic core of the town since the 1930s, and particularly in the 50s and 60s. More recently the number of new houses built within the town has been relatively low although a site for 63 houses is being built out adjacent the Marlborough School on the eastern edge of the town.
- 9.95 In accordance with the overall strategy, additional housing development in this sub-area will be focused on Eynsham, Long Hanborough and Woodstock as rural service centres, with any additional development steered mainly towards the larger villages.

Employment

- 9.96 Employment opportunities in this area are focused at Eynsham, Long Hanborough and Woodstock. Eynsham provides a range of facilities including employment, with the large Oakfield industrial estate and Siemens located on the outskirts of the village. Long Hanborough has a small number of shops, a reasonable range of other services and facilities and there is a sizeable and well used employment area to the east of the village located next to the railway station on the Cotswold line. Some development opportunities remain here at Blenheim Office Park.
- 9.97 Blenheim Palace is the District's largest visitor attraction and a major contributor to the local economy, both in terms of employment and spending. Its location, immediately next to Woodstock, combined with the attractive character of the town itself, has resulted in tourism being especially important to Woodstock's livelihood. The town's dual role as a tourist centre and a service centre, for its own population and its hinterland, means there are several pubs, restaurants, hotels and tea shops, along with a good range of other shops. Outside of the town's central area there are a few specific employment sites including The Quadrangle a collection of barn conversions now offices and also the Owen Mumford factory and depot off Green Lane.
- 9.98 The proximity of this sub-area to Oxford Airport, Kidlington and Oxford with the major employment growth areas also to the south of Oxford, present a diverse range of opportunities within close distance although traffic congestion along key routes including the A40 and A44 is a severe problem at peak times. Further employment opportunities will be able to come forward in this area primarily through the redevelopment, intensification and expansion of existing employment sites and small scale rural diversification schemes.

Retail & Leisure

- 9.99 The widest retail offer is however provided by Woodstock where the range of shops available belies the size of the town. The centre has a number of high quality shops, pubs, hotels, cafes and restaurants with a low level of vacancy underlining that it is performing relatively well but is reliant on the visitor economy. Despite this apparent prosperity, the loss of shops which meet the day to day needs of residents is an issue of local concern. The availability of car parking to support the town centre is also of concern and needs to be reviewed. Long Hanborough has a small number of shops and Eynsham as an important local service centre also provides a number of shops. Leisure opportunities are available at Standlake where there is a cricket club, banger racing circuit and holiday park. Nearby Oxford presents a diverse range of services and facilities including extensive retail and leisure opportunities.
- 9.100 This sub-area contains two valuable water-based leisure resources: the River Thames and its tributaries and the Lower Windrush Valley. The remoteness, tranquillity and landscape sensitivity of the Upper Thames limits the opportunities for further major water based activities and riverside facilities. The Council will however work with others, such as the Environment Agency and the River Thames Alliance, to optimise

the leisure and tourism potential of the River Thames and its tributaries, while conserving and enhancing the ecological landscape and heritage value.

- 9.101 The Lower Windrush Valley, particularly in the Stanton Harcourt/Standlake area, has long been associated with the production of sand and gravel and restoration to form lakes, providing an extensive area for windsurfing, fishing, watersports and bird watching. A Project covering this area sets out a series of proposals to help achieve landscape, nature conservation and leisure objectives, including the provision of a long distance path – The Windrush Way – linking Witney to the Thames Path.

Transport

- 9.102 Transport is a key issue for this part of West Oxfordshire. The A40 runs east-west through the sub-area and significant congestion occurs between Eynsham and Oxford at peak times. This area is identified as a priority by Oxfordshire County Council and the possibility of a park and ride site at Eynsham serving Oxford and Witney has been identified in the draft IDP. Congestion also occurs on the A44 Woodstock Road and Oxfordshire County Council has identified a number of improvements to the northern approaches to Oxford to alleviate the traffic problems in this area. Financial contributions towards these improvements will be sought from development where appropriate.
- 9.103 Public transport availability in this area is good with railway stations at Tackley, Combe and Long Hanborough, the latter being one of the District's largest and most well-used stations although experiences some parking related problems. Oxfordshire County Council has identified a number of potential enhancements to Long Hanborough Station through their draft rail strategy (January 2012). There are also proposals for an additional car park for rail users on the adjacent industrial estate.
- 9.104 In terms of bus services, Eynsham provides the best opportunities with regular services to Witney, Carterton and Oxford including the S1 and S2 premium services. Woodstock is served by the S3 service to Chipping Norton and Oxford whilst there are a number of other Oxford bound services in the wider area. The County Council has aspirations to upgrade existing bus stops, enhance frequencies and journey times and contributions from development will be sought as appropriate.

The Environment

- 9.105 This is a sensitive area both in terms of the natural and historic environment. In relation to the natural environment, the northern part of the sub-area falls within the Cotswolds AONB, the eastern part is within the Oxford Green Belt and much of the south is designated as a mineral consultation area with restored sand and gravel pits which together with the River Windrush, form part of the Lower Windrush Biodiversity Target Area. The Standlake area is particularly vulnerable to flooding. Cassington Meadows is of international importance forming part of the wider Oxford Meadows, a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

- 9.106 There are conservation areas and a number of listed buildings in Long Hanborough, Eynsham and Woodstock. Of particular note is the Blenheim World Heritage Site (WHS) at Woodstock which abuts the western boundary of the conservation area and extends to the north and south of the town along the A44. Blenheim Park covers some 2,000 acres and was famously landscaped by 'Capability Brown'. Blenheim Palace itself is one of England's largest houses built between 1705 and c.1724. It is essential that any future development at Woodstock does not adversely affect the significance of the WHS and its setting, including views to and from the site.
- 9.107 A Management Plan published in 2006 for Blenheim Palace WHS aims to sustain and conserve the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) which makes Blenheim internationally and nationally significant. The Council will work with the owners of the Estate to ensure that the OUV is maintained and enhanced, having regard to the Management Plan and its objectives. This document (prepared under the guidance of a Steering Group which included the District Council and County Council and endorsed by Government) guides the management, maintenance and enhancement of the natural and built environment of this important and complex Estate and is a material planning consideration.

Infrastructure

- 9.108 In addition to transport, other infrastructure considerations in this area include leisure and education. The Eynsham Parish Plan identified a number of leisure needs including an all-weather artificial turf pitch, whilst current needs in Woodstock appear to be a skateboard facility and development of an outdoor training area with an ATP. The District Council's priority in Woodstock is to support the community in looking at the feasibility of an outdoor floodlit training area or ATP plus additional changing accommodation and assist in maximising any external funding opportunities.
- 9.109 In terms of education, schools in this area are operating in line with the County Council's target level of spare places for rural areas but are generally nearing capacity. Schools experiencing particular pressure include Combe and Bladon. Like the rest of the District, there is a need for more affordable housing and housing for older people.

Scope for Further Expansion

- 9.110 Although most future growth in the District will be focused in the Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton sub-areas, the two, more rural sub-areas have a key role to play and it is essential that they accommodate an appropriate amount and type of development so as to not stagnate or decline and provide for local housing and economic needs. The greatest potential for further development in this sub-area is considered to be at the rural service centres.

- 9.111 At Eynsham there is some scope for further development within the existing built up area and on the fringe of the village. There is also some scope for further development at Long Hanborough although the capacity of the local primary school is a consideration. At Woodstock whilst there is some scope for limited development within and on the fringe of the town, the potential impact on the historic fabric of the town in particular the Blenheim World Heritage Site is a key consideration.
- 9.112 Opportunities for development elsewhere in the sub-area are relatively limited. In Freeland there may be scope for some small-scale intensification and conversions however at Standlake a long standing search for a rural exception site in the village has proved unsuccessful. There may be scope for additional employment opportunities of an appropriate scale and type including rural diversification.
- 9.113 The most appropriate mechanism for exploring in more detail the options for growth in this sub-area is likely to be through locally driven Neighbourhood Plans. Depending on the take-up of such plans, the Council may continue to prepare a 'site allocation' development plan document to identify appropriate development opportunities in this area.

Core Policy 34 – Eynsham – Woodstock Sub-Area Strategy

The focus of new development will be Eynsham, Long Hanborough and Woodstock. Development in these rural service centres will be of an appropriate scale and type that would help to reinforce the existing service centre role. Development elsewhere will be limited to meeting local housing, community and business needs and will be steered towards the larger villages.

Proposals for development in the sub-area should be consistent with the strategy which includes:

- delivery of about 450 new homes to include affordable housing and homes for older people and newly forming households
- ensuring that new development makes appropriate and timely provision for necessary supporting infrastructure, including education, leisure, green infrastructure and other community facilities
- protection of the Oxford Green Belt and Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- protection of historic and community assets including in particular the safeguarding of the Blenheim World Heritage Site and its setting
- enhancing public transport and pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure together with managing car parking to reduce car use for short journeys
- working with the highway authority, the town council and other partners to reduce the impact of through traffic in Woodstock
- seeking the retention and development of local services and community facilities throughout the sub-area and ensuring Woodstock Town Centre remains vibrant through resisting the loss of shops and other town centre uses, and promoting an increase the availability and efficient use of car parking provision in appropriate locations
- avoiding development which will increase the risk of flooding and working with partners such as the Environment Agency to deliver flood mitigation measures.
- working with the River Thames Alliance, support tourism and leisure proposals which are sensitive to and where appropriate enhance the ecological, landscape and heritage value of the River Thames
- support for additional employment opportunities including sustainable tourism and rural diversification.

In the Lower Windrush Valley the Council will continue to work with the Lower Windrush Valley Project and County Minerals Authority to identify appropriate opportunities for tourism and leisure development. Proposals which complement the rural character of the area will be supported and where possible deliver comprehensive long term recreational access, community or nature conservation benefits.

Burford – Charlbury Sub-Area

Description

- 9.114 This is the largest of the sub-areas and has a predominantly rural character, with a population of about 13,000. It includes a network of small and medium sized villages, none larger than 3,000 residents. The majority of the area is within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and many of the towns and villages have extensive conservation areas and many listed buildings. There are two designated rural service centres; Burford and Charlbury. With a population of 1,300 Burford is the smallest of the District's service centres but has a level of services which belies its size and is one of West Oxfordshire's most popular tourist attractions. With a population of just under 3,000, Charlbury lies in the centre of West Oxfordshire on the Cotswolds rail line.
- 9.115 Other larger settlements in this area include the villages of Milton under Wychwood and Shipton under Wychwood (population of 1,500 and 1,300 respectively). Both villages are within the Cotswolds AONB. Stonesfield has a population of about 1,500 and has a thriving community spirit, with a range of local services and facilities. It is popular with walkers and cyclists being a focus of rural footpaths and bridleways, including the Oxfordshire Way.

Housing

- 9.116 The existing housing stock in this sub-area is relatively evenly distributed with no single major large settlement. In Burford, there have been no sites allocated for residential development since the late 1980s. The environmental quality of the town makes it a desirable place to live but restricts the availability of suitable sites for new housing. These factors combine to make housing in Burford particularly expensive. Rural exception sites for affordable housing are being progressed on the eastern edge of the town.
- 9.117 Charlbury remained largely unchanged until the 20th century with three quarters of the houses in the town having been built since 1900 and well over half since 1950. From 1981 to 1996 almost 200 new homes were built and since then a further 100 homes have been added to the town including 44 affordable homes. Housing affordability is a key issue in this area with house prices in Charlbury being above the District average. A rural exception site for affordable housing is being progressed on the edge of the town.
- 9.118 Milton under Wychwood has seen the addition of more modern development than its neighbour Shipton under Wychwood and although dispersed at its edges, the main part of the village is relatively densely developed. An extra care housing scheme is being progressed on the edge of the village. At Shipton, former dispersed hamlets have now been largely consolidated by linear infill and modern estate development. The settlement therefore has a relatively dense core but is dispersed at its edges, open spaces between forming key parts of the settlement character.

- 9.119 Stonesfield has seen considerable consolidation of development in the past with redevelopment of farmyards and conversion of barns for housing primarily during the 1980s. There has been only limited new build in recent years as few opportunities remain for residential intensification. A rural exception site for affordable housing has recently been completed on the edge of the village.
- 9.120 In accordance with the overall strategy, additional housing development in this sub-area will be focused on Burford and Charlbury as rural service centres although given the relatively limited capacity of these settlements, some development may be necessary in the larger villages.

Employment

- 9.121 As a predominantly rural area, employment opportunities in this sub-area are more limited but there are a number of small industrial estates and offices, many in converted buildings and within or on the edge of the towns and larger villages. A significant isolated employment site exists at Leafield Technical Centre with a long association with motorsport. At Charlbury, there are now few employment sites within the built up area although some local employment is provided nearby, for example adjacent to the railway station and within Cornbury Park. Shipton and Milton under Wychwood both have small employment areas with a number of small business units which appear well occupied. Further employment opportunities will be able to come forward in this area through the redevelopment, intensification and expansion of existing employment sites and small scale rural diversification schemes.

Retail & Leisure

- 9.122 There are retail and leisure opportunities across the sub-area including in particular Burford town centre which has a relatively high number of shops, hotels, pubs and restaurants catering for the tourist and visitor market, with very low vacancy rates. The availability of car parking to support the town centre is key issue. Opportunities to improve the efficient use of available car parking and increase capacity will need to be taken where appropriate. Charlbury also has a variety of leisure and social activities for its residents and a range of shops and local services and facilities. The level of shopping and employment in the town has however diminished, particularly over the last twenty years, despite a growth in the town's population.
- 9.123 The Wychwoods each have a reasonable range of services and facilities and share some services such as the new purpose-built doctors' surgery, now located in Shipton, and the primary school located between the two villages. Each village has a post office and several shops, community hall and recreation ground. Stonesfield also has a range of local services and facilities.

Transport

- 9.124 Key road links in this area include the A40 which runs through Burford east – west, the A361 linking Burford with Chipping Norton and the A424 linking with Burford with Stow on the Wold. This sub-area is the best served in terms of rail services with the Cotswold line running along the Evenlode Valley and passenger stations at Kingham, Shipton under Wychwood, Ascott under Wychwood, Charlbury and Finstock. Oxfordshire County Council's draft Rail Strategy identifies a number of potential improvements to rail services in this area including redoubling the remaining single-track section between Charlbury and Wolvercot Junction. Bus services are relatively limited although Charlbury offers good access to Witney, Chipping Norton, Oxford and the Wychwoods.

The Environment

- 9.125 This sub-area is particularly environmentally sensitive being covered almost entirely by the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Burford is identified as within the Upper Windrush Valley Landscape character area which has been described as an area that is highly attractive, remarkably unspoilt and with a rural character. The Upper Windrush is rich in biodiversity and is designated a Conservation Target Area. Wychwood Forest (part National Nature Reserve) is the basis of an extensive Project Area to revive the landscape character and mix of habitats associated with this former royal hunting forest.
- 9.126 Charlbury has a very strong landscape and environmental setting, lying as it does in the Cotswolds AONB and the Wychwood Project Area. With Charlbury lying in the catchment area for the River Evenlode, and with a number of spring-fed tributaries of the Evenlode flowing through or close to the town, the exceptional rainfall experienced during summer 2007 resulted in flooding within the area. This is an area particularly rich in biodiversity with Stonesfield Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the south and west. The village of Shipton under Wychwood sits within a sensitive valley side context within an extensive conservation area and within the Cotswolds AONB. The northern part of the village is subject to significant flooding constraints.
- 9.127 The area is also significant in terms of the historic environment. Much of Burford is covered by a Conservation Area and is home to a number of listed buildings. There is evidence of settlement in the Charlbury area since Neolithic and Bronze ages and an extensive Conservation Area covers the built-up area of the town, plus its immediate setting. Many of the Cotswold stone buildings are listed for their architectural or historic interest. Shipton is designated a Conservation Area and contains many listed structures and unlisted vernacular buildings. Much of Stonesfield has been built in the Cotswolds vernacular with stone walls and slate roofs and has been designated a Conservation Area.

Infrastructure

9.128 Despite being predominantly rural, this sub-area is reasonably well served by infrastructure which meets primarily local needs. There is a range of shops and services available in Burford, Charlbury, Stonesfield and the Wychwoods as well as in some of the other smaller villages including Kingham. The main considerations appear to be improvements to public transport including bus and rail and primary education provision where pressure on school capacity is expected to continue in most schools in this area with the exception of Finstock where some capacity is forecast to continue.

Scope for Further Expansion

9.129 Although it is extremely environmentally sensitive, this sub-area has good transport links and a range of existing infrastructure which meets primarily local needs. It is appropriate therefore that some future growth is planned for this area. However, it must be recognised that opportunities for future development are relatively limited and the scale of growth therefore needs to be appropriate.

9.130 In Burford, the Town Council is keen to see an increase in the housing stock to provide some affordable housing to enable younger families to live in the town, secure the future of the primary school and increase the supply of key workers. Whilst there is some scope to provide additional dwellings within the built up area, the setting of the listed buildings and conservation area is a key sensitivity, limiting large scale intensification. There are no large previously developed sites in need of redevelopment. The development potential of land surrounding Burford is heavily constrained by the sensitivity of the landscape although there may be some scope for a small scale extension of the built-up area.

9.131 At Charlbury, capacity for further housing within the town is also limited. There are no large previously developed sites and the historic core forms a tight settlement with little potential for new housing, even on small sites. Even within the post-war housing estates, there are few possibilities for intensification of development. The sensitivity of Charlbury's strong landscape and environmental setting mean development on the fringes of the village is unlikely to be acceptable. There is some scope for additional development at the Wychwoods and Stonesfield.

9.132 The most appropriate mechanism for exploring in more detail the options for growth in this sub-area is likely to be through locally driven Neighbourhood Plans. Again, depending on the take-up of such plans, the Council may continue to prepare a 'site allocation' development plan document to identify suitable development opportunities in this area.

Core Policy 35 – Burford – Charlbury Sub-Area Strategy

The focus of new development will be Burford and Charlbury and the larger villages. Development in the rural service centres will be of an appropriate scale and type that would help to reinforce the existing service centre role. Development elsewhere will be limited to meeting local community and business needs.

Proposals for development in the sub-area should be consistent with the strategy which includes:

- delivery of about 350 new homes to include affordable housing and homes for older people and newly forming households
- ensuring that new development makes appropriate and timely provision for necessary supporting infrastructure, including education, leisure, green infrastructure and other community facilities
- protection of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- protection and enhancement of the Upper Windrush Valley and Wychwood Project Area
- enhancing public transport and pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure together with managing car parking to reduce car use for short journeys
- avoiding development which will increase the risk of flooding and working with partners such as the Environment Agency to deliver flood mitigation measures
- support for additional employment opportunities including sustainable tourism and rural diversification
- seeking the retention and development of local services and community facilities throughout the sub-area and ensuring Burford Town Centre remains vibrant through resisting the loss of shops and other town centre uses, and promoting an increase in the availability and efficient use of parking provision in appropriate locations

Key Evidence

Settlement Sustainability Report (December 2010)
Economy Study 2007
Economy Study Update 2012
Retail Needs Assessment Update (2012)
Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2030 (LTP3)
Area Transport Strategies
Summary of Development and Infrastructure Strategic Modellings (2012)
West Oxfordshire Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)
Oxfordshire County Council Draft Rail Strategy (January 2012)
West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment 1998
Carterton Landscape Assessment 2009
Witney Landscape Assessment 2007
Landscape Planning Review of Strategic Development Options (2012)
Biodiversity Action Plans
Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire
Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report (2012)
Assessment of Strategic Site Options (2012)
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
Lower Windrush Valley Project
The River Thames Waterway Plan 2006-2011
Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan

Delivery and Monitoring



10. DELIVERY AND MONITORING

10.1 In this section we consider how the various elements of the draft Local Plan will be delivered. We also explain how the plan will be monitored. This is critical as it allows us to see whether it is coming forward as expected, failing to deliver or perhaps having some unintended consequences.

Delivery

10.2 As a 'spatial plan' responsibility for delivering the Local Plan rests with a number of different organisations and agencies. We have already discussed in Section 4 our approach to infrastructure provision and the various agencies involved including ourselves and external partners such as Oxfordshire County Council, the Highways Agency, Environment Agency, Thames Water and others.

10.3 There are other elements of the plan which will also require the action and involvement of various partners in order to come forward. Core Policy 8 on affordable housing for example will require the involvement of housing developers, housing associations, West Oxfordshire District Council's housing and planning departments and potentially other groups such as Community Land Trusts.

10.4 Similarly, Core Policy 24 on transport will require the involvement of Oxfordshire County Council, the Highways Agency, transport providers including bus and rail, developers and the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council.

Monitoring

10.5 Monitoring is an essential part of any good strategy as it allows us not only to establish whether policies and proposals are coming forward as expected but also whether they are having any unintended, potentially harmful wider impacts for example in relation to the environment or economy.

10.6 Where monitoring demonstrates that policies are failing to deliver their objectives or having unintended consequences, appropriate action can be taken such as revising or replacing a particular policy or potentially reconsidering the overall strategy.

10.7 Effective monitoring also allows for:

- Plans to be adapted if circumstances change
- Progress against national, regional and local targets to be measured (e.g. job creation, delivery of affordable housing etc.)
- Progress against sustainability aims and objectives to be measured
- Trends to be established over time (e.g. housing completions, unemployment rate etc.)

Delivery and Monitoring Framework

- 10.8 Attached at Appendix 3 is a delivery and monitoring framework setting out how each Core Policy will be delivered and the indicators that will be used to measure progress.
- 10.9 The framework will form the basis of future monitoring arrangements with the results being published through the Council's monitoring report currently produced on an annual basis. Where monitoring suggests that policies need to be revised or replaced this will be carried out through future stakeholder consultation and subsequent revisions to the Local Plan.

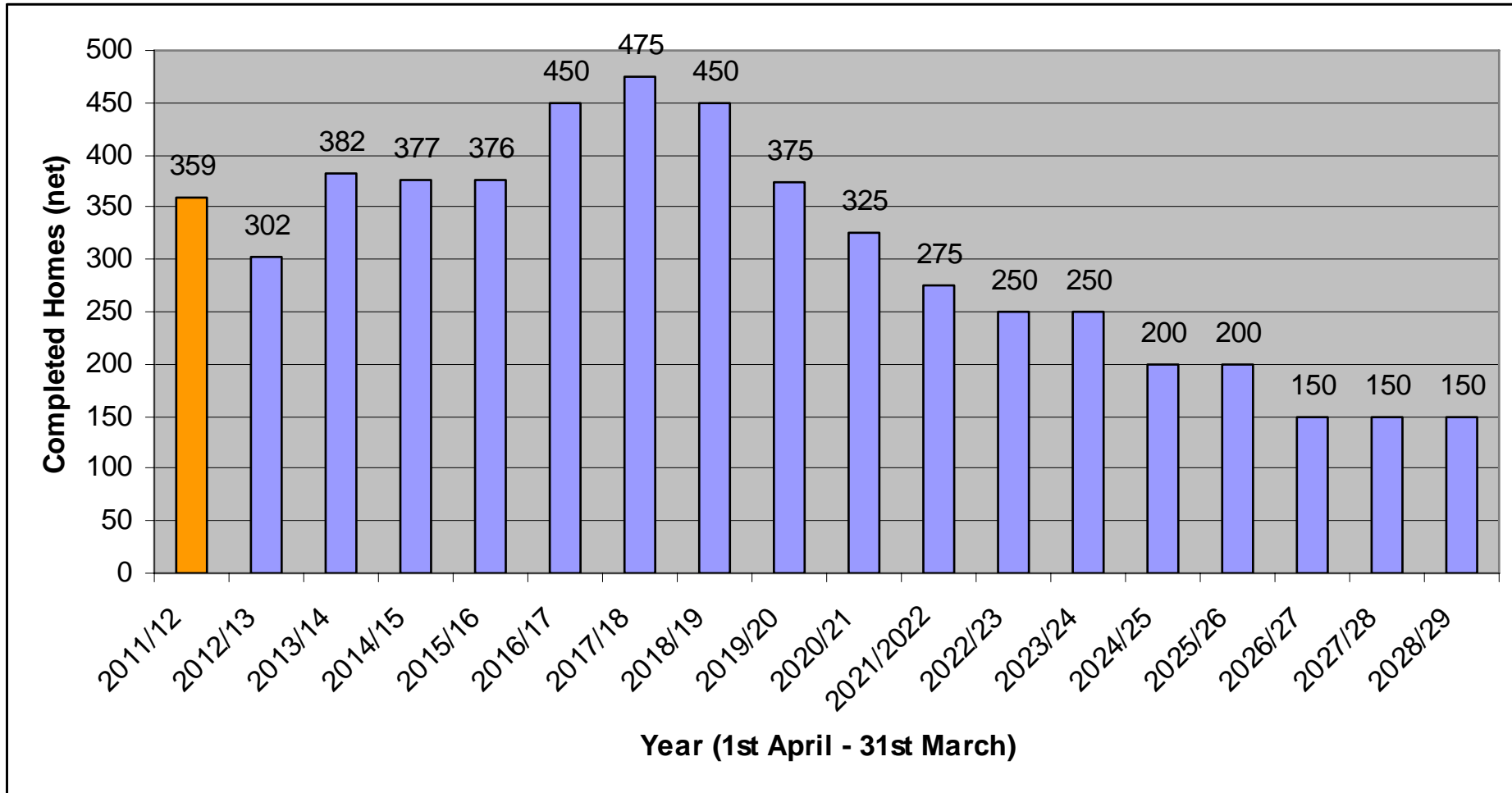
**APPENDIX I – ADOPTED LOCAL PLAN (2006)
POLICIES TO BE REPLACED**

Adopted Local Plan Policies	Replacement Policies
BE1 - Environmental and Community Infrastructure	Core Policy 5 - Supporting Infrastructure
BE2 - General Development Standards	Core Policy 2 - Locating Development in the Right Places Core Policy 4 - High Quality Design Core Policy 3 - Prudent Use of Natural Resources
BE3 - General Development Standards	Core Policy 24 - Transport and Movement
BE4 - Open space within and adjoining settlements	Core Policy 19 - Public Realm and Green Infrastructure
BE5 - Conservation Areas	Core Policy 23 - Historic Environment
BE8 - Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building	Core Policy 23 - Historic Environment
BE10 - Conversion of Unlisted Vernacular Buildings	Core Policy 13 - Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings
BE11 - Historic Parks and Gardens	Core Policy 23 - Historic Environment
BE12 - Archaeological Monuments	Core Policy 23 - Historic Environment
BE18 - Pollution	Core Policy 22 - Environmental Protection
BE19 - Noise	Core Policy 22 - Environmental Protection
BE20 - Protection for hazardous substances, installations and airfields	Core Policy 22 - Environmental Protection
BE21 - Light Pollution	Core Policy 22 - Environmental Protection
NE1 - Safeguarding the Countryside	Core Policy 2 - Locating Development in the Right Places Core Policy 17 - Landscape Character Core Policy 18 - Biodiversity
NE3 - Local Landscape Character	Core Policy 17 - Landscape Character
NE4 - Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Core Policy 17 - Landscape Character
NE6 - Retention of Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows	Core Policy 17 - Landscape Character
NE7 - The Water Environment	Core Policy 22 - Environmental Protection
NE10 - Water Resources	Core Policy 3 - Prudent Use of Natural Resources Core Policy 22 - Environmental Protection
NE11 - Water Quality	Core Policy 22 - Environmental Protection
NE12 - Renewable Energy	Core Policy 20 - Decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy development
NE13 - Biodiversity Conservation	Core Policy 18 - Biodiversity
NE14 - Sites of Nature Conservation or Geological Importance	Core Policy 18 - Biodiversity
NE15 - Protected Species	Core Policy 18 - Biodiversity
T1 - Traffic Generation	Core Policy 2 - Locating Development in the Right Places Core Policy 24 - Transport and Movement
T2 - Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities	Core Policy 24 - Transport and Movement
T3 - Public Transport Infrastructure	Core Policy 5 - Supporting Infrastructure Core Policy 24 - Transport and Movement

Adopted Local Plan Policies	Replacement Policies
T4 - Major Highway Schemes	Core Policy 25 - Witney Sub-Area Strategy Core Policy 29 - Carterton Sub-Area Strategy
T6 - Traffic Management	Core Policy 24 - Transport and Movement
H2 - General Residential Development Standards	Core Policy 2 - Locating Development in the Right Places Core Policy 4 - High Quality Design Core Policy 9 - Existing Housing
H3 - Range and Type of Residential Accommodation	Core Policy 7 - Type and Mix of New Homes
H4 - Construction of New Dwellings in the Open Countryside and Small Villages	Core Policy 2 - Locating Development in the Right Places
H5 - Villages	Core Policy 2 - Locating Development in the Right Places
H6 - Medium-sized Villages	Core Policy 2 - Locating Development in the Right Places
H7 - Service Centres	Core Policy 2 - Locating Development in the Right Places
H8 - Sub-division of Existing Dwellings	Core Policy 9 - Existing Housing
H10 - Conversion of Existing Buildings to Residential Use in the Countryside and Small Villages	Core Policy 13 - Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings
H11 - Affordable Housing on Allocated and Previously Unidentified Sites	Core Policy 8 - Affordable Housing
H12 - Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites	Core Policy 8 - Affordable Housing
H13 - Gypsies	Core Policy 10 - Travelling Communities
H15 - Travelling Showpeople	Core Policy 10 - Travelling Communities
E1 - Employment Allocations	Core Policy 11 - Land for Business
E2 - New Employment Sites in Towns and Larger Villages	Core Policy 2 - Locating Development in the Right Places
E3 - Individual Premises	Core Policy 2 - Locating Development in the Right Places
E4 - Re-use of Vernacular Buildings	Core Policy 13 - Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings
E5 - Re-use of Non-vernacular Buildings	Core Policy 13 - Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings
E6 Change of Use of Existing Employment Sites	Core Policy 11 - Land for Business
E7 - Existing Businesses	Core Policy 11 - Land for Business
SH1 - New Retail Development	Core Policy 16 - Town Centres
SH3 - Changes of Use in Town Centres	Core Policy 16 - Town Centres
SH4 - Shopping Facilities for the Local Community	Core Policy 16 - Town Centres
SH5 - Retention of Local Shops and/or Post Offices	Core Policy 15 - Local Services and Community Facilities
SH7 - Farm Shops	Core Policy 12 - Supporting the Rural Economy
SH8 - Garden Centres	Core Policy 16 - Town Centres
TLC1 - New Tourism, Leisure and Community Facilities	Core Policy 14 - Sustainable Tourism

Adopted Local Plan Policies	Replacement Policies
TCL2 - Use of Existing Buildings	Core Policy 13 - Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings
TCL3 - New Build Tourist Accommodation	Core Policy 14 - Sustainable Tourism
TLC4 - Touring Holiday Caravan and Camping Sites	Core Policy 14 - Sustainable Tourism Core Policy 17 - Landscape Character
TLC5 - Existing Outdoor Recreational Space	Core Policy 19 – Public Realm and Green Infrastructure
TLC10 - River Thames	Core Policy 14 - Sustainable Tourism
TLC11 - Lower Windrush Valley	Core Policy 14 - Sustainable Tourism
TLC12 - Protection of Existing Community Services and Facilities	Core Policy 15 - Local Services and Community Facilities
WIT1 - Buttercross and Church Green	Core Policy 25 - Witney Sub-Area Strategy
WIT3 - Windrush in Witney	Core Policy 25 - Witney Sub-Area Strategy
Proposal 7 - Cogges, Witney	Core Policy 25 - Witney Sub-Area Strategy Core Policy 28 - East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)
Proposal 8 - North Curbridge Development Area, Witney	Core Policy 25 - Witney Sub-Area Strategy Core Policy 27 - West Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)
Proposal 9 - Employment Land, Downs Road, Witney	Core Policy 25 - Witney Sub-Area Strategy Core Policy 27 - West Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)
Proposal 11 - A40 Junction at Downs Road, Witney	Core Policy 25 - Witney Sub-Area Strategy Core Policy 27 - West Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)
Proposal 12 - Traffic Management in the Central Core and Fringe Central Area of Witney	Core Policy 24 - Transport and Movement Core Policy 26 - Witney Town Centre Strategy
Proposal 18 - Carterton Town Centre	Core Policy 30 - Carterton Town Centre Strategy

**APPENDIX 2 -
Built and Projected Housing Completions (2011 – 2029)**



APPENDIX 3 – Delivery and Monitoring Framework

Core Policy 1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - NPPF - Neighbourhood Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Developers & landowners - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of applications determined within target timescale - Percentage of applications refused as contrary to policy 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.
Core Policy 2 – Locating Development in the Right Places			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic allocations at Witney and Carterton - Neighbourhood Plans - SHLAA - Rural exception sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Developers & landowners - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities - Registered providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual proportion of residential and non-residential development built within each category of settlement. 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.
Core Policy 3 – Prudent Use of Natural Resources			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management including application of Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Developers & landowners - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion of new dwellings achieving Code Level 3, 4, 5 and 6 - Proportion and size of non-residential development achieving BREEAM very good or excellent - District recycling rates 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review. The requirements may be adjusted at the national level which could necessitate a potential review.
Core Policy 4 – High Quality Design			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management including application of the WODC Design Guide, Landscape Assessments, Conservation Area Appraisals and AONB guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Developers & landowners - Local communities - Cotswolds Conservation Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of permissions refused on the basis of design grounds - Number of design awards won - Crime and fear of crime 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide (2006) is likely to be updated.

Core Policy 5 – Supporting Infrastructure			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) - Community Infrastructure Levy - Section 106 legal agreements - New Homes Bonus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Infrastructure providers - Oxfordshire Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP) - Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) - Developers & landowners - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of IDP schemes delivered per annum - Money derived from new development as contribution to CIL - Annual community infrastructure floorspace 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review. The IDP will be finalised in 2013 with CIL to be introduced before March 2014.
Core Policy 6 – Amount and Distribution of Housing			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Plan including strategic allocations - Annual monitoring including 5-year housing supply - Development management - Neighbourhood Plans - SHLAA - Unidentified/windfall sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Developers & landowners - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities - Registered providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential completions (district) - Proportion of target (District) - Residential completions by sub-area - Proportion of target by sub-area - 5 year housing land supply 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.
Core Policy 7 – Type and Mix of New Homes			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic allocations at Witney and Carterton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Developers & landowners - Registered providers - Oxfordshire County Council - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion of residential permissions by type and tenure by sub-area - Proportion of residential completions by type and tenure by sub-area - Overall housing stock by type - Proportion of homes built to lifetime homes standard 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review. New housing needs evidence may lead to a review of the policy approach being taken.

Core Policy 8 – Affordable Housing			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Rural exception sites - Self-build schemes - Strategic allocations - Use of commuted sums including potential acquisition of land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Developers & landowners - Registered providers - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities - Local Housing and Community Land and Self-Build Trusts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total number of affordable housing completions in district per annum. - Proportion of total housing completions that are affordable. - Proportion of total housing completions that are affordable by sub-area - Changes in housing need 	<p>To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review. Changes in levels or distribution of housing need may lead to a revised approach.</p>
Core Policy 9 – Existing Housing			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Partnership working in relation to the re-use of empty homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Developers & landowners - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential conversions to non residential uses by District and sub-area - Size, number, location of existing housing which is subdivided/ extended (or proposed for such alterations) to provide additional dwellings - Number of replacement dwellings - Number of empty homes 	<p>To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.</p>
Core Policy 10 – Travelling Communities			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Partnership working to identify sites - Potential site-based DPD or partial review of Local Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Travelling communities - Developers & landowners - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total number of pitches - Total number of permissions per annum - Proportion of permissions on allocated and unallocated sites - Level of identified need 	<p>The criteria-based policy will be applied until the Council is in a position to identify potential sites. This is likely to be post-adoption of the Local Plan scheduled for March 2014.</p>

Core Policy 11 – Land for Business			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic allocations - Neighbourhood Plans - Potential site allocations DPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Business community - Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership - Developers & landowners - Town and Parish Councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total amount of permitted employment land (District) - Total amount of permitted employment land by sub-area - Total amount permitted per annum - Total amount completed per annum - Amount of employment land lost to other uses per annum 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review. The employment land target may be revised in light of new evidence.
Core Policy 12 – Supporting the Rural Economy			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Rural business community - Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership - Developers & landowners - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total amount of rural employment floorspace - Total area of floor space permitted for rural diversification by sub-area - Total area of floor space completed by sub-area - Percentage coverage of high-speed broadband in rural areas 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review. Roll out of high-speed broadband is to a large extent dependent on funding availability through the 'Oxonline' project and other potential sources.
Core Policy 13 – Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management including application of West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Business community - Developers & landowners - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total number of non-residential conversions permitted by sub area - Total number of non-residential conversions completed by sub area 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.

Core Policy 14 – Sustainable Tourism			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Partnership working - Lower Windrush Valley Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Cotswold Conservation Board - River Thames Alliance - Oxfordshire County Council - Developers and landowners - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total number of leisure and recreation permissions per annum - Total area of leisure and recreation permissions by location - Total number of visitor attractions and facilities 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.
Core Policy 15 – Local Services and Community Facilities			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Partnership working - Strategic allocations to include community provision where appropriate - Localism Act including Community Right to Bid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Developers & landowners - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amount of floorspace permitted per annum for community uses - Amount of floorspace under community use lost per annum - Total number of community facilities by District and sub-area 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.
Core Policy 16 – Town Centres			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Neighbourhood Plans - Partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Retail business community - Developers & landowners - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total amount of retail floorspace permitted in centre per annum - Total amount of retail floorspace permitted out of centre per annum - Loss of A1 (retail) units - Loss of other town centre uses - Vacancy rates 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.

Core Policy 17 – Landscape Character			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Partnership working including Lower Windrush Valley Project, Windrush in Witney Project and the Wychwood Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Cotswold Conservation Board - Oxfordshire County Council - Developers and landowners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total number of applications granted within AONB. - Total number of applications granted within project areas - Proportion of development in district refused on basis on landscape character impact 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.
Core Policy 18 – Biodiversity			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) - Partnership working - Conservation Target Areas - Establishment of Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum - Oxfordshire County Council - The Cotswolds Ecological Networks Partnership - Developers and landowners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total number of applications refused on basis of biodiversity impact - Number of applications granted within project areas - Changes in biodiversity assets including condition of Oxford Meadows SAC 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review. There is an overarching international commitment to halting and reversing biodiversity decline by 2020.
Core Policy 19 – Public Realm and Green Infrastructure			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) - Partnership working - Development of county wide Green Infrastructure strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Developers and landowners - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developer contributions secured for green infrastructure enhancements - Total area of green infrastructure assets lost to new development by sub area - Access to informal greenspace 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review. Preliminary work is underway on the preparation of a county wide Green Infrastructure strategy which will help to co-ordinate funding and improvements to green infrastructure to priority areas.

Core Policy 20 – Decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy development			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic allocations - Partnership working including community-led initiatives - Community woodfuel initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Cotswold Conservation Board - West Oxfordshire Wood Fuel Network - Developers and landowners - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total capacity of renewable energy generation secured through new development. (capacity, type and location) - Total capacity of stand alone renewable energy permitted in district (capacity, type and location) 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.
Core Policy 21 – Flood Risk			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management including application of sequential test - Use of flood risk assessments - Use of sustainable drainage systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Environment Agency - Developers and landowners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of applications permitted within flood zones 2 and 3 by type. - Number of applications refused on basis of flood risk by type 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.
Core Policy 22 – Environmental Protection			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) - Air Quality Action Plans - Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Environment Agency - Developers and landowners - Civil Aviation Authority - MOD - Oxfordshire County Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Air quality including number of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) - Number of applications refused on the basis of environmental protection considerations (by sub-area) 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.
Core Policy 23 – Historic Environment			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development Management - Conservation Area Appraisals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - English Heritage - Developers and landowners - Oxfordshire County Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of applications refused on basis of impact on the historic environment 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.

Core Policy 24 – Transport and Movement			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic allocations - LTP3 - Oxfordshire County Council Rail Strategy - Partnership working - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Oxfordshire County Council - Oxfordshire Rural Community Council - Other local authorities - Bus and rail providers - Developers and landowners - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion of trips made by car - Proportion of trips made by non-car modes e.g. walking, cycling, public transport - Air quality - Number of travel plans per annum 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.
Core Policy 25 – Witney Sub-Area Strategy			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic allocations - Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Oxfordshire County Council - Developers and landowners - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities - Business and retail community - Landowners and developers - Cotswold Conservation Board - Environment Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of residential permissions/completions at Witney including delivery of strategic development areas - Number of residential permissions/completions in rest of sub-area - Amount of employment land permitted - Provision of new infrastructure including strategic transport schemes - Number of extra care units completed 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.

Core Policy 26 – Witney Town Centre Strategy			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Partnership working - Strategy and promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Witney Town Council - Business and retail community - Oxfordshire County Council - Landowners and developers - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vacancy rates - Percentage of retail and non-retail uses in primary frontages - Proportion of uses in secondary frontages - Amount of new retail floorspace permitted - Amount of retail floorspace lost to other uses - Parking availability/capacity - Visitor numbers 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review. Retail evidence suggests there will be capacity for additional retail floorspace in Witney in the medium to longer term.
Core Policy 27 – West Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - West Witney consortium - Oxfordshire County Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of new homes completed per annum including provision for extra care - Employment floorspace completed per annum - Amount of new greenspace provided - Sustainable homes code level achieved 	It is anticipated that the residential element of the West Witney SDA will be implemented from 2013/14 onwards.
Core Policy 28 – East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Potential CPO to deliver land for Shore's Green west facing slip roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - East Witney consortium - Oxfordshire County Council - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of new homes completed - Sustainable homes code level achieved - Delivery of Shore's Green west facing slip roads - Amount of new greenspace provided 	Allowing for the possibility of compulsory purchase and construction of the Shore's Green west facing slip roads, it is anticipated that the residential element of the East Witney SDA will be implemented from 2016/17 onwards.

Core Policy 29 – Carterton Sub-Area Strategy			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic allocations - Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) - Annington Homes - Bloor Homes - Town and Parish Councils - Oxfordshire County Council - Environment Agency - River Thames Alliance - Transport providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of residential permissions/completions at Carterton including delivery of strategic development areas - Number of residential permissions/completions in rest of sub-area - Amount of employment land permitted - Provision of new infrastructure including strategic transport schemes - Number of extra care units completed 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.
Core Policy 30 – Carterton Town Centre Strategy			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Partnership working - Strategy and promotion - South West Quadrant redevelopment area (Phase I) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Carterton Town Council including the Carterton Fast Forward Partnership - Business and retail community - Oxfordshire County Council - Landowners and developers - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vacancy rates - Percentage of retail and non-retail uses in primary frontages - Proportion of uses in secondary frontages - Amount of new retail floorspace permitted - Amount of retail floorspace lost to other uses - Parking availability/capacity - Visitor numbers 	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review.
Core Policy 31 – East Carterton Strategic Development Area (SDA)			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Bloor Homes - Oxfordshire County Council - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of new homes completed including provision for extra care - Sustainable homes code level achieved - Amount of new greenspace provided 	It is anticipated that the East Carterton SDA will be implemented from 2015/16 onwards.

Core Policy 32 – REEMA North and Central Strategic Development Area (SDA)			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
- Development management	- WODC (lead) - Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) - Annington Homes - Oxfordshire County Council - Town Council - Local communities	- Number of new homes completed - Sustainable homes code level achieved	The DIO has indicated that the REEMA Central Site could be released to the open market in 2016.
Core Policy 33 – Chipping Norton Sub-Area Strategy			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
- Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan -SHLAA - Rural exception sites - Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Development management	- WODC (lead) - Town and Parish Councils - Developers and landowners - Business and retail community - Local Communities - Oxfordshire County Council - Infrastructure providers - Cotswolds Conservation Board	- Number of new homes completed including extra care provision - Number of new affordable homes completed - Amount of new employment floorspace provided - Amount of new retail floorspace completed - Amount of retail floorspace lost to other uses - Number of local services and community facilities lost to other uses	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review. The progress of the Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan will be key to the delivery of the sub-area strategy.
Core Policy 34 – Eynsham - Woodstock Sub-Area Strategy			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
- Neighbourhood Plans - SHLAA - Site allocation DPD - Rural exception sites - Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Development management	- WODC (lead) - Town and Parish Councils - Developers and landowners - Business and retail community - Local Communities - Oxfordshire County Council - Infrastructure providers - Cotswolds Conservation Board	- Number of new homes completed - Number of new affordable homes completed - Amount of new employment floorspace provided - Amount of retail floorspace lost to other uses - Number of local services and community facilities lost to other uses	To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review. The potential need for a site allocation DPD will be determined having regard to the take-up of neighbourhood plans within the sub-area.

Core Policy 35 – Burford - Charlbury Sub-Area Strategy			
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neighbourhood Plans - SHLAA - Site allocation DPD - Rural exception sites - Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Development management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Town and Parish Councils - Developers and landowners - Business and retail community - Local Communities - Oxfordshire County Council - Infrastructure providers - Cotswolds Conservation Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of new homes completed - Number of new affordable homes completed - Amount of new employment floorspace provided - Amount of retail floorspace lost to other uses - Number of local services and community facilities lost to other uses 	<p>To be applied on an ongoing basis and subject to annual review. The potential need for a site allocation DPD will be determined having regard to the take-up of neighbourhood plans within the sub-area.</p>