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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the Local Plan for West Oxfordshire. It sets out a vision of the District in 2031 and provides an overarching framework to guide and deliver that vision. 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. Some of these issues are locally specific such as traffic congestion on the A40, whilst others are broader in nature including housing affordability, climate change and the need for economic growth.
- 1.2 A strong message received throughout the preparation of the Local Plan 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 Local Plan is to deliver the new development that is 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.
- 1.3 The Local Plan is therefore underpinned by a general presumption in favour of ‘sustainable development’ and seeks to articulate what this means in the context of West Oxfordshire and how it will be achieved.

The Role and Status of the Local Plan

- 1.4 Local Plans sit at the heart of the planning system, setting out a vision and framework for the future development of an area. They seek to identify how much development is needed, what type, where it will take place and when it will come forward as well as what infrastructure is needed to support it. Local Plans should be aspirational but realistic about what can be delivered.
- 1.5 All local authorities are required to prepare a Local Plan and once adopted, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 1.6 In this regard Local Plans help to provide certainty for local communities, service providers and those looking to invest or move into an area.

The Plan Period

- 1.7 This Local Plan covers the 20-year period 1st April 2011 – 31st March 2031. It will however be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate. In particular an early, focused review of the plan is likely to be needed to take account of unmet housing need arising from Oxford City.
- 1.8 Partnership working through the Oxfordshire Growth Board is currently underway to determine the extent of this unmet need and how it should be addressed across the County. If through this process, an element of additional housing is apportioned to West Oxfordshire District, there will be a need to undertake an early, focused review of this Local Plan.

Key Influences

- 1.9 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 Local Enterprise Partnership, the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Thames Water, Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency.
- 1.10 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 this Local Plan has been prepared including a non-technical summary.
- 1.11 Other key influences include:
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 - National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
 - Oxfordshire and West Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategies
 - District Council Strategies such as Housing and Tourism
 - Adopted and emerging Local Plans in neighbouring local authorities.
 - Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and planning guidance
 - Local Plan consultation responses
 - 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 economic needs, development viability, transport and flood risk¹

Structure and Content

- 1.12 The Local Plan is structured as follows:
- **Section 2** sets out a brief profile of the District, highlighting its key characteristics and drawing out the key issues and challenges to be addressed through the Local Plan.
 - **Section 3** outlines our vision for West Oxfordshire in 2031 which is underpinned by a series of core objectives.
 - **Section 4** sets out the overall strategy for the District, which is based on five key principles including a presumption in favour of sustainable development, locating development in the right places, ensuring the prudent use of natural resources, high quality design and provision of 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, transport and environment and heritage.

¹ See <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning/LDFsustapprevidbase.cfm>

- **Section 9** sets out the local strategy for each of the District’s five sub-areas.
- **Section 10** explains how the various elements of the Local Plan will be implemented and monitored.

1.13 The plan contains a number of policies to manage change and to ensure that all new development is sustainable. These include ‘cross-cutting’ policies that apply to all forms of development regardless of location, ‘topic-based’ policies that apply to certain types of development and ‘placed-based’ policies that apply to certain locations within the District.

1.14 The policies replace many of those set out in the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2006). Further information is provided at Appendix 1.

Measuring Progress

1.15 Section 10 sets out a delivery and monitoring framework explaining how each Local Plan 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.

1.16 The degree to which the Local Plan policies are being successfully implemented (or otherwise) will be assessed through regular monitoring reports.

Reviewing the Local Plan

1.17 As a general guide, Local Plans tend to be reviewed every 5-years or so. This helps to ensure that any new evidence (e.g. housing or economic needs) can be properly taken into account and addressed through a plan review where appropriate.

1.18 As outlined above, there is likely to be a need to undertake an early review of this Local Plan in order to address the issue of unmet housing need arising from Oxford City.

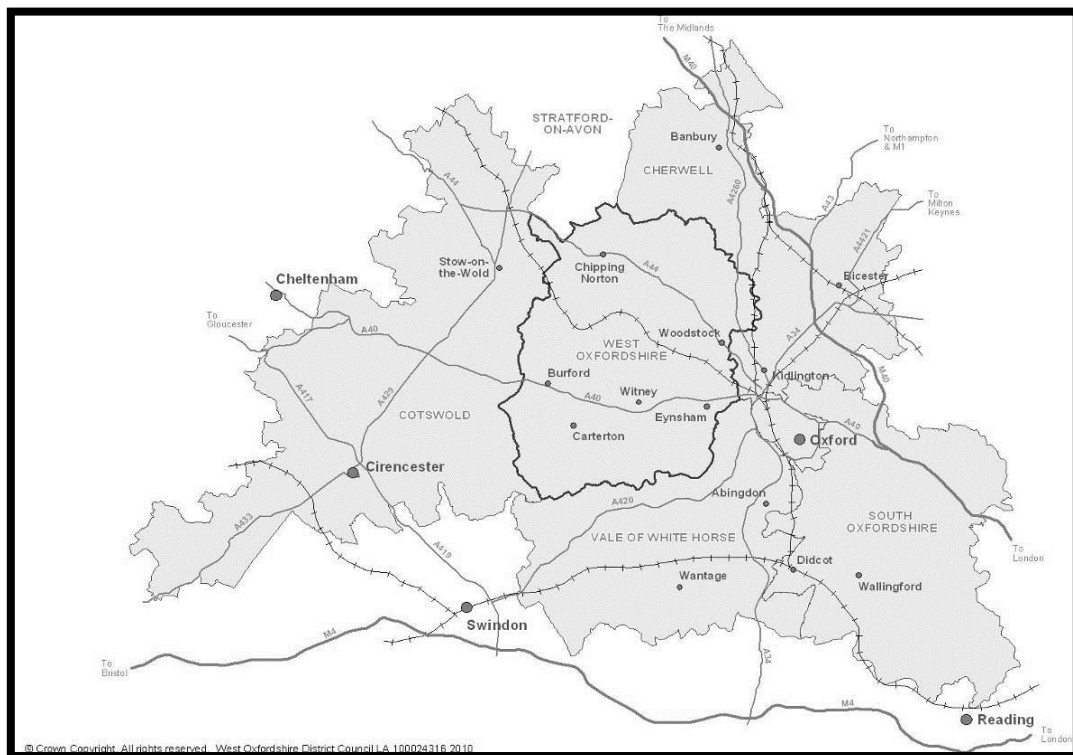
2. WEST OXFORDSHIRE IN 2015

- 2.1 In this section we set out a brief profile of West Oxfordshire, the purpose of which is to identify the key issues and challenges facing the District both now and in the future. This is important because it helps to ensure that the remainder of the Local Plan focuses 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, work and visit.

Figure 2.1 West Oxfordshire Context



Character

- 2.3 West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural area and enjoys a strong sense of place derived from the Cotswold vernacular style of building, rolling countryside and river valleys. With a population density of 1.5 people per hectare, it is the second most sparsely populated of the 67 local authorities in South East England with almost 60% of its 81 parishes containing fewer than 500 residents. Around one third of the District falls within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

- 2.4 There are around 130 separate towns, villages and hamlets scattered across the District. The three main towns are Witney (population 28,000) Carterton (16,000) and Chipping Norton (6,500)². Notably, whilst these all offer a good range of services and facilities, none are served by rail (see below).
- 2.5 Supporting the three main towns are six rural service centres including Bampton (population 2,500) Burford (1,300) Charlbury (3,000) Eynsham (5,000) Long Hanborough (2,400) and Woodstock (3,000)³. These service centres generally offer a good range of services and facilities. Long Hanborough and Charlbury benefit from railway stations serving the Cotswold rail line.
- 2.6 The District's remaining settlements comprise a number of medium-sized and smaller villages and hamlets.

Relationship to Other Areas

- 2.7 The District has strong functional links with a number of other areas. In economic terms, travel to work data⁴ indicates that the closest links are with Oxford City, which performs a 'City-Region' role, Cherwell District and the Vale of White Horse District. There are also links with South Oxfordshire, Swindon, Cotswold and London, albeit less pronounced.
- 2.8 As might be expected the proportions working in Oxford are highest in the east of the District at Woodstock and Eynsham where around 30% of workers work in Oxford and are lowest in the rural west of the District including Burford and Carterton.
- 2.9 In terms of housing, West Oxfordshire falls within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area (HMA) which is largely contiguous with the County boundary.

Population and Demographics

- 2.10 West Oxfordshire has a total population of around 108,000 people⁵, which is much lower than the other Oxfordshire authorities, reflecting the rural character of the District.
- 2.11 The population is reasonably well-balanced in terms of different age groups. There is a similar proportion of young people (aged 0 – 15) compared to the national and regional averages although the proportion of older people (aged 65 or over) is higher than average, a trend which is forecast to continue.
- 2.12 Almost 62% of the population are of working age (16 – 64) slightly below the regional average of 62.7%.
- 2.13 The significant majority of residents of West Oxfordshire are white British/Irish with just 6.8% of the population being non-white British/Irish, well below the county average of 15.4%, regional average of 13.9% and national average of 19.3%.

² 2011 Census

³ 2011 Census

⁴ 2011 Census

⁵ ONS 2013 mid-year population estimate

Housing

- 2.14 According to the 2011 Census there were around 43,200 households in West Oxfordshire, an increase of 5,200 since 2001. Most of this growth has taken place at Witney and Carterton through major new housing developments including Madley Park and Shilton Park.
- 2.15 Levels of owner-occupation have increased since 2001 and at 69.7%⁶, sit above the county, regional and national averages. In keeping with national trends, the proportion of people renting privately has increased since 2001 although at 16.6%⁷ remains below the county, regional and national averages. Levels of private renting are particularly strong in Carterton.
- 2.16 In terms of the type of housing available, the District is dominated by a high proportion of detached properties which comprise almost 35% of the total housing stock, followed by semi-detached (32%) and terraced properties (23%). The proportion of flats/maisonettes available at just over 10% is lower than any other Oxfordshire authority. The majority of flats are located in Chipping Norton, Witney and Carterton.
- 2.17 In terms of house sizes, West Oxfordshire is characterised by a reasonable balance of property sizes as follows:
- 6.8% - 5 or more bedrooms
 - 20% - 4 bedrooms
 - 40.8% - 3 bedrooms
 - 24.9% - 2 bedrooms
 - 7.3% - 1 bedroom
- 2.18 In terms of housing affordability, as a desirable area to live, house prices in West Oxfordshire are above the national average although remain below the county average, which is skewed by very high prices in Oxford City and South Oxfordshire in particular.
- 2.19 In 2011, the housing affordability ratio for West Oxfordshire, which shows the relationship between house prices and income, was 9.89, higher than both the regional average (8.19) and the national average (6.57) and second only to Oxford City (10.0). This means that even the cheapest properties in West Oxfordshire are almost 10 times the lowest income. There are currently around 870 households on the waiting list for affordable housing.

The Local Economy

- 2.20 West Oxfordshire has a strong and resilient local economy. Economic activity rates are high at 84.5%, well above the South East average of 79.9%. Unemployment rates are low with the modelled unemployment rate being 3.4% compared to the South East average of 5.0% and are half the national average of 6.8%. In terms of qualifications, the West Oxfordshire workforce is above the South East average at all levels.

⁶ 2011 Census

⁷ 2011 Census

- 2.21 In the pre-recession period, employment growth in West Oxfordshire was above the national average and higher than Oxfordshire as a whole. Growth was particularly strong in the financial and business services sector and in other services. Losses in manufacturing employment over this period were also comparatively small compared with what was happening nationally.
- 2.22 The most recent employment statistics suggest that in the period post-recession, employment in West Oxfordshire has recovered well. More significantly, unlike much of the country and some of its neighbouring districts, employment growth in West Oxfordshire has not just been driven by part-time and self-employment growth. West Oxfordshire has seen an increase in full-time employees of just over 5% in the period 2009-13. Importantly however, the nature of jobs in the District is of lower value than they once were and since 2005 average workplace wages in the district have been below the national average.
- 2.23 In terms of the make-up of the local economy, West Oxfordshire has a high proportion of employment in manufacturing, which includes a number of firms in the advanced manufacturing sectors, reflecting a strong tradition in the engineering sector. West Oxfordshire also has an above average share of employment in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector, reflecting a high quality of life and ability to retain consumer expenditure in cultural and leisure sectors.
- 2.24 Tourism and the visitor economy remains an important sector, with total local business turnover from tourist activity estimated at over £255m in 2010, a marginal rise of 2.6% over 2009.
- 2.25 West Oxfordshire has a high proportion of residents who work in higher skilled occupations. In particular the proportion of managers, directors and senior officials is above both the South East and Oxfordshire average. The proportion of employees working in skilled trades is also above both regional and country average (reflecting the area's history in engineering). Generally however the occupational structure fairly closely resembles that of the South East as a whole.
- 2.26 The District is characterised by a large number of small companies with very few large businesses present. 72% of local businesses have fewer than 5 employees and 87% have fewer than 10. This is a more pronounced pattern than is found nationally. The majority of employment is concentrated in the south east of the District. 35% of West Oxfordshire's employment is located in Witney with a further 25% in Eynsham and Woodstock.
- 2.27 Rates of home working are high, with just under 8,000 or 18% of West Oxfordshire's employed residents working mainly at or from home in 2011.

Transport

- 2.28 Transport is a critically important issue for West Oxfordshire. In terms of travel patterns, the District demonstrates a reasonable level of self-containment, with 65% of residents in employment either commuting within the District, working at home or having no fixed place of work and 35% commuting out of the District to work elsewhere⁸. Almost 12,000 people commute into the District each day and 20,000 commute out, meaning a net outflow of around 8,000, just under 15% of the District's resident workforce. This represents a slight increase since 2001. There is a particularly high net outflow of workers in the education, health and professional scientific and technical sectors.
- 2.29 The majority of out-commuters (7,500) travel to Oxford City, with most travelling by car. This places significant pressure on the road network with severe traffic congestion on the A40 to Oxford being a daily occurrence. The problems associated with the A40 also have wider impacts as drivers choose to take alternate routes leading to congestion elsewhere including the A4095, A415 and A44 as well as minor roads including the B4449 which suffer because of narrow, historic crossing points across the River Thames. Congestion also occurs within some towns with air quality management areas having been designated at Witney and Chipping Norton.
- 2.30 Public transport provision in West Oxfordshire is average. There are two main rail lines, the Cherwell Valley Line and the Cotswold line. A very small proportion of the Cherwell Valley Line runs through the eastern part of the District with a station at Tackley providing services northwards to Birmingham and southwards to Oxford and onto London Paddington.
- 2.31 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. Notably, neither of the District's two rail lines serves the three main towns.
- 2.32 In terms of bus provision, Witney and Carterton, the two largest settlements, are connected to Oxford by high frequency services. Other bus services operate throughout the rural area with varying frequencies but many require ongoing public subsidy.
- 2.33 Most cycle and pedestrian routes are focused on the main towns.

Leisure and Recreation

- 2.34 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 and allotments.
- 2.35 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.

⁸ 2011 Census

Health and Well-Being

- 2.36 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.
- 2.37 Generally speaking, the health of people in West Oxfordshire is better than the England average with life expectancy is around two years longer, for both men and women. However, there is still room for improvement in some areas including obesity.
- 2.38 Deprivation is lower than average, however 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.
- 2.39 In terms of child health, rates of obesity (Year 6) are better than the average for England and the rate of alcohol specific hospital stays among those under 18 was better than the average for England.
- 2.40 In terms of adult health, in 2012 just under 20% of adults were classified as obese. The rate of alcohol related harm hospital stays was better than the average for England as was the rate of smoking related deaths. Estimated levels of adult smoking and physical activity are also better than the England average. The rate of people killed and seriously injured on roads is however worse than average as is the rate of new cases of malignant melanoma. Rates of sexually transmitted infections and TB, statutory homelessness, violent crime, long term unemployment, drug misuse and early deaths from cardiovascular diseases are all better than average.
- 2.41 Priorities in West Oxfordshire are to reduce obesity in children and adults, increase physical activity and improve access to screening programmes.

Education

- 2.42 West Oxfordshire has a network of 47 primary schools, 2 infant schools, 1 nursery school, one special school and 7 secondary schools. In terms of educational achievement, the rate of children obtaining 5 or more GCSEs (Grades A*- C including English and Maths) is slightly higher than the England average.
- 2.43 Importantly, throughout much of the District primary schools are either already under pressure or are forecast to fill as pupil numbers increase. There is more flexibility at secondary level although the proposed level of growth at Witney is likely to necessitate provision of a new secondary facility within the town.
- 2.44 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 year olds. The college has recently redeveloped part of its site to provide enhanced facilities and has further plans for improvement.

Natural Environment

- 2.45 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 falls within the Oxford Green Belt and at Cassington Meadows there is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) of European importance. There are also a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) areas of Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Sites. There is however an acknowledged need to further enhance and extend habitats to develop networks and a series of Conservation Target Areas has been identified where the restoration and enhancement of habitats would have the greatest benefit.
- 2.46 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.
- 2.47 West Oxfordshire contains some extensive sand and gravel and limestone resources particularly in the southern half of the District, focused on the Lower Windrush Valley which has seen extensive mineral extraction for a number of years. The Council continues to engage with the County Council as mineral planning authority in relation to the overall strategy for future sand and gravel extraction in the County.
- 2.48 The after-use of mineral sites presents the opportunity for leisure and tourism uses as well as creating opportunities for nature reserves but it is vital that mineral extraction is properly managed in order to protect environmental quality and public amenity and to help ameliorate flood risk.

Historic Environment

- 2.49 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.

Key Issues and Challenges - Summary

- 2.50 Drawing on this brief profile of the District and other background information, we can identify a number of key issues and challenges to be addressed through the Local Plan. These are set out below in the form of a SWOC analysis – **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **C**hallenges.

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 • High rates of economic activity and low unemployment • No significant areas of dereliction • Oxfordshire Cotswolds - important tourism sector with nationally important attractions • Blenheim World Heritage site • Good variety of formal and informal leisure opportunities • High levels of owner-occupation • Reasonable level of self-containment (about 65%) • Two railway lines • Reasonably well-balanced population in terms of different age groups • A generally healthy population • Extensive sand and gravel resources provide a local source of construction aggregate to support future growth • High rates of home working 	<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 • Districts three main towns are 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 the national average and very high in some areas • A predominance of larger properties exacerbates problems of housing affordability • 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 • Only just above average rates of educational attainment • Very few large multi-national companies • Some older employment areas in need of investment/redevelopment

Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address traffic congestion on the A40 between Witney and Oxford • Raising design standards across the District • 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 and knowledge 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 • Further enhance and expand habitats and networks • Provision of new green infrastructure through after-use of mineral working • Provision of primary road connection between Carterton/RAF Brize Norton and the A40 • Provision of major road infrastructure improvements to facilitate future growth • 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 • To further increase levels of home working to reduce the need to travel • To increase opportunities for those wishing to self-build their own home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing affordability • A relatively 'tight' labour market (i.e. employers must compete for employees) • 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 a mix of different housing types to meet the needs of different groups including young people, families, older people and those wishing to self-build • 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 economic growth centres close to West Oxfordshire including the Oxfordshire 'knowledge spine' • 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 superfast broadband in rural areas • Increasing physical activity • Improving rates of educational achievement • Managing the impact of continued sand and gravel working

3. WEST OXFORDSHIRE IN 2031 – OUR VISION

- 3.1 Having identified the key issues and challenges facing the District, we need to look to the future and set out what we want West Oxfordshire to be like by the end of the plan period - 2031. Set out below is the Local Plan vision which is underpinned by a series of core objectives that inform the remainder of the plan.
- 3.2 These have evolved through extensive consultation with local communities and partner organisations and have regard to the West Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 'Shaping Futures' and other components of the Local Plan evidence base.

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, attractive and biodiversity rich environment where new development achieves a high standard of design and respects and complements the distinctive character of the area whilst managing the impacts of climate change.

Improved opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport will have helped to reduce reliance on the private car and traffic congestion on key routes including the A40 will have been addressed as far as reasonable, thereby helping to improve journey times and air quality.

The District's economy will have grown and diversified, adding value and capitalising on the proximity to the Oxfordshire 'knowledge spine' and the presence of RAF Brize Norton. An improved balance of housing and jobs and increased levels of home working, facilitated by improved broadband provision, will have helped to reduce out-commuting and increase self-containment.

The housing needs of current and future residents will have been met through the provision of a range of high quality housing developments in accessible, sustainable locations including affordable housing. The provision of a broad range of house types will have met the needs of a range of different age groups including families and those wishing to self-build. A better balance of house types will have helped to rebalance the current predominance of larger properties and improve affordability.

Rates of educational attainment will have improved and rates of physical activity will have increased through improved leisure and recreation provision, leading to a reduction in rates of obesity.

All new development will have been supported by appropriate investment in new and enhanced infrastructure, delivered in a timely fashion.

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 and improve, alongside further improvements in the quality of the built environment and connectivity with the rest of the town. The provision of additional local employment opportunities and improved access by road to the A40 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

3.3 To guide the vision we have identified a number of core objectives. These are set out below under five key headings:

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

1. Strong Market Towns and Villages

3.4 West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district with its population dispersed to a number of market towns, villages and hamlets varying in size. It is vital that the District's distinctive rural characteristics are maintained while meeting the needs of local communities. To achieve this it is important to recognise the need for, and benefits of, new development but to ensure that what comes forward is of an appropriate scale and type, commensurate with the role and function of the settlement where it is proposed.

3.5 Although West Oxfordshire is a relatively affluent area there are pockets of deprivation particularly in rural areas where access to services is often limited. For rural communities to be sustainable they must have access to affordable housing, good employment opportunities and services and facilities.

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	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.
CO3	Promote safe, vibrant and prosperous town and village centres and resist proposals that would damage their vitality and viability or adversely affect measures to improve those centres.

2. Meeting the Specific Housing Needs of our Communities

3.6 A key role of the Local Plan is to ensure that future housing needs are met. There also 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.

- 3.7 Two key challenges will be to address identified future housing needs and to better meet the needs of certain groups including older people, younger people, families, travelling communities as well as those wishing to self-build.

- CO4 Locate new residential development where it will best help to meet local housing needs and reduce the need to travel.**
- CO5 Ensure the timely delivery of new housing to meet forecast needs and support sustainable economic growth.**
- CO6 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, younger people, black and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, families and travelling communities.**

3. Sustainable economic growth

- 3.8 The West Oxfordshire local economy is reasonably strong and diverse and has proven resilient to recession. However, the District is facing increasing competition from elsewhere including major planned growth associated with the Oxfordshire 'knowledge spine' running from the Science Vale Enterprise Zone through Oxford City up to Bicester.
- 3.9 There is a need to capitalise on the District's economic strengths and ensure that it is well-placed to benefit from future economic growth within the County and adjoining areas by playing a 'complimentary', rather than necessarily a 'competing' role. We must seek to add value to the West Oxfordshire economy as far as possible.
- 3.10 There is also a need to ensure that the needs of existing businesses and those looking to invest in West Oxfordshire are adequately provided so as to reduce the possibility of such firms locating elsewhere.

- CO7 To deliver sustainable economic growth which adds value to the local economy, improves the balance between housing and local jobs, provides a diversity of local employment opportunities, capitalises on economic growth in adjoining areas, improves local skills and work readiness, removes potential barriers to investment and provides flexibility to adapt to changing economic needs.**
- CO8 To achieve a prosperous and sustainable tourism economy.**

4. Sustainable communities with access to services and facilities

- 3.11 In a rural area it is important to achieve a sensible balance between delivering services directly to local residents and expecting people to travel. 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 therefore be located in the right places and provide the necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of its residents and/or users.
- 3.12 The objectives outlined below seek to deliver a high quality of life whilst improving opportunities wherever possible or appropriate for travel by means other than the car.

- CO9 Promote inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free communities.**
- CO10 Ensure that land is not released for new development until the supporting infrastructure and facilities are secured.**
- CO11 Maximise the opportunity for walking, cycling and use of public transport.**
- CO12 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.**
- CO13 Improve access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.**

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

- 3.13 West Oxfordshire is fortunate to benefit from a rich natural and historic environment. It is essential that this is protected and enhanced wherever possible. The objectives outlined below seek to protect and enhance the high environmental quality of the District and meet the challenges of climate change by improving the sustainability of new development.

- CO14 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.**
- CO15 Reduce the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.**
- CO16 Achieve improvements in water and air quality.**
- CO17 Minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.**
- CO18 Improve the sustainable design and construction of new development, including improving energy, water efficiency and water management.**

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. For example how are we going to deliver more affordable housing, how will we tackle flooding and what will we do to boost the local economy?

4.2 This section of the plan sets out the overall strategy for the District which has five key strands and 'cross-cutting' policies that apply to all development regardless of scale or type:

- **Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development** – allowing development which is sustainable to go ahead. This must however be seen in the context of West Oxfordshire as there is no 'one-size fits all' approach.
- **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 finite. 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 and strong 'sense of place'.
- **Supporting infrastructure** – appropriate and timely provision must be made for the facilities and services that are needed to support future growth including schools, roads, GP surgeries, libraries and open space. Without appropriate investment, existing services will come under pressure and may be unable to cope.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

4.3 National policy emphasises that Local Plans and planning decision making should be underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development, in other words development that is sustainable should go ahead, without delay.

4.4 So what is sustainable development? The generally accepted definition is development that meets the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Essentially this means that any decision taken now should not have a harmful impact on future generations.

- 4.5 There are three main dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. Good planning is essentially about balancing these often competing elements. For example whilst there may be a need to deliver new housing or jobs, this should not be at the expense of the environment. Indeed, the three dimensions of sustainable development should be pursued jointly and simultaneously.
- 4.6 The NPPF provides an overview of what sustainable development means in practice for the planning system. It covers issues such as economic growth, town centre vitality, supporting the rural economy, promoting sustainable transport, mixed-use development, improving communications infrastructure, delivering a wide choice of high quality housing, achieving high standards of design, improving the health of local communities, the protection of designated areas including Green Belt and AONB, tackling climate change and flood risk, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and ensuring the sustainable use of minerals.
- 4.7 These are all laudable objectives but to give the Local Plan more purpose, we need to consider what sustainable development means in the context of West Oxfordshire. Drawing on the District profile, vision and objectives outlined previously, it is reasonable to suggest that achieving sustainable development for West Oxfordshire is likely to mean the following (in no particular order):
- Reducing the current reliance that is placed on the private car for journeys into, within and away from the District by promoting opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport;
 - Reducing current levels of out-commuting and increasing 'self-containment';
 - Reducing the current risk of flooding where possible and ensuring that new development does not increase that risk;
 - Achieving mixed-use developments that create vibrant, active places and reduce the need to travel;
 - Maximising the use of previously developed land provided it is not of high environmental value;
 - Strengthening and increasing the value and resilience of the local economy, capitalising on current and forecast growth sectors and enhancing links with major growth areas nearby including the Oxfordshire 'Knowledge Spine';
 - Identifying and meeting current and future housing needs for a variety of different groups including those in need of affordable housing;
 - Tackling traffic congestion in key locations like Witney and on key routes including the A40 and A44;
 - Improving air quality in known problem areas including Witney and Chipping Norton;
 - Reducing the impact of development on climate change and ensuring that new development is able to respond to future change through appropriate design and adaptation;
 - Improving connectivity between the District's settlements;

- Conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- Protecting the Green Belt;
- Effectively managing and mitigating the impact of mineral working within the District and capitalising on after-use opportunities;
- Making sure that the leisure and recreational needs of residents and visitors are met both in terms of the quality and quantity of facilities available;
- Ensuring that new development is supported by appropriate investment in new and/or enhanced infrastructure including education, water supply and disposal, transport, affordable housing and open space;
- Achieving high quality design in all new development;
- Improving the health of local communities including tackling obesity;
- Improved telecommunications including superfast broadband throughout the District, with a particular focus on harder to reach rural areas;
- Protection and enhancement of the District’s rich heritage and natural environment; and
- Maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of local communities, particularly small-settlements in rural areas that may be under pressure from the loss of shops, public houses and other services and facilities.

4.8 In line with national policy, this Local Plan is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In other words, development that is shown to be sustainable in the West Oxfordshire context will be permitted. Taking account of the various issues outlined above, the remainder of this Local Plan sets out in more detail what will and won’t be considered sustainable in West Oxfordshire. Regard should also be had to the NPPF.

4.9 As a general principle, when considering development proposals and Neighbourhood Plans, the Council will take a positive approach and will work with applicants and other stakeholders 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. This approach is reflected in Policy OS1 below.

Policy OS1 – 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.

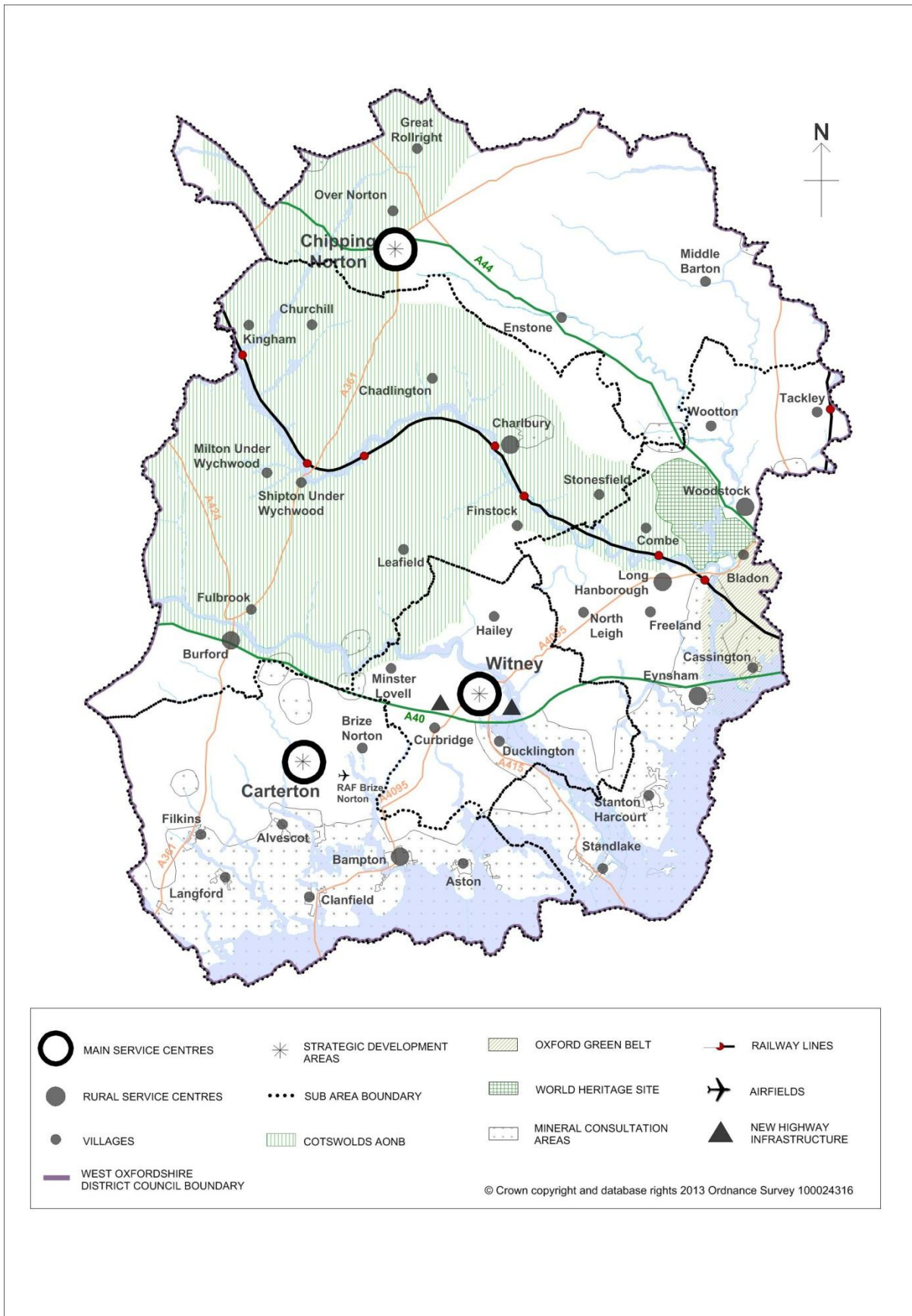
Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- **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

- 4.10 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 live and work. Putting development in the right places can also help to reduce development pressures on sensitive locations including the AONB and Green Belt.
- 4.11 Throughout the preparation of the Local Plan we have sought views on the overall strategy for accommodating future growth including the most suitable locations for development. Various options have been proposed and tested through consultation and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and our proposed approach is set out below.
- 4.12 For the purposes of this Local Plan the District has been divided into five sub-areas based on landscape characteristics and local catchment areas for key services and facilities. The sub-areas are:
- Witney Sub-Area
 - Carterton Sub-Area
 - Chipping Norton Sub-Area
 - Eynsham – Woodstock Sub-Area
 - Burford – Charlbury Sub-Area
- 4.13 The extent of each sub-area is illustrated on Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 – West Oxfordshire Sub-Areas and Key Diagram



- 4.14 Each sub-area includes a range of different settlements of varying size and character. For the purposes of the Local Plan the following ‘settlement hierarchy’ has been identified.

Table 4.1 – Settlement Hierarchy

Main Service Centres		
Witney	Carterton	Chipping Norton
Rural Service Centres		
Bampton	Burford	Charlbury
Eynsham	Long Hanborough	Woodstock
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 plus open countryside.		

- 4.15 Taking account of previous consultation responses and the results of several SA reports, the overall strategy of this Local Plan is to steer most future development into the Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton Sub-Areas, with a particular focus on the three main service centres of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton.
- 4.16 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 (other than rail) and offer a good range of job opportunities. Strategic Development Areas (SDA) are therefore proposed at Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton (see Section 9 – Strategy at the Local Level).
- 4.17 Not all growth can or indeed should go to Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton however and there is a need for development elsewhere to spread the potential benefits of growth and help sustain the more rural parts of the District.

- 4.18 Outside of the three main towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton, 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 meet their development needs and those of their immediate hinterlands.
- 4.19 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.
- 4.20 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.
- 4.21 The proposed strategy is reflected in Policy OS2 below.

Policy OS2 – Locating Development in the Right Places

Main Service Centres, Rural Service Centres and Villages

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 (SDAs) at Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. Development elsewhere will be more limited and will focus on meeting locally identified community and business needs.

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 by the Council within or on the edge of some of these service centres, including through Neighbourhood Plans.

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 may be specifically identified by the Council within or on the edge of some of these villages to help meet local needs, including through Neighbourhood Plans.

Proposals for residential development will be considered in accordance with Policy H2 of this Local Plan.

Small Villages, Hamlets and Open Countryside

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 which would lead to an enhancement of their immediate setting, with preference given to employment, tourism and community uses;**

- new accommodation proposed in accordance with policies specifically for travelling communities;
- 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.

Proposals for residential development will be considered in accordance with Policy H2 of this Local Plan.

General Principles

All development will be located where:

- it forms a logical complement to the existing scale and pattern of development and/or the character of the area;
- it would not have a harmful impact on the amenity of existing occupants;
- it protects or enhances the local landscape and the setting of the settlement/s;
- it makes use of previously developed land where available, provided it is not of high environmental value (e.g. ecology) and the loss of any existing use would not conflict with other policies of this plan;
- 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; and
- necessary supporting infrastructure can be provided.

Prudent Use of Natural Resources

- 4.22 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 in this regard.
- 4.23 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. This Local Plan is therefore based on the following three-step hierarchy:
1. Lean – using less energy, by the use of sustainable design and construction measures
 2. Clean – supplying energy efficiently, giving priority to decentralised energy supply
 3. Green – using renewable energy, especially woodfuel biomass
- 4.24 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 step of the energy hierarchy - sustainable design and construction. The use of decentralised and renewable energy is addressed in Section 8.
- 4.25 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 and water, as well as carbon emissions.
- 4.26 Central Government has adopted a zero carbon homes strategy, as part of its move to a low carbon future with the intention of implementing zero carbon homes from 2016⁹. Since 2006, the Code for Sustainable Homes (a nationally described standard for environmental performance) has been promoted and, along with other good practice standards, such as Buildings for Life and BREEAM requirements (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method), has driven up overall standards of sustainable construction.
- 4.27 As a result of the Government's review of Housing Standards, it is the intention that Building Regulations (which are separate to Planning) will be increasingly used to set sustainable construction standards, with the Code for Sustainable Homes being wound down accordingly.

⁹ The definition of a zero-carbon home is one where there are zero net emissions from all energy used over one year.

- 4.28 Some elements of building regulations are proposed to be mandatory, such as energy efficiency standards that are planned for 2016, whereas others such as water efficiency standards, are to be optional, their imposition being sought through Local Plans where necessary and viable.
- 4.29 As part of the strengthening of energy performance requirements through building regulations (with planned implementation of zero carbon homes from 2016), the Government intends to introduce a national framework for 'allowable solutions'. This is because it will not always be technically feasible or cost effective to meet the zero carbon homes standard through measures on site and in such cases, house builders will be allowed to meet the remainder of the zero carbon target by supporting off-site abatement measures termed 'allowable solutions'.
- 4.30 Because the details of the changes to building regulations and the operation of the system of 'allowable solutions' are not yet known, further work will be needed in the future including the extent to which it would be reasonable and appropriate to implement the optional building regulations requirements in West Oxfordshire (e.g. water efficiency). This work will take place and inform more detailed policies that will be included in the early review of this Local Plan.
- 4.31 In the interim, as a general principle and a fundamental element of the overall presumption in favour of sustainable development that underpins this Local Plan, the Council will expect all development proposals to show consideration of the prudent and efficient use and management of natural resources. This is reflected in Policy OS3 below.

Policy OS3 – 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**
- **delivering development that seeks to minimise the need to travel**
- **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;**
- **maximising resource efficiency, including water**

- **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 including achieving low carbon development in line with Government policy.

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

High Quality Design

- 4.32 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 (AONB).
- 4.33 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.
- 4.34 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.

- 4.35 The Design Guide is currently in the process of being updated and will be finalised in 2015. 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.

Policy OS4 – 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

- 4.36 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. We know from previous consultation responses that local people have concerns about the capacity of existing schools and GP surgeries and congestion on the A40. These are key issues for the Local Plan to address.

- 4.37 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, telecommunications 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.
- 4.38 One of the main ways in which new and improved infrastructure can be provided is through new development. For some time developers have provided or funded infrastructure through legal agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) or similar.
- 4.39 The use of Section 106 agreements remains in place (particularly for larger developments) although it is gradually being scaled-back to focus on affordable housing and site-specific infrastructure needed to allow development to proceed (e.g. a new road junction, utility improvements and access to superfast broadband).
- 4.40 More general infrastructure provision such as contributions towards local libraries and school places will now fall within the remit of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which is essentially a tariff or charge that local authorities can choose to impose on certain types of new development.
- 4.41 CIL is intended to be a more equitable system because it can, subject to viability considerations, apply to all sizes of development (with the exception of self-build which is exempt) whereas Section 106 legal agreements often only relate to larger development schemes (e.g. 10 or more dwellings).
- 4.42 Thus with CIL the burden of having to pay for new or enhanced infrastructure is more evenly spread. Importantly unlike Section 106 obligations, local authorities are required to pass a proportion of CIL receipts to local Town and Parish Councils. This is a minimum of 15% but increases to 25% if the Town or Parish Council has a Neighbourhood Plan in place.
- 4.43 The first step to introducing CIL is to identify the infrastructure that is needed to support future growth and how much it is likely to cost. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared in partnership with a range of organisations including Oxfordshire County Council and will be refined and updated on an ongoing basis. The Council consulted on its CIL preliminary draft charging schedule (PDCS) in December 2013 and intends to consult on its draft charging schedule (DCS) in 2015.
- 4.44 Ensuring that new development is coupled with appropriate and timely investment in supporting infrastructure is a key element of sustainable development and has been raised as a key issue consistently throughout consultation on this Local Plan. The Council will therefore ensure that all new development, where necessary and viable, delivers or contributes towards the delivery of appropriate supporting infrastructure either through Section 106 and/or CIL¹⁰. This is reflected in Policy OS5.

¹⁰ Certified self-build projects are exempt from having to pay CIL

- 4.45 Future infrastructure requirements will be identified and kept up to date through the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and CIL 'Regulation 123' list¹¹.

Policy OS5 – Supporting Infrastructure

Where necessary and viable, new development will be required to deliver, or contribute towards the provision of appropriate supporting infrastructure either directly as part of the development, or through an appropriate financial contribution towards off-site provision.

This will include, where applicable the strategic infrastructure items identified within the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and CIL Regulation 123 list as well as non-strategic infrastructure requirements including those associated with individual development proposals.

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

Favourable consideration will be given to development proposals that make appropriate provision for supporting infrastructure in a timely manner. Conversely, development proposals that fail to make adequate or timely provision for necessary supporting infrastructure will be resisted.

¹¹ Sets out which infrastructure items/projects the Council intends to fund through CIL.

5. PROVIDING NEW HOMES

Our housing related objectives include:

- CO4** Locate new residential development where it will best help to meet local housing needs and reduce the need to travel.
- CO5** Ensure the timely delivery of new housing to meet forecast needs and support sustainable economic growth.
- CO6** 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, younger people, black and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, families and travelling communities.

- 5.1 The provision of new housing is a critically important issue for West Oxfordshire and has been a key, recurring theme throughout consultation on the Local Plan to date. New housing is vital to economic growth and as an attractive and well-located place, people want to live in West Oxfordshire.
- 5.2 There are some key considerations to be addressed through the Local Plan including how much housing is needed, where it should be provided, what type and size of housing is required and how the needs of different groups can best be met including for example older people, younger people, families, black and minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, travelling communities and those wishing to self-build their own home.
- 5.3 A particularly important issue for West Oxfordshire, due to relatively high house prices, is the need to deliver more affordable housing to assist those who are unable to buy or rent suitable accommodation on the open market.
- 5.4 These key issues are addressed below.

Amount of Housing

- 5.5 An important consideration is the amount of new housing to be provided over the plan period. The Local Plan has a key role to play in identifying an appropriate housing target and setting out the strategy and sites to deliver it. Identifying a housing target is not however an exact science. There is no single, right answer rather it is a case of pulling together a range of relevant factors and forming a balanced view on the most appropriate level of provision.
- 5.7 Previously, Local Plan targets were set by regional and county structure plans. The previous regional plan for example suggested that in the 20-year period 2006 – 2026, West Oxfordshire should aim to provide 7,300 new homes (365 per year). However, regional and structure plans no longer exist and are of little direct relevance to this Local Plan.

- 5.8 The most up to date assessment of housing need in Oxfordshire is set out in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which was published in April 2014. Across Oxfordshire as a whole, the amount of new homes recommended in the SHMA over a 20-year period is almost twice that which was envisaged under the previous regional plan. The reason for this is that the SHMA provides an ‘unconstrained’ objective assessment of housing need (OAN) whereas the regional plan provided a ‘constrained’ assessment of need that took account of relevant constraints including those relating to infrastructure and the environment.
- 5.9 National policy¹² states that in order to significantly boost the supply of housing, local planning authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the framework. In this regard, the Council is committed to meeting its objectively assessed need (OAN) in full through this Local Plan. However, the Council has concerns regarding a number of aspects of the SHMA and considers that the OAN figure for West Oxfordshire set out in the SHMA (660 homes per annum) is too high and should be adjusted downwards.
- 5.10 In particular, the Council considers that the demographic projections and to a lesser extent the employment projections used in the SHMA have been ‘inflated’ by an abnormally high period of house building in the District which caused a ‘spike’ in migration which has been carried forward into future projections.
- 5.11 The inflationary effect of past housing delivery on West Oxfordshire’s household projections is acknowledged in the SHMA, and whilst no adjustment has been made, the SHMA suggests that *‘there is potentially a good basis for doing so.’*¹³ The possibility of a downward adjustment is highlighted in national policy¹⁴ which states that:
- ‘If a Council has robust evidence that past high delivery rates that inform the (household) projections are no longer realistic – for example they relied on a particular set of circumstances that could not be expected to occur again – they can adjust their projections down accordingly’.***
- 5.12 Since the SHMA was published, the Council has commissioned two separate reports to further consider this issue. The first report¹⁵ models the impact of longer-term migration trends and concludes that around 484 homes per year are needed in West Oxfordshire. It also models the 2012-based population projections published since the SHMA was completed and concludes that between 459 and 551 homes per year are needed, the mid-point of which is 506 homes per year.

¹² Paragraph 47 National Planning Policy Framework

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

¹³ SHMA (2014) paragraph 9.17

¹⁴ Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 3-036-20140306)

¹⁵ An Analysis of West Oxfordshire’s future housing requirement (Keith Woodhead June 2014)

- 5.13 The second report¹⁶ considers a number of aspects of the SHMA and taking account of the inflationary effect of past trends concludes that the housing need for West Oxfordshire ranges from 520 to 596 per annum, the mid-point of which is 558 homes per year.
- 5.14 In addition to the demographic projections, the Council also has concerns about the approach taken towards job-led growth in the SHMA which runs counter to more recent guidance published by the Planning Advisory Service in June 2014¹⁷. In simple terms, the guidance warns against translating job forecasts into future population and household numbers. It highlights the fact that the population assumptions that feed into job forecasts are rarely the same as the population assumptions that flow out from them which are often much higher.
- 5.15 In the SHMA, the basic projected population increase across Oxfordshire in the period to 2031 is just over 107,000 people. However, the job-led model which ultimately drives many of the final recommendations, assumes a potential increase of almost 184,000 people. The PAS guidance suggests that such models are inconsistent because the output population does not equal the input population. It suggests that results often make no sense and in formal logic is known as ‘self-defeating prophecy’.
- 5.16 The Council also has concerns that the job-led assumptions used in the SHMA are not ‘policy neutral’ insofar as they take account of local economic initiatives resulting in an aspirational job forecast that is significantly in excess of the baseline forecast. Recent case law has established that an objective assessment of housing need should be policy neutral.
- 5.17 In light of the various issues outlined above and the recommendations of two separate analyses undertaken since the SHMA was published, the Council considers that the objectively assessed need (OAN) for new housing in West Oxfordshire is 525 homes per annum which over the period of the Local Plan (2011 – 2031) equates to 10,500 new homes.

Distribution of Housing

- 5.18 In accordance with the overall strategy (Policy OS2) this Local Plan seeks to focus the majority of new housing development at the District’s three main towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. 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.
- 5.19 It also ensures that in accordance with national policy, at least 10 years’ worth of specific, developable housing sites have been identified including allocated Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) at Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton.
- 5.20 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 and other larger settlements.

¹⁶ Validation of an objectively assessed housing need (OAN) (Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research January 2015).

¹⁷ Objectively Assessed Need and Housing Targets Technical Advice Note (PBA on behalf of PAS June 2014).

- 5.21 The Council’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) provides an initial assessment of the suitability and deliverability of a number of sites. Additional site allocations will be made in these sub-areas as necessary through the anticipated early review of this Local Plan. The Council will work with the towns, parishes and local communities to identify suitable and deliverable sites including through Neighbourhood Plans.
- 5.22 The proposed distribution of housing is summarised in Policy H1 below. 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.
- 5.23 An allowance has been made for future ‘windfall’ sites yet to come forward, excluding ‘garden land’ development in line with the NPPF.

Policy H1 – Amount and Distribution of Housing

West Oxfordshire will provide at least 10,500 new homes between 1st April 2011 and 31st March 2031 (525 per year). In accordance with the overall strategy, the majority of new homes will be provided in the Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton sub-areas with a particular focus on Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton.

The proposed distribution of housing will be as follows:

Witney sub-area	3,700 homes
Carterton sub-area	2,600 homes
Chipping Norton sub-area	1,800 homes
Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area	1,600 homes
Burford – Charlbury sub-area	800 homes

This is an indicative distribution and should not be taken as an absolute target for each sub-area or maximum ceiling to limit development.

Development will be monitored annually 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 including the use of parish or neighbourhood plans.

Housing Delivery

- 5.24 In this section of the plan we explain how the proposed housing target and distribution set out in Policy H1 above will be delivered. Regard should also be had to Section 9 which sets out the proposed strategy for each of the five sub-areas in more detail.

Homes already built

- 5.25 Of the overall housing requirement (10,500 homes) a number of these homes have already been built in the first few years of the plan period. However, a relatively flat housing market has meant that the number of completions has been relatively low totalling just 823 in the period 2011 – 2014.

Existing commitments

- 5.26 It is also important to note that a large number of new homes are already in the development pipeline ranging from very small sites for just one house through to much larger sites for several hundred new homes. This includes sites that already benefit from planning permission as well as those sites that have a resolution to grant planning permission subject to a legal agreement being completed.
- 5.27 As of 1st February 2015, the number of homes expected to be delivered through existing commitments was 4,333.

Strategic Development Areas (SDAs)

- 5.28 Through this Local Plan we have identified a number of housing allocations referred to as ‘Strategic Development Areas’ (SDAs). These are sites that after considerable scrutiny and detailed consideration of reasonable alternatives, are considered to represent the most sustainable locations for strategic-scale housing growth within the District.
- 5.29 In line with the overall strategy, these proposed allocations are focused on the District’s three main towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton and include:
- Land to the east of Witney (400 homes)
 - Land to the north of Witney (1,000 homes)
 - Land at REEMA Central, Carterton (200 homes)
 - Land to the east of Chipping Norton at Tank Farm (600 homes)
- 5.30 Further information on these sites and the alternative options that have been considered is set out in Section 9 and in the Council’s supporting background evidence¹⁸.

SHLAA sites

- 5.31 In line with national policy, the Council has prepared an assessment of potential land availability for new housing in the form of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The SHLAA seeks to identify suitable and deliverable housing sites at a range of settlements across the District. A number of these sites are highly likely to come forward for development, indeed a number already have or are in the process of being considered.
- 5.32 It is anticipated that the future delivery of these sites will make a significant contribution towards the overall housing target. Further information on those sites that have been identified as being potentially suitable within each sub-area is set out in Section 9.

¹⁸ Sustainability Appraisal and Site Assessment Matrix

Windfall Development

- 5.33 'Windfall' developments are essentially speculative developments on sites that are not known to the Council and have therefore not been assessed through the SHLAA. Such sites can be previously developed (brownfield) land where the current use may no longer be viable or undeveloped, Greenfield sites that the owner wishes to bring forward for development.
- 5.34 Such windfall development has historically formed a large component of housing delivery in West Oxfordshire and it is reasonable to assume that this trend will continue. We consider that a reasonable estimate of likely windfall delivery over the remaining period of the Local Plan (2015 – 2031) is 125 homes per annum which equates to 2,000 homes overall (400 per sub-area).
- 5.35 The Council's overall approach is summarised in Policy H2 below.

Policy H2 – Delivery of New Homes

The Council will deliver at least 10,500 new homes in the period 2011 – 2031. This will be achieved through a combination of homes already completed, existing commitments, allocated Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) sites identified as suitable and deliverable/developable in the Council's SHLAA and windfall development.

In determining future proposals for housing the Council will apply the following criteria depending on location.

Main Service Centres, Rural Service Centres and Villages

1. New dwellings will be permitted at the main service centres, rural service centres and villages in the following circumstances:

- On sites that have been allocated for housing development within a Local Plan or relevant neighbourhood plan;
- On previously developed land within the built up area provided it is not of high environmental value (e.g. ecology) and the loss of any existing use would not conflict with other plan policies;
- On undeveloped land within or adjoining the built up area where the proposed development is necessary to meet identified housing needs and is consistent with the criteria in 3) below and other policies in this plan.

Small Villages, Hamlets and Open Countryside

2. New dwellings will be permitted in the small villages, hamlets and open countryside in the following circumstances:

- where there is an essential operational or other specific local need that cannot be met in any other way, including the use of existing buildings. Where appropriate, 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;

- where residential development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of a heritage asset;
- residential development of exceptional quality or innovative design;
- new accommodation proposed in accordance with policies specifically for travelling communities;
- accommodation which will remain ancillary to existing dwellings*;
- replacement dwellings on a one for one basis; and
- re-use of appropriate existing buildings which would lead to an enhancement of their immediate setting and where it has been demonstrated that the building is not 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 otherwise not be met.

General Principles

3. Where acceptable in principle, all residential development will be expected to:

- Be of a proportionate and appropriate scale to its context having regard to the potential cumulative impact of development in the locality;
- Be of demonstrable benefit to the local community in which it is proposed;
- Avoid the coalescence and loss of identity of separate settlements;
- Not have a harmful impact on the amenity of adjoining occupants;
- Where applicable, form a logical complement to the existing scale and pattern of development and/or the character of the area;
- Protect and where possible enhance the local landscape and setting of the settlement;
- Make use of previously developed land where available, provided it is not of high environmental value and the loss of any existing use would not conflict with other policies of this plan;
- 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;
- Be provided with safe vehicular access and safe and convenient pedestrian access to supporting services and facilities;
- Not be at risk of flooding or be likely to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;

- Comply with policies for the protection of the natural environment and heritage assets;
 - Ensure it does not lead to the sterilisation of a mineral resource;
 - Comply with national policies for Green Belt and AONB where applicable; and
 - Provide all necessary supporting infrastructure including access to superfast broadband.
- * Proposals for extensions or alterations to an existing dwelling to create a self-contained unit of accommodation may be subject to a condition ensuring the accommodation remains ancillary to the main dwelling.*

Affordable Housing

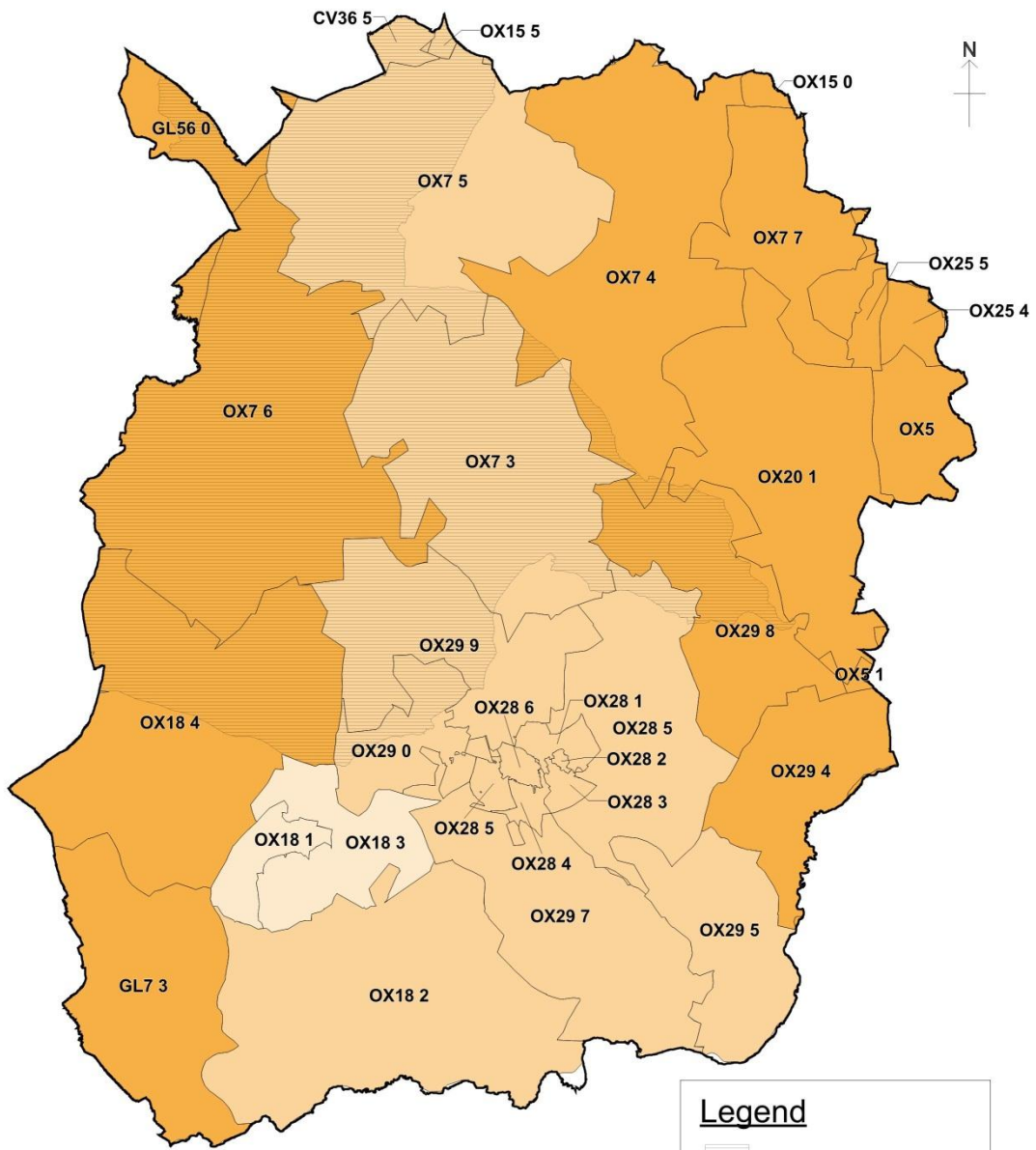
- 5.36 Housing affordability is a key issue in West Oxfordshire because of the relationship between property prices and household incomes. Even relatively small, modest properties are beyond the reach of most single income households and as a result, there are around 1,200 households on the Council's waiting list for affordable housing.
- 5.37 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.
- 5.38 There are a number of different forms of affordable housing including social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing. Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers and has a guideline target rent market determined through the national rent regime. Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers to households who are eligible for social rented housing. It is subject to controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent. Intermediate housing is for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels. It includes shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.
- 5.39 There is a significant need for more affordable housing in West Oxfordshire. This is confirmed in the Council's Housing Needs Assessment (2011) and the Oxfordshire SHMA (2014) with estimates ranging from 220 - 274 affordable homes needed each year. Increasing the number, type and distribution of affordable housing for both rent and subsidised sale is therefore a key priority for West Oxfordshire.
- 5.40 There are two main ways in which new affordable housing will be delivered; the first is through market housing developments (either as part of the development or in the form of a commuted sum towards off-site provision) and the second is through the delivery of rural exception sites (RES) which are essentially small sites used for affordable housing that would not normally be released for development.

Delivery of Affordable Housing through Market Housing schemes

- 5.41 In relation to market housing, previously the Council has sought the provision of affordable housing on larger housing schemes of 15 or more in the main towns and from smaller schemes of 2 or more dwellings in the rest of the District. However, national policy now states that affordable housing should generally only be sought on larger sites of more than 10 dwellings other than in designated rural areas such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) where a lower threshold can apply with medium-scale schemes of 6 – 10 dwellings being required to make a financial contribution towards affordable housing off-site. Smaller schemes of 1 – 5 dwellings are not required to make any provision for affordable housing.
- 5.42 Given the high level of affordable housing need within the District the Council considers that it is reasonable to seek a financial contribution from schemes of 6-10 dwellings within the Cotswolds AONB. The Council considers that an appropriate way of calculating such a commuted sum is to base it on the size of the private, market homes that are proposed¹⁹ and charge on a £ per m² basis in the same way as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) operates. Our viability evidence suggests that alongside CIL typical developments of 6-10 units should be able to afford an affordable housing commuted sum of £100 per m². This figure will however be kept under review.
- 5.43 Thus for example, a scheme of 6 market houses each with a floor area of 100m² would be required to make a financial contribution of £60,000 (£10,000 per unit). This payment will be deferred until after the scheme has been completed.
- 5.44 Affordable housing commuted sums received from developers will be put into the Council's enabling fund and used to subsidise the 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 (see Policy H5).
- 5.45 Outside of the Cotswolds AONB, despite the high level of affordable housing need identified, the Council is unable to seek financial contributions towards affordable housing from housing schemes of 6-10 units by virtue of the national policy position.
- 5.46 For larger development proposals involving 11 or more dwellings (or schemes which have a gross floorspace of more than 1,000m²) the Council will require the provision of affordable housing on-site unless it can be robustly demonstrated that this cannot be achieved for reasons of viability.
- 5.47 The proportion of affordable housing required will vary according to location reflecting the fact that in some parts of the District, development will have a greater value and be able to make a larger contribution. The Council's evidence suggests that the District falls into three zones. These are defined on the plan below.

¹⁹ Gross Internal Area (GIA)

Figure 5.1 – Affordable Housing Zones



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- 5.48 Having regard to viability and identified affordable housing need, the Council considers it reasonable and justifiable to seek on-site provision of 50% affordable housing in the high value zone, 40% in the medium value zone and 35% in the low value zone.
- 5.49 Whilst it would be easier to adopt a flat rate across the District, this would be overly simplistic and would not reflect the fact that the gross development value of residential scheme in say Woodstock or Burford is likely to be significantly higher than a scheme in Carterton or Chipping Norton.
- 5.50 It is however 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. In particular, the Council's evidence suggests there may be some viability issues with flatted schemes including extra-care and sheltered housing which will be taken into account by the Council in negotiations.
- 5.51 In considering residential development proposals the Council will have regard to the possibility of threshold dodging whereby land is promoted for a smaller number of dwellings than it is capable of accommodating in order to avoid a requirement to provide for affordable housing. In such instances, the Council will resist proposals that fail to make efficient use of land.
- 5.52 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. The Council will seek, 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.
- 5.53 In terms of the type of affordable housing to be provided, there is a significantly greater need for rented accommodation than for the various forms of intermediate housing. As such a ratio of 2:1 in favour of affordable rented homes will be generally sought however this is a general guide only and the precise mix will be determined on a case by case basis.

Other Mechanisms for Delivering Affordable Housing

- 5.54 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.
- 5.55 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.

- 5.56 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 Policy OS2 – Locating Development in the Right Places and Policy H2 – Delivery of New Homes.
- 5.57 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.

Policy H3 – Affordable Housing

In order to address identified affordable housing needs, the Council will require ‘qualifying’ market housing schemes to make an appropriate contribution towards the provision of affordable housing within the District.

Small-scale developments of 1 – 5 units will not be required to contribute.

Within the Cotswolds AONB, medium-scale housing schemes of 6-10 units and with a maximum gross floorspace of 1,000m² or less will be required to make a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing off-site within the District. This commuted sum will be deferred until completion of the development to assist with viability.

Outside of the Cotswolds AONB, medium-scale housing schemes of 6-10 units and with a maximum gross floorspace of 1,000m² or less will not be required to make a financial contribution towards affordable housing.

Across the District as a whole, larger-scale housing schemes of 11 or more units and/or with a gross floorspace of more than 1,000m² will be required to provide affordable housing on-site as a proportion of the market homes proposed as follows:

- High value zone (50%)**
- Medium value zone (40%)**
- Low value zone (35%)**

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.

Affordable housing mix and tenure will be responsive to identified local needs and site specific opportunities. A 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.

Type and Mix of Homes Needed

5.58 Having determined the amount of housing to be provided and how it will be distributed across the District, we need to consider what type and mix of homes should be sought through the Local Plan.

5.59 There are a number of issues to address including the size of new homes needed (i.e. 1-bed, 2-bed, 3-bed etc.) the type of new homes needed (i.e. flats, terraced houses, semi-detached houses, detached etc.) and how the needs of different groups of people can best be met including older people, people with disabilities, younger people, families, those wishing to self-build their own home etc.

5.60 We deal with each of these issues in turn below.

The Size of New Homes Needed – Market Housing

5.61 The existing housing stock in West Oxfordshire is dominated by larger properties. Whilst recent developments at Witney (Madley Park) and Carterton (Shilton Park) have helped to increase the stock of smaller homes available, the overall imbalance remains with the 2011

Census identifying that almost 70% of properties have 3 or more bedrooms. This is similar to the trend across Oxfordshire as a whole.

5.62 Previous evidence²⁰ suggested that in order to create a more balanced housing stock, new housing developments should provide around 60% 1 and 2-bed properties and 40% 3 and 4+bed properties. More recent evidence²¹ suggests that future provision of market housing in Oxfordshire should be focused on delivering smaller family housing for younger households.

5.63 As a general guide, it is suggested that market housing in West Oxfordshire should be sought in the following proportions:

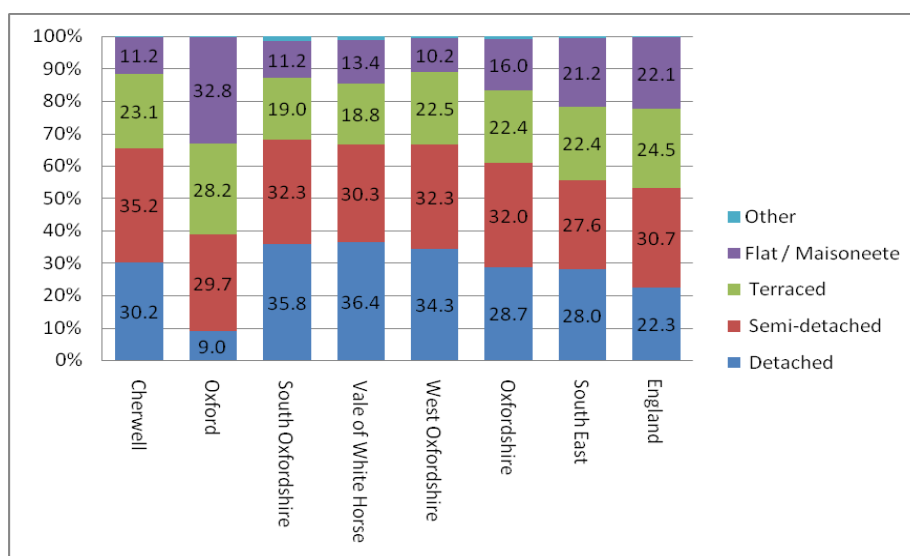
- 4.8% 1-bed properties
- 27.9% 2-bed properties
- 43.4% 3-bed properties
- 23.9% 4+bed properties

5.64 This suggests that the main focus should be 2 and 3-bed properties and to a lesser extent 4 bed and larger. 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.

Type of homes needed

5.65 The existing housing stock in West Oxfordshire is characterised by a reasonable spread of different property types although there is a slight imbalance towards semi-detached and detached properties, the proportion of which is higher than the national and regional averages.

Figure 5.2 – Residential Property Types in Oxfordshire (2011 Census)



²⁰ West Oxfordshire 2011 Housing Needs Assessment

²¹ Oxfordshire SHMA (2014)

- 5.66 The Oxfordshire SHMA does not provide any guidance on future housing requirements by property type (only by size) but having regard to the current breakdown set out above, the Council will in general terms continue to seek a balanced mix of property types in future housing schemes across the District.

Meeting the needs of specific groups.

- 5.67 The NPPF requires local authorities to plan for a mix of housing having regard to the needs of different groups in the community such as, but not limited to; families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes.
- 5.68 The Oxfordshire SHMA (2014) identifies a number of groups which may have housing needs that differ from those of the wider population including:

- Older persons;
- People with disabilities;
- Black and minority ethnic (BME) households;
- Households with children;
- Young people;
- Students; and
- Self-builders

Older Persons

- 5.69 West Oxfordshire has a relatively old demographic profile reflecting the fact that it is an attractive District that people wish to remain living in or retire to. Between 1981 and 2011 the proportion of residents aged 60+ increased by 82% (11,900 people) and 18% of people are currently aged 65 and over (compared with 16% nationally).
- 5.70 Importantly, future projections suggest that the number of older people in West Oxfordshire will continue to increase. In the period 2011 – 2031, the proportion aged 55+ is projected to increase by 54% with a particularly high increase in people aged 85+ (160%). This will be coupled with a significant increase in the number of people suffering from dementia and mobility problems.
- 5.71 The Local Plan has a key role to play in ensuring that suitable housing (and health care) is provided for older people. This is likely to be through a combination of specialist housing provision (e.g. retirement and extra-care housing) as well as ensuring that new homes are adaptable and allow people to stay in their own homes longer (e.g. provision of wider doorways, lower windows etc.).

- 5.72 In terms of specialist housing provision for older people there are a number of different types including:
- Sheltered/age exclusive housing;
 - Extra-care housing (also known as very-sheltered housing);
 - Close care or assisted living housing;
 - Care homes; and
 - Care homes with nursing (previously known as nursing homes)
- 5.73 There are currently around 614 older persons housing units in West Oxfordshire the majority of which (523) are in private market schemes with the remainder (91) provided in the affordable sector²². Relative to the District's population this represents 66 units per 1,000 persons aged 75 and over, well below the county average (133 units per 1,000) and significantly below the national average (170 units per 1,000).
- 5.74 There is clearly a need to boost supply. The Oxfordshire SHMA (2014) suggests that in order to achieve the current Oxfordshire average of 133 units per 1,000, an additional 1,891 new properties would need to be provided in West Oxfordshire in the period 2011 – 2031 (95 per year). To achieve the current national average of 170 units per 1,000, a total of 2,588 new properties would need to be provided (129 per year).
- 5.75 These are 'net' figures that take no account of replacement provision of existing accommodation that is no longer fit for purpose. The 'gross' need is therefore expected to be higher.
- 5.76 Whilst these figures are indicative only and should be treated with some caution, they clearly demonstrate that there will be an increasing need for specialist older persons housing in the District over the period of the Local Plan. The Council will therefore seek to increase the supply of such housing by encouraging specific schemes in suitable, sustainable locations and seeking to ensure that older persons housing is provided as part of the overall mix of development on larger developments.
- 5.77 We will also seek to ensure that new homes built in the District are able to be easily adapted to meet the changing needs of occupants as they get older and support people who require aids and adaptations in order to be able to stay in their own home.
- 5.78 We will also:
- Support in principle the redevelopment of existing older persons accommodation that may be unsuitable and/or fails to comply with current legislative requirements;
 - Seek to effectively utilise the existing affordable housing stock and will support and encourage those in affordable housing who wish to down-size in order to help release larger affordable homes for younger households;
 - Seek to ensure enough subsidised or low cost housing of a decent quality is provided for those who cannot afford market prices;

²² Oxfordshire SHMA (2014)

- Seek to facilitate the requirements of older owner-occupiers wishing to ‘downsize’ into non-specialist accommodation (e.g. bungalows); and
- Work with the County Council, other local authorities and stakeholders in relation to the delivery of specialist housing for older people.

People with Disabilities

- 5.79 The SHMA suggests that across Oxfordshire as a whole, demographic trends are expected to lead to a significant growth in the population and number of households with disabilities over the period to 2031. The 2011 Census shows that around 15,000 people in West Oxfordshire (14.5%) currently suffer from a long-term health problem or disability.
- 5.80 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 and 64 in Oxfordshire by 2015. In West Oxfordshire, there will be 6,698 residents (17%) with a serious and moderate physical disability.
- 5.81 Oxfordshire County Council is aiming to deliver 390 homes for working age adults with various disabilities across Oxfordshire by 2020. Their strategy²³ identifies that West Oxfordshire should be seeking to provide 63 of the overall 390 homes target with a particular focus on Witney.
- 5.82 The strategy envisages 3 main ‘models’ of delivery:
- Specially adapted, purpose built accommodation for groups of residents either in shared or self-contained homes;
 - Purpose built wheelchair accessible homes, provided as part of the overall mix of housing on new developments;
 - Conventional homes with limited adaptations and communal facilities but for groups of adults with a learning disability or mental health need to live in as a group;
- 5.83 In light of the identified needs outlined above, the Council will seek to increase the supply of housing for those with disabilities through a number of measures. This will range from encouraging the provision of specific purpose built properties to ensuring that a proportion of the homes provided as part of larger housing developments are built to high accessibility standards. The need for specialist housing on qualifying sites will be determined through a local register managed by the District / County Council. Our proposed approach is set out in Policy H4 below.

²³ Strategy for delivering an increased supply of specialist housing for adults with care and support needs in Oxfordshire – Oxfordshire County Council (May 2013).

Black and minority ethnic (BME) households

- 5.84 The Oxfordshire SHMA (2014) highlights black and minority ethnic (BME) households as potentially having particular housing needs. Notably, West Oxfordshire has a very low percentage of black or minority ethnic households (6.8%) when compared to Oxfordshire as a whole (15.4%) and the regional (13.9%) and national (19.3%) averages.
- 5.85 The SHMA concludes that across Oxfordshire as a whole, BME households appear to be typically younger and less likely to be owner occupiers. There is consequently, a greater reliance on the private rented sector. BME households are also more likely to be overcrowded and less likely to under-occupy dwellings. The SHMA suggests that the implications of this are more for housing strategy than planning.
- 5.86 Given the relatively small BME population of the District and the lack of clear actions identified for the planning system in the SHMA, we are not proposing any specific measures to address the housing needs of BME households other than in relation to our overall objective of securing a good, balanced mix of dwelling types and tenures to meet the needs of a range of different people (see Policy H4 below).

Households with children

- 5.87 The SHMA provides some limited commentary on meeting the needs of families (i.e. any household with at least one dependent child). It suggests that across Oxfordshire, the number of children (aged under-15) is expected to increase markedly by around 38,000 in the period 2011 – 2031 (33%). In West Oxfordshire, according to the 2011 census there were 19,500 people aged 0 – 15 (18.6%) similar to the national and regional averages.
- 5.88 The SHMA highlights the fact that lone parents are households with children are about four times more likely than other households to be overcrowded and that other than for married couple households, levels of under-occupancy are very low. It states that households with children should be seen as a priority and that Councils should therefore seek to ensure that the housing offer meets the needs of such households, in particular the need to ensure a reasonable quality of housing in the private rented sector.
- 5.89 We will therefore seek to achieve a good, balanced mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures including market and affordable housing in order to ensure households with children are able to access suitable housing.

Service Families

- 5.90 The SHMA does not consider the needs of service families in detail but with RAF Brize Norton located within the District this is an important consideration for West Oxfordshire. The Council works closely with the Ministry of Defence in order to understand the future needs associated with RAF Brize Norton including future accommodation requirements for service personnel and their families.

- 5.91 In 2012 the MOD announced that they needed fewer homes for service families than originally planned. 200 new homes will be built on the REEMA North site in Carterton and the REEMA Central site which had originally been reserved for service family housing will be released to the open market (See Section 9.0).
- 5.92 The needs of a number of service families are also met on the open market in rental or owner-occupied properties. We will therefore continue to work closely with the MOD to ensure that the accommodation needs of service families linked to RAF Brize Norton are catered for over the period of the Local Plan.
- 5.93 This will include consideration of the potential re-development of existing MOD housing stock in Carterton to provide a better quality housing offer and environmental enhancements more generally (see Section 9.0).

Young people

- 5.94 Providing for the needs of younger person households is an important consideration. The ability to retain young people in an area can assist in providing a more balanced demographic profile as well as providing a vital part of the local workforce. The SHMA highlights the fact that of those households that are headed by a younger person, very few are owner-occupiers and there is a particular reliance on the private rented sector and to a lesser degree, social rented housing.
- 5.95 It suggests that factors such as a balanced approach to housing in terms of bedroom sizes and property types, along with high standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) will help younger households to access housing. There are very few HMOs in West Oxfordshire so this latter point is less relevant but we will seek to ensure a good, balanced mix of house types and tenures is provided in all new housing developments. The provision of affordable housing (Policy H3) and support for self-build projects (Policy H5) will also help to meet the needs of younger people.

Students

- 5.96 The SHMA (2014) highlights the importance of student housing demand within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area. It considers potential future growth in the student population and current plans to increase the supply of accommodation. The analysis is however centred largely around Oxford City and there are no conclusions of note reached in relation to West Oxfordshire.
- 5.97 Given the relative lack of higher education facilities in the District, student accommodation is not considered to be a key issue for West Oxfordshire and as such we do not propose any specific policies or proposals.

Summary

- 5.98 National policy requires future housing provision to take into account the needs of a broad range of groups of people. The above analysis has highlighted a number of key issues and considerations and these are reflected in Policy H4 below.

Policy H4 – Type and Mix of New Homes

All residential developments will be required to provide or contribute towards the provision of a good, balanced mix of property types and sizes.

Developers will be required to demonstrate how their proposal would help create a more balanced housing stock within the District and meet the needs of a range of different groups having regard to specific local needs.

Particular support will be given to proposals for specialist housing for older people including but not restricted to, extra-care housing. Opportunities for extra care will be sought in service centres and other locations with good access to services and facilities for older people.

In recognition of the ageing population the Council will also require larger housing developments of 11 or more units to provide a percentage of market homes as accessible and adaptable housing (formerly lifetime homes). This will be a matter for negotiation but as a minimum the Council will seek the provision of at least 25% of market and affordable homes to this standard.

To support the anticipated increase in the number of people with disabilities (linked to the ageing population) the Council will require larger housing developments of 11 or more homes to provide a percentage of market and affordable homes as wheelchair user dwellings (formerly wheelchair accessible homes). Again this will be a matter for negotiation but as a minimum the Council will seek the provision of at least 5% of homes to this standard (with a minimum of 1 unit).

The provision of specialist housing for those with a disability will be supported in principle in accessible, sustainable locations subject to other policies in this plan. The District Council will work with the County Council and other relevant partners to identify suitable sites and opportunities.

Custom Build Housing

- 5.99 Custom build housing is where a builder is contracted by a home owner to create a 'custom built' home or where a private individual builds their home as a DIY 'self-build' project. This can range from single dwellings built for or by an individual to larger schemes with many homes built as custom or self-build housing.
- 5.100 The Government is massively supportive of custom build housing which is seen as a more affordable route to home ownership and an opportunity to create bespoke, well-designed and sustainably constructed new homes. It also offers opportunities to smaller builders and contractors, creating local jobs and contributing to the local economy.

- 5.101 In June 2014, the Government announced a £150m loan scheme that aims to provide around 10,000 serviced plots over the next 6-years. It has also endorsed an online self-build portal²⁴ to provide information to potential custom and self-builders.
- 5.102 In a recent consultation²⁵ the Government consulted on a new 'right to build' under which custom builders will have a right to a plot from local authorities. The outcome of the consultation is not yet known but if the measures are implemented as proposed, the Council will need to establish the level of demand for custom and self-build in the District, provide the opportunity for interested parties to register their interest, assess the eligibility of those that express an interest and then seek to address the level of identified demand.
- 5.103 The Government envisages that there are a number of ways in which demand for custom and self-build will be met including specific site allocations within local plans, policies within local plans that require developers to provide a proportion of land for custom and self-build and local authorities buying land and disposing of their own surplus assets. Potentially, local authorities will through these various measures need to offer a suitable and serviced plot to someone who has registered an interest within a prescribed period of time (e.g. 3 years).
- 5.104 The SHMA (2014) provides some limited commentary on self-build in Oxfordshire, highlighting the fact that research is fairly limited including data about how many schemes are coming forward. It suggests that in policy terms there is some potential to encourage developers of large sites to designate parts of those sites as 'serviced plots' which can then be developed as self-build. It also highlights the financial challenge faced by those wishing to self-build with most self-build schemes commissioned by those with substantial savings rather than borrowings.
- 5.105 Since the SHMA was published, we have collected some further evidence of local custom build demand by commissioning a local agent to supply data on the numbers of individuals and groups searching for residential plots in West Oxfordshire. This suggests that there are 427 potential custom/self-builders seeking suitable plots within the District.
- 5.106 There is clearly a good level of demand for custom build and self-build housing in the District and the Council is keen to support increased delivery to promote greater diversity in the local housing stock, innovative design and more affordable and sustainable construction.
- 5.107 We will therefore implement a number of measures including:
- Continuing to establish an accurate picture of demand for custom and self-build in the District;
 - Offering support and advice to those wishing to undertake a custom/self-build project in the District;
 - Maintaining a database of those individuals and organisations who have expressed an interest in custom/self-build projects in the District;
 - Working with individuals and self-build groups to help identify suitable and deliverable sites including through the development of Neighbourhood Plans;

²⁴ <http://www.selfbuildportal.org.uk/>

²⁵ Right to Build: supporting custom and self-build (October 2014)

- Endeavouring to offer a suitable plot to those individuals/organisations within a reasonable period of time;
- Utilising affordable housing commuted sums secured under Policy H3 to acquire land in order to promote affordable custom/self-build projects;
- Requiring a proportion of larger housing developments (100 or more dwellings) to set aside a proportion of their site for custom/self-build or to provide other suitable land available off-site for custom/self-build purposes; and
- Encouraging the re-use of existing buildings through custom/self-build projects (see Policies OS2 and H2 and E3).

5.108 Our proposed approach is summarised in Policy H5 below. Where custom build involves or is delivered via a housing association, the scheme should comply with the definition and requirements set out at Policy H3 – Affordable Housing.

Policy H5 – Custom and Self-Build Housing

In order to address the need for custom and self-build housing, the Council will require all housing developments of 100 or more dwellings to include 5% of the residential plots to be serviced and made available for this purpose. This can include the partial completion of units to be made available for self-finish.

As an alternative, the developer may provide serviced land for an equivalent number of custom and self-build plots in another suitable, sustainable location.

If any of the serviced plots/units offered for custom/self-build/self-finish remain unsold after 12 months marketing, they may be built out by the developer.

Only where it can be robustly demonstrated that the provision of on-site plots is unviable or cannot be achieved for some other reason and the developer is unable to make off-site provision will the Council waive the 5% requirement.

All schemes will be considered in accordance with the custom/self-build checklist contained in the Council’s Design Guide.

The Council will generally control access to custom/self-build housing schemes by establishing and maintaining a Register of Interest of those who wish to become custom builders and meet relevant criteria.

Elsewhere, proposals for custom and self-build housing will be approved in suitable, sustainable locations subject to compliance with other relevant policies of this plan including Policies OS2, H2 and E3.

Existing Housing

5.109 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 adaption.

Alterations, extensions and sub-division of existing housing remain a significant source of new homes.

- 5.110 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.
- 5.111 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.
- 5.112 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.
- 5.113 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.
- 5.114 Our approach is set out in Policy H6 below.

Policy H6 – 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 it can be demonstrated they are in an unsuitable location for housing, do not provide satisfactory living accommodation, are not needed to meet an identified local housing need, 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;**
- proposals to replace an existing permanent dwelling which is not of historical or architectural value on a one-for-one basis, provided the character and appearance of the surrounding area is not eroded, there would be no harmful impact on ecology or protected species and the replacement dwelling is of a reasonable scale relative to the original building.**

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

- 5.115 All Councils are required to make adequate provision to meet the housing needs of gypsies, traveller and travelling showpeople. Councils should undertake an assessment of need and develop effective strategies to meet those needs through the identification of land for sites.
- 5.116 They should set 'pitch' targets for gypsies and travellers and 'plot' targets for travelling showpeople. The SHMA (2014) does not address the needs of travelling communities but the Council already has a good idea of how many pitches and plots are needed to meet future needs from a number of previous studies.
- 5.117 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).
- 5.118 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.
- 5.119 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.
- 5.120 In terms of future requirements, in relation to gypsies and travellers, the most recent evidence suggests there is a need for around 20 additional pitches in the period up to 2029. For travelling showpeople there is a need for around 27 plots over the same period. Taking into account existing provision there is a shortfall of around 16 pitches for gypsies and travellers and 21 plots for travelling showpeople.
- 5.121 The Council has not yet allocated any specific sites for travelling communities but intends to do so through an early review of this Local Plan. In the interim, a criteria-based approach will be applied in order to deal with any speculative proposals that are submitted to the Council for consideration. Policy H7 below will apply.

Policy H7 – 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 safe and convenient 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 or AONB designation;**
- not be located in areas at flood risk; and**
- be designed in accordance with Government’s Good Practice guidance**

6. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Our economic objectives include:

- CO3 Promote safe, vibrant and prosperous town and village centres and resist proposals that would damage their vitality and viability or adversely affect measures to improve those centres.**
- CO7 To deliver sustainable economic growth which adds value to the local economy, improves the balance between housing and local jobs, provides a diversity of local employment opportunities, capitalises on economic growth in adjoining areas, improves local skills and work readiness, removes potential barriers to investment and provides flexibility to adapt to changing economic needs.**
- CO8 To achieve a prosperous and sustainable tourism economy.**
- CO12 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.**
- CO13 Improve access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.**

6.1 Having outlined our approach towards housing delivery, in this section of the plan we focus on the economy and how we will promote sustainable economic growth in the District in the period up to 2031. We explain how we will seek to meet our economic objectives particularly through our policies on the provision of land for employment, the rural economy, tourism, community facilities and town centres.

Context

- 6.2 West Oxfordshire has a successful local economy and has weathered the recession relatively well. Economic activity rates are high at 84.5% which is well above the South East average of 79.9% and whilst unemployment has increased in recent years, at 3.4% (modelled), it remains at about half the national average and is lower than the South East average (5.0%).
- 6.3 There are approximately 52,000 jobs in the District and two thirds of these are taken by local residents. A high proportion of jobs are in the manufacturing, engineering, retail and tourism sectors.
- 6.4 The area has particular specialisms including biomedical equipment manufacture and engineering with significant employers such as Abbott Diabetes Care (employs approximately 900 staff), Siemens Magnet Technology (employs approximately 750 staff) and Owen Mumford (employs approximately 600 staff).

- 6.5 The District 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 employing in the order of 4,000 personnel. In addition, there are many small businesses established in the District which are involved in high value activities in service-based and professional sectors. In terms of future growth, it is predicted that future economic growth is expected to come mainly from the financial and business services sector.
- 6.6 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.
- 6.7 Many businesses are located within or next to one of the larger towns and villages where the largest employment sites are generally located but there is also a diversity of mainly smaller employment sites and businesses in the rural area. 72% of businesses employ less than 5 workers and 87% employ less than 10. The formation of new businesses is steady and survival rates are strong.
- 6.8 The District is surrounded by strong and growing economic areas with better strategic transport links – notably Oxford, Swindon, Banbury, Bicester and the area between Didcot and Abingdon which is known as Science Vale. This is an area of high technology science related business and research which incorporates the centres of Milton Park and Harwell Oxford Campus. These areas attract significant numbers of workers from the District which leads to congestion on major roads including the A40.
- 6.9 The 2011 Census identified a net out-flow of 8,000 commuters, with 20,000 people travelling out of the District to work each day and 12,000 travelling in. There is a particularly high net outflow of workers in 'education', 'health' and 'professional scientific and technical' sectors.
- 6.10 Whilst West Oxfordshire's economy is considered to be very resilient with a well-balanced industrial structure, productivity is relatively low. 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 superfast broadband throughout the District is critical to future economic success including rural areas which are harder to reach.
- 6.11 There is a continuing need for modern, good quality business premises and the amount of available employment development land will need to be increased to meet longer term needs. Consideration will need to be given to the replacement of aging employment units on existing sites where there is limited demand, although it will be important to retain a range of unit types to cater for different sectors.

- 6.12 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. The Council will therefore seek to encourage measures designed to improve skills such as the use of employment and skills plans whereby larger developments will be encouraged to implement training initiatives to help up-skill the local workforce e.g. use of apprenticeships.
- 6.13 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, improvements on strategic routes such as the A40 will not be implemented in the short term. We will work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to investigate options to improve access to Oxford such as a potential Park & Ride site at Eynsham and bus priority along the A40 west of Oxford.
 - Provide access to superfast broadband to all premises in the District, including commercial and residential by the end of 2016 and ensure new development is 'broadband ready'. Improve mobile connectivity through working in partnership with providers.
 - Maintain a labour supply with appropriate skills and 'work readiness'
 - 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 rolling out superfast broadband, facilitating homeworking, small rural business premises and diversified farming and land based sectors.
- 6.14 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.
- 6.15 The following policies set out our approach to land for employment, 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 Employment

- 6.16 For the purposes of this section, Employment Development Land and Employment Sites include land and sites with office-based, industrial and warehouse/storage uses (known as the B-use classes). Employment uses under this section do not include housing, care homes, retail or leisure uses which are considered elsewhere in the strategy.
- 6.17 Our evidence indicates the need for more employment development land to allow for the movement and expansion of business, start-ups and inward investment. This will help meet the identified need for modern employment premises, whilst providing a good balance of unit types and ages across the District. Whilst a mix of unit sizes is necessary, the bulk of demand is for smaller units of less than 3,000 square feet and therefore the priority will be towards the provisions of smaller units.
- 6.18 The Council's original economic evidence²⁶ suggested the need for around 60ha of employment 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. More recent evidence²⁷ confirms that this is a reasonable quantum of employment land to plan for having regard to future identified needs and that at any one time the Council should be seeking to have 8 hectares of employment land available.
- 6.19 Around 23 ha is currently identified within existing planning permissions and previous local plan allocations particularly at Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. This includes 10ha to the west of Witney, 5ha in Carterton (at West Oxon Business Park and Land at Ventura Park) and just over 3ha in Chipping Norton, split between three sites (former highway depot, former Parker Knoll factory site and to the north of London Road). However a significant proportion of this land is unavailable for various reasons and as such there is a need to consider additional provision to provide sufficient flexibility.
- 6.20 In this regard, 10ha of employment land is identified as part of the committed scheme to the west of Witney (also known as north Curbridge). Total identified provision is therefore 33 hectares (although as set out above not all of this is currently available).
- 6.21 Small scale schemes and business extensions have accounted for a significant proportion (about 25%) of employment land supply in the past and are expected to continue in towns, villages and the countryside.
- 6.22 It is acknowledged that the economics of business property versus residential development means that the market is unlikely to identify and bring forward significant employment sites without direction and intervention by the Council. At the same time, businesses need options and choices to make investment decisions. The Council will therefore seek to identify future employment sites and work with the landowners to bring them forward as a key strand of its developing economic development strategy.

²⁶ West Oxfordshire Economy Study (NLP 2007)

²⁷ West Oxfordshire Economic Snapshot (CAG 2015)

- 6.23 In Carterton for example, there is a desire locally to increase the amount of employment land available and evidence suggests there is a lack of jobs relative to resident workers. The Council will therefore support in principle the provision of additional employment land at Carterton in suitable locations. The Council will work in partnership to help identify suitable sites. One option is to replace the existing sports pitches on the corner of Monahan Way and Carterton Road with employment land (subject to replacement of the pitches in a suitable location elsewhere). These and other potential opportunities will be investigated further. The overall aim is to provide an additional 10 hectares of employment land at Carterton over and above the 5 hectares already identified.
- 6.24 In Chipping Norton, there is a shortage of available employment land and with just over 3 hectares identified, not all of which is available. As such, this Local Plan seeks to provide up to 4.3 hectares over and above the existing level of provision (i.e. up to 7.3 ha) including 1.5 hectares to be provided as part of the East Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area (SDA).
- 6.25 The Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area has been identified in the Council’s recent economic evidence as being particularly important for the local economy benefitting from a proximity to Oxford and the Oxfordshire ‘knowledge spine’. As such, the local plan sets out a commitment to securing additional employment land provision in this area although at the present time no specific sites have been identified.
- 6.26 In addition to new provision of new employment land, consideration must be given to the existing stock of premises in the District. There are many existing employment sites throughout the District the loss of which 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 employment sites where there is an on-going 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.
- 6.27 In some cases, a continuing business use may not be suitable or economically viable and in these circumstances non-employment uses will be acceptable in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. Where the issue is one of viability the Council will require robust evidence, including evidence of a robust marketing campaign, to demonstrate that continuing employment use has been fully tested before non-employment 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 employment sites the Council will also take account of prevailing economic conditions. During economic downturns the retention of employment sites will be important to aid long term recovery.
- 6.28 Non-employment uses may also be allowed on employment sites where they offer community benefits which cannot otherwise be achieved, provided there are not strong economic reasons why the change of use would be inappropriate. Some small scale retail and other uses such as cafés, crèches, or trade counters, may improve the functionality and attractiveness of an employment site and help to facilitate the refurbishment and

regeneration of premises. Retail and leisure proposals which are ancillary to other uses may be supported on employment sites, otherwise these will be considered in the light of the town centre first approach (See Policy E6).

Policy E1 – Land for Employment

Provision of New Employment Land

Employment Development Land and Employment 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 Employment Development Land provision is identified to meet employment needs:

- Witney - 20ha to the west of Witney.**
- Carterton – 5ha at West Oxon Business Park and Land at Ventura Park with further consideration to be given to additional sites for employment use in appropriate locations as required with the overall objective of securing an additional 10 hectares of employment land in a suitable, sustainable location or locations.**
- Chipping Norton - at least 4.5 hectares and up to 7.3 hectares of employment land located on the eastern side of the town.**
- 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 employment will continue to be monitored and the need for further provision considered through Neighbourhood Plans and any future Local Plan review.

Where justified, new employment allocations may be subject to an Article 4 Direction in the interests of safeguarding local employment opportunities. Proposals for new employment premises and sites may be subject to a condition limiting permitted development rights to protect the employment use.

Existing Employment Sites

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

Non-employment uses on employment sites will be resisted except in the following circumstances:

- where it can be demonstrated that the site or premises are not reasonably capable of being used or redeveloped for employment purposes; or**
- where the site or premises are considered unsuitable on amenity, environmental or highway safety grounds for employment uses; or**

- where the proposed use includes community, leisure, or retail uses which are complementary and compatible to the functioning of the employment site and the local community, and conform with Policy E6 – Town Centres; or

- where substantial community benefits would be achieved by allowing alternative forms of development.

Supporting the Rural Economy

- 6.29 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.
- 6.30 Superfast broadband and mobile telecommunications are crucial to the success of such businesses particularly as home working in the District represents a reasonably high proportion of total employment and has been growing. It is expected that this will continue on an upward trend and in recognition of this, the Council is working to ensure all premises in the District will have access to superfast broadband by the end of 2016.
- 6.31 In the interest of sustainable development, our strategy directs larger businesses and employers to the main service centres which have generally better transport connections, but continues to support the rural economy through a positive approach towards homeworking flexible working practices, small rural business premises and diversifying the land based sector. Tourism and leisure activities, such as walking, cycling and horseriding, are also significant and are considered in the policies that follow.
- 6.32 Development of new small employment sites within and adjacent to Rural Service Centres and Villages will be supported where they are commensurate with the scale and character of the area. Small employment sites are considered those up to 500sqm (gross internal) and should not have unacceptable adverse impacts on local communities and the character of the countryside, particularly in terms of traffic, noise, lighting and visual impact.
- 6.33 The Council supports the re-use of existing buildings to provide new employment premises in accordance with Policy E3. Where new buildings are proposed in rural locations it will need to be demonstrated that the business need cannot be met through the conversion of existing buildings or through the use of existing premises or land in more sustainable locations such as the Main Service Centres. In addition, it will also need to be demonstrated that new buildings will safeguard the amenity of local residents, the character of the countryside and the local highway safety.
- 6.34 Where Live Work premises are proposed or other new business premises which also include residential accommodation, the appropriateness of the residential use will be considered in accordance with the housing policies of this Plan and against all other relevant policies.

- 6.35 The land based sector remains important to protecting home food production which is of increased importance as the world population continues to increase. In addition, this plays an essential role in reducing food miles and 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.
- 6.36 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.
- 6.37 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 on-going additional farm income.
- 6.38 Existing buildings should be reused where feasible and proposals should conform to Policy E3. 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 farm produce and 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.
- 6.39 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 Policy EH1).
- 6.40 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.
- 6.41 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 should also demonstrate that there is a good prospect that the proposed enterprise will be economically viable and is capable of being sustained in the medium to long term.

Policy E2 - Supporting the Rural Economy

New small employment sites in or adjacent to Service Centres and Villages as listed in Table 4.1 will be supported where they are commensurate with the scale of the centre or village and the character of the area.

Elsewhere 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 business need which cannot otherwise be met in a more sustainable location.

Development proposals which are necessary for agricultural production or which make a positive contribution to farm or country estate diversification will be supported where they:

- **are supported by or operate as part of and will continue to add value to a viable core farm/estate business; and**
- **remain compatible and consistent in scale with the farm/estate operation and a countryside location; and**
- **re-use existing buildings where feasible in accordance with Policy E3.**

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 demonstrably undermine the viability and vitality of shopping provision in existing villages. Conditions will be imposed to limit the proportion of goods from other sources.

Development proposals for new or replacement buildings may be subject to a condition to safeguard their use in the interests of the local economy.

The Council will seek to secure access to superfast broadband and improved mobile telecommunications in rural areas and subject to compliance with other relevant policies, will adopt a positive approach to well-designed proposals to facilitate homeworking and flexible working practices (such as live-work units) which maintain the amenity of existing residents. All new development will be required to demonstrate that the necessary infrastructure is in place or will be provided to enable access to superfast broadband.

Re-Use of Non-Residential Buildings

- 6.42 Many non-residential buildings throughout West Oxfordshire are built in the vernacular style (using local building styles and materials) and a high proportion of these are former agricultural buildings. These traditional buildings are a key part of the character and history of West Oxfordshire and many are listed for their architectural or historic interest. Due to modern agricultural practices, many agricultural buildings have become redundant and it is recognised that 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 these buildings reduces the need for new building and creates the opportunity to provide unobtrusive economic activities, community facilities and housing.
- 6.43 In accordance with the overall strategy, conversion of existing buildings to residential use is more appropriate within our service centres and villages with services and facilities (see Policy H2). Elsewhere, re-use for employment, tourism or community uses is generally more suitable than residential use in accordance with Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to avoid isolated new homes in the countryside.
- 6.44 In addition, the re-use of such buildings to employment, tourism or community uses often involves fewer alterations to such buildings or their setting and provides a valuable contribution to maintaining a vibrant rural economy. Many of these buildings cater for small and start-up businesses and therefore their retention is important to the local economy.
- 6.45 Suitable buildings for re-use will be of substantial and permanent construction and the Council may require structural surveys to demonstrate that 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.
- 6.46 It is not the Council's objective to prolong the life of buildings that are harmful to the appearance of an area. Non-traditional or modern agricultural buildings are typically unworthy of retention due to their form and unsympathetic materials. As there are many such buildings throughout the countryside, their general re-use could lead to a dispersed pattern of development contrary to the overall spatial strategy and having an adverse impact on the character and tranquillity of rural areas.
- 6.47 Outside of the provisions of permitted development rights, opportunities for the re-use of non-traditional buildings will be limited to more sustainable locations and where they contribute to farm diversification in accordance with Policy E2. Other proposals for the re-use of non-traditional buildings will only be supported if they can be demonstrated to meet an economic or social need which cannot be met in a more sustainable location and where this significantly enhances the character of the area, such as through the removal of other intrusive and harmful buildings. Non-traditional buildings are unlikely to be suitable for conversion to residential use without major improvement or rebuilding and as such conversion to employment, tourism or community use will normally be more appropriate.

- 6.48 The impacts resulting from the re-use of non-residential buildings will need to be weighed alongside the contribution of the building(s) to the character of the area and the potential local economic and social benefits that may result from re-use. The potential impacts of a building conversion may include visual and landscape impacts, traffic and accessibility impacts and light pollution. In some cases where a building is situated in an isolated and inaccessible location or where it detracts from the character of the surrounding area, re-use may not be appropriate, particularly in the Cotswolds AONB or other designated areas.
- 6.49 If the principle of conversion is accepted, it is important that detailed proposals respect or improve the original character of the building. The condition of the building and the methods of construction should be understood before significant works of repair or alteration are undertaken. Loss of historic fabric should be minimised and repairs should be carried out using appropriate materials. Further guidance is available in the West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD and the English Heritage good practice guidance on the Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings.

Policy E3 - Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings

The Council supports the re-use of traditional buildings for employment, tourism and community uses to support the rural economy where the following criteria are met:

- a) the existing form and design of the building(s) positively contribute to the character of the area, and;**
- b) the building(s) are capable of conversion to the proposed use without necessitating alteration(s) or extension (s) which would harm the form of the original building and without removing features of architectural or nature conservation interest, and;**
- c) 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-traditional buildings including modern farm buildings, for employment, tourism and community uses will be supported within or adjoining Service Centres or Villages, or where it forms part of an agricultural holding and the proposal is part of a farm diversification scheme under Policy E2 or where re-use would address a specific local need which cannot be met in an alternative way. This is provided that the following criteria are met:

- a) the general character and form of the building(s) are not harmful to the surroundings; and**
- b) the scale and type of use is suitable to its location and will not result in excessive alteration(s) or extension(s) to the host building.**

A Sustainable Tourism Economy

- 6.50 Tourism is an important and growing economic sector in West Oxfordshire estimated to be worth over £250 million to the local economy each year (£255m in 2010) and accounting for 12.4% of total jobs in the District. 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.
- 6.51 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.
- 6.52 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.
- 6.53 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 8 - Environmental and Heritage Assets.
- 6.54 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.
- 6.55 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. The intensification or extension of existing camping or caravan sites should achieve positive environmental improvements. 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. In most cases, well designed (non-caravan) holiday units are more appropriate.

- 6.56 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.
- 6.57 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, cycling 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.
- 6.58 The Lower Windrush Valley Project was set up to co-ordinate habitat creation and conservation alongside achieving leisure opportunities such as the Windrush Path which also provide social and economic benefits. 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.
- 6.59 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. The Council will also support the retention and improvement of cycling and walking routes throughout the District, including along the River Thames which incorporates the Thames Path National Trail as well as within the Lower Windrush Valley.
- 6.60 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.

Policy E4 – 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 should be located within or close to Service Centres and Villages and reuse appropriate existing buildings wherever possible. In small villages, hamlets and the open countryside, new tourism and visitor facilities may be justified in the following circumstances:

- **where there is a functional linkage with a particular countryside attraction; or**
- **to secure the diversification of a farm enterprise or country estate in accordance with Policy E2; or**
- **the proposal will re-use an appropriate building in accordance with Policy E3**

Subject to specific locational or functional requirements, the town centre first approach will be applied to tourism and leisure development, including hotels.

Proposals in the Cotswolds AONB should conserve the landscape quality and biodiversity of the area and 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 in partnership with other organisations, 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 provision or extension of permanent base moorings and associated facilities will be allowed in suitable locations off the main river channel, provided these do not harm the ecological, landscape or heritage value of the river and provide an enhancement where possible.

Retention and Development of Local Services and Community Facilities

- 6.61 Local services and community facilities provide for the health and wellbeing, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community. They 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.

- 6.62 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. These also assist in maintaining healthy and inclusive communities, sustainable travel patterns and local employment opportunities. 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.
- 6.63 Through the Localism Act the Government has implemented the Community Right to Bid whereby communities can apply for services and facilities which further the wellbeing or social interest of the local community to be listed as Assets of Community Value. When listed assets become available, the Community Right to Bid provides a delay in the disposal process to give community groups the time to develop a bid and seek to buy the asset when it comes on the open market. The provisions apply to the sale of land or assets not to their use which continues to be decided through the planning process. However, where assets have been listed under the provisions, this reflects the importance of a facility to a community and the Council will have regard to this in the consideration of planning proposals for a change of use.
- 6.64 The Council will continue its approach of resisting the loss of local services and community facilities 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.
- 6.65 For commercially run facilities such as local shops and pubs, the Council considers that a robust marketing exercise is the most transparent way of demonstrating that such facilities are no longer viable. This allows local communities to consider making a bid to run or acquire premises of value through the Community Right to Bid. The Council will publish separate guidance on the required nature of marketing exercises. In seeking to justify the loss of local services or community facilities, applicants will also be required to consider whether existing premises or sites can be adapted to retain a viable community facility or service.

Policy E5 - Local Services and Community Facilities

The Council will support the development and retention of local services and community facilities to meet local needs and to promote social wellbeing, interests, 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;**
- in the case of pubs, shops and other commercially run services and facilities, the existing use is no longer viable and is incapable of being made viable or adapted to retain a viable service or facility including as a community run enterprise. A robust marketing exercise will be required to demonstrate that the use or premises is unviable in accordance with separate guidance published by the Council.**

In considering the loss of local services and community facilities, the Council will have regard to whether a site or facility is registered as an Asset of Community Value.

Town Centres

- 6.66 Town centre uses include retail development, offices (including flexible 'office-hubs') leisure, entertainment, arts, culture, 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.
- 6.67 The 'high street' however faces a number of challenges, not least from changing consumer behaviour including increasing competition posed by the internet and competing centres such as Oxford. Therefore, strategies which support our high streets are even more vital.
- 6.68 Witney is the largest and strongest performing town centre, accounting for 47% of the District's retail distribution sector. It has a strong convenience goods offer (e.g. food and groceries) and comparison goods offer (e.g. clothes, jewellery and electrical items) that attracts shoppers and visitors from a wide area. 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.
- 6.69 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, although there remains considerable scope to improve this further.

- 6.70 Chipping Norton which serves the north of the District was identified as a centre which could benefit from further food store provision and this has now been advanced through recent permissions including an extension to the Co-op and a new Aldi store.
- 6.71 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.
- 6.72 All of these centres are potentially vulnerable to out of centre proposals and changing consumer habits. Our objective is to ensure continued investment in the town centres to enhance their shopping and leisure offer to meet residents' and visitor needs.
- 6.73 Our retail evidence²⁸ 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 a phased extension to the town centre to accommodate new investment.
- 6.74 In Carterton there is significant capacity to 'claw back' trade that is leaking to other town centres and whilst increased food store provision in the town helps to achieve this, there remains a need to enhance the centre's comparison shopping and leisure offer.
- 6.75 Recognising their ability to support significant new town centre development, town centre strategies have been prepared for Witney and Carterton (see Section 9).
- 6.76 The retail evidence also suggests there is some capacity to support additional (non-food) retail floorspace in Chipping Norton in the period to 2029.
- 6.77 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.
- 6.78 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.
- 6.79 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. The Council's²⁹ latest retail study identified that due to the small scale of the centres in West Oxfordshire, impact assessments will be required for proposals over 500m² net sales floorspace where they are not in a centre or in accordance with a local or neighbourhood development plan This

²⁸ West Oxfordshire Retail Needs Assessment Update November 2012

²⁹ West Oxfordshire Retail Needs Assessment Update November 2012

threshold will help protect the town centres from medium and large out of centre food stores 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.

- 6.80 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. Where permission is required we will resist the loss of shops in these areas.
- 6.81 As the trend in 'remote working' is predicted to increase, there is an opportunity for the town centres of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton to cater for those working remotely by providing spaces such as cafes, coffee houses, libraries and more flexible shared spaces. This will help ensure the town centres are more resilient to changing work practices.
- 6.82 In recognition of the importance of complementary uses in town centres, secondary shopping frontages have been designated to support shops and other uses which complement the shopping and leisure role of town centres including cafes, restaurants and other leisure and cultural uses including those that support the evening economy in appropriate locations. However, 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.
- 6.83 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 where permission is required.
- 6.84 The Council will continue to work with communities 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.
- 6.85 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.
- 6.86 Car parking capacity is however nearing capacity in the town centres and therefore the Council have commenced work on a District-wide Parking Strategy due to be completed by the end of 2015 to investigate whether parking provision is meeting current needs and will meet future parking requirements.
- 6.87 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 and access to them, whether through direct provision or financial contributions.

- 6.88 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 Policy E2.
- 6.89 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.

Policy E6 - Town Centres

Town 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 proposals. 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 or that the alternative use will positively contribute to the function, vitality and viability of the town centre.

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. Improvements to the public realm will be sought through high design standards which will apply to all town centre development.

Development proposals which significantly increase car parking demand in our town centres will be expected to make appropriate public car parking provision or equivalent financial contributions.

7. 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.**
- CO10 Ensure that land is not released for new development until the supporting infrastructure and facilities are secured.**
- CO11 Maximise the opportunity for walking, cycling and use of public transport.**
- CO13 Improve access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.**
- CO15 Reduce the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.**
- CO16 Achieve improvements in water and air quality.**
- CO17 Minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.**

- 7.1 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 private vehicles with around 80% of commuting journeys being made by car.
- 7.2 This high level of car use has a number of direct effects including traffic congestion in some locations, which in turn contributes towards poor air quality as well as affecting climate change more generally.
- 7.3 Indirectly, a high percentage of car use also affects health, with increasing rates of obesity in Oxfordshire partly attributed to declining levels of activity. Active forms of travel such as walking and cycling have an important role to play in reversing this trend.
- 7.4 In this section of the plan we set out how we will seek to encourage less car use, whilst recognising that as a predominantly rural area, the private car will remain the dominant form of transport in West Oxfordshire, and as such, improvements to the highway network will be needed.
- 7.5 The following issues are addressed in turn.
 - Location, design and mix of new development;
 - Improvements to the highway network;
 - Public transport including bus and rail;
 - Active travel (walking and cycling); and
 - Parking provision

Location, Design and Mix of New Development

- 7.6 Where new development is located, how it is designed and what different uses it includes can all have a direct influence on people's travel choices.

Location

- 7.7 Whilst we cannot eliminate the need to travel by car, locating development in places where public transport can be easily accessed and walking and cycling is a realistic and safe option can at least help to reduce people's propensity to drive.
- 7.8 In recognition of this, national policy encourages local authorities to promote patterns of development which facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport. More specifically, local plans should ensure that developments which generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised.
- 7.9 This has been a key consideration in the development of the overall plan strategy (see Policy OS2) which seeks to focus the majority of future growth at Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton, where there are already good opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport and the ability to make further, tangible improvements.
- 7.10 In accordance with the overall strategy, we will as a priority seek to locate new development, particularly major 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.
- 7.11 Where appropriate, developments will be required to monitor the levels of travel by all modes and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport through the use of a Travel Plan. We will also require developments that have significant transport implications either in themselves or with other proposals to include a Transport Assessment (TA).
- 7.12 It is important however to recognise that West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural District and that it will not be possible to locate all development where convenient access to public transport, walking and cycling opportunities can be achieved. This situation is acknowledged in national policy which recognises that the opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas and that different policy approaches may be required.
- 7.13 For example other approaches in more isolated rural locations such as the provision of superfast broadband and the promotion of more flexible, home working can play a positive role in helping to reduce the need to travel including by car.

Design

- 7.14 In addition to location, the design of new development also has an important role to play in influencing travel patterns. We have outlined above how superfast broadband can promote home working and other examples of how good design can help include:
- accommodating the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;
 - giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movements;
 - providing access to high quality public transport facilities;
 - creating safe and secure layouts which minimise conflict between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians;
 - incorporating facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles; and;
 - considering the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.
- 7.15 We will therefore seek design solutions that maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport as well as home working through measures such as superfast broadband.

Mix of Uses

- 7.16 Mixed-use developments can have a number of advantages. As well as contributing to the vitality and viability of an area, developments that incorporate a mix of different uses can also help to reduce the need to travel. For example a mix of housing, employment, retail and leisure is likely to have a number of benefits.
- 7.17 Those living in the new houses for example may be able to work or choose to shop in the same location and those visiting the development may be able to benefit from a single, linked trip e.g. going shopping and then to the cinema, rather than having to travel to two separate places.
- 7.18 We will therefore support in principle, the provision of mixed-use developments. Typically this is likely to be on larger development schemes at the main towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton although the principle of mixed-use development will be supported in other accessible and sustainable locations.

Policy T1 – Sustainable Transport

Priority will be given to locating new development in areas with convenient access to a good 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 on the routes around Oxford and the Air Quality Management Areas at Witney and Chipping Norton.

In addition to this;

- 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

- To promote increased home working and telecommuting, all new residential and commercial developments will be required to make provision for superfast broadband.

- Mixed-use developments will be supported in principle in accessible, sustainable locations subject to compliance with other relevant local plan policies.

Proposals for new developments that have significant transport implications either in themselves or in combination with other proposals will be required to include a Transport Assessment (TA), and where necessary a travel plan, in accordance with County Council requirements.

Improvements to the Highway Network

- 7.19 As a largely rural district with a high percentage of car use, the highway network plays a key role in West Oxfordshire and notwithstanding the various measures outlined above, as the private car is likely to remain the dominant form of transport over the plan period, we need to consider what improvements to the highway network are needed.
- 7.20 The main routes within the District 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.
- 7.21 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.
- 7.22 Under this Local Plan the importance of the highway network will continue to be recognised with necessary improvements being identified and safeguarded as appropriate. This will include 'strategic' and 'non-strategic' highway schemes needed to support the level and distribution of growth set out in the plan.

A40

- 7.23 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) also a contributory factor.
- 7.24 Importantly the problems on the A40 lead to the displacement of traffic onto other routes as drivers seek an alternative. This increases the number of cars using the A4095 through Long Hanborough and Bladon (to the detriment of those communities) and in turn, vehicle numbers on the A44 Woodstock Road into Oxford. Further development in the District will put additional pressure on these highly trafficked routes.

- 7.25 The problems with the A40 are long established and in light of this, Oxfordshire County Council has started to develop the A40 Oxford Science Transit project – a central element of the Oxfordshire Growth Deal which will bring together local, national and private funding to focus on four key priority areas identified in the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise’s (LEP) Strategic Economic Plan³⁰ including improved connectivity.
- 7.26 Under the first two rounds of the Local Growth Fund, the Oxfordshire LEP has secured a total of £108.5m funding from central Government with £9.2m of new funding for 2015/16 and £53.7m for 2016/17 to 2021. Of this, £35m will be used to deliver the Oxford Science Transit project which will include measures to expand the integrated public transport system along the Oxfordshire knowledge spine and deliver major enhancements to the A40 between Oxford and Witney.
- 7.27 Oxfordshire County Council has prepared a baseline study looking at current conditions on the A40 and are in the initial stages of considering a package of measures to help alleviate congestion on the A40. At this stage the outcome and timing of any firm recommendations are not yet known but we will continue to work in partnership with the County Council and other relevant partners including the LEP and Oxfordshire Growth Board to ensure the timely delivery of necessary improvements.
- 7.28 Where appropriate, we will seek contributions from new development towards solutions to the A40/A44 congestion problems on the approaches to Oxford.

Witney

- 7.29 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 although recent improvements have been made to the former to help improve traffic flow.
- 7.30 Witney’s 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. A previous scheme known as the Cogges Link Road (CLR) which would have provided a second river crossing was abandoned following a failed compulsory purchase order.
- 7.31 As the District’s main town and focus for growth under this local plan, it is essential that future development at Witney is supported by appropriate and timely investment in new and enhanced highway infrastructure. We have identified a number of ‘strategic’ and ‘non-strategic’ highway improvement schemes needed to support the Local Plan.
- 7.32 In addition to the improvements to the Ducklington Lane junction which have already been completed, the following strategic highway schemes have been identified as being necessary to support the quantum and distribution of planned housing and employment growth at Witney:

³⁰ Add weblink here

- **Downs’s road junction** – the provision of a new ‘all movements’ junction onto the A40 at Downs’ Road to the west of Witney. This will be delivered as part of the committed urban extension to the west of Witney (north Curbridge).
- **Shore’s Green Slip Roads** - the provision of west facing slip roads at the Shore’s Green junction onto the A40 to the east of Witney. This will be delivered as part of the proposed East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy WIT1
- **West End Link** – the provision of a new road link between Woodford Way and West End creating a second river crossing for Witney. This will be delivered as part of the proposed North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy WIT2
- **Northern Distributor Road** – the provision of a new road link between Hailey Road and Woodstock Road via New Yatt Road. This will be delivered as part of the proposed North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy WIT2

- 7.33 Whilst these schemes cannot be expected to eliminate traffic congestion in Witney, they will help to mitigate the impacts of the developments that are proposed to deliver them and as a combined package of measures, will have a number of wider benefits that justify them being safeguarded and taken forward through the Local Plan.
- 7.34 The Shores Green Slip Roads scheme will for example allow those living in the east and north east areas of Witney to access the town centre from the south by using the A40 instead of travelling along Oxford Hill and Bridge Street. Similarly, a proportion of drivers wishing to access the A4095 will be able to do so via Jubilee Way rather than via Bridge Street and Woodstock Road.
- 7.35 The Downs Road junction will have a number of demonstrable benefits not least the fact that the large number of businesses located on the western side of Witney will be able to access the A40 directly instead of using Deer Park Road and Thorney Leys. New residents of the committed urban extension to the west of Witney will also be able to conveniently access the town centre via the A40 should they wish to.
- 7.36 The West End Link and northern distributor road are needed to enable the proposed development of land to the north of Witney. Without these measures in place the development would be likely to have an unacceptable transport impact. Transport modelling also suggests these new links will have a number of wider benefits to Witney.
- 7.37 These four strategic highway schemes will therefore be safeguarded through this local plan and delivered through the development schemes identified. A number of potential ‘non-strategic’ improvements are also likely to be needed in and around the central area of Witney to help facilitate the movement of vehicles including buses through the town.
- 7.38 The Council’s IDP identifies a number of potential improvements and the District Council will continue to work in partnership with the County Council to bring these and other schemes forward as necessary.

Carterton

- 7.39 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 improved access to the town and RAF Brize Norton from the strategic road network. This is seen as critically important to unlocking the town's economic potential and helping to provide a better balance of housing and job opportunities in order to reduce levels of out-commuting. It will also facilitate the movement of vehicles to and from RAF Brize Norton.
- 7.40 The County Council have undertaken a number of studies to help inform the most appropriate way forward and have prioritised the B4477 Brize Norton Road for upgrading to A-road standard. It is estimated that this will cost in the region of £3.5m and will be delivered through a combination of funding including developer contributions. The addition of west facing slip roads to the A40 has been identified as a key part of this project in LTP4 and is likely to cost in the region of £2.8m.
- 7.41 It has been previously suggested that a new link road could also be provided from the B4477 Brize Norton Road to the Witney Road which would take a proportion of vehicular trips away from the northern part of Brize Norton village. The County Council has concluded that in light of the priority being given to the B4477 upgrade to A-road standard, at the present time this link is not needed as it would encourage trips along the Witney Road instead.
- 7.42 Elsewhere in Carterton, the committed development of 316 homes to the north west of Carterton will deliver a new link road from Shilton Road to Elmhurst Way. It is anticipated that this development will be complete within 5-years.

Chipping Norton

- 7.43 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. As a result, an Air Quality Management Area has been designated on Horsefair and Banbury Road, which could act as a constraint to new development if unresolved. 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 (see Section 9).

Other Areas

- 7.44 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 narrow highways through the centre of settlements, 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.
- 7.45 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 as well as the aforementioned problems along the A4095 around Long Hanborough and Bladon.

- 7.46 We will continue to work in partnership with the County Council to identify and deliver highway improvements that are needed to mitigate and support the level and distribution of growth planned for these rural sub-areas through the Local Plan.
- 7.47 Where appropriate and necessary, the District Council will seek provision towards enhanced highway infrastructure from new developments, either directly or through an appropriate financial contribution.
- 7.48 In general terms, 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.

Policy T2 – Highway Improvement Schemes

All development will be required to demonstrate safe access and an acceptable degree of impact on the local highway network.

Development proposals that are likely to generate significant amounts of traffic, shall be supported by a will need to be demonstrated through a Transport Assessment (TA) and where appropriate, a Travel Plan.

Where necessary to mitigate the impact of development and support planned growth, contributions will be sought from new development towards new and/or enhanced highway infrastructure either directly as part of the development or in the form of an appropriate financial contribution.

The following strategic highway infrastructure schemes are proposed to be safeguarded and delivered as part of the committed and allocated urban extensions identified in this Local Plan:

- Downs Road junction, Witney**
- Shores Green Slip Roads, Witney**
- West End Link Road, Witney**
- Northern Distributor Road, Witney**

The Council will continue to support the provision of A-road access to Carterton via the B4477 together with the provision of west facing slip roads at the junction of the A40 and B4477. Contributions will be sought from new development as appropriate.

The Council will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council in relation to securing improvements to the A40 between Eynsham and Oxford including the

potential provision of a new park and ride site at Eynsham and associated bus priority measures. Contributions will be sought from new development and other potential sources of funding as appropriate.

In addition, the Council will work in partnership with the County Council to deliver other 'non-strategic' highway improvements necessary to support the quantum and distribution of growth identified in the Local Plan with contributions to be sought from new development as appropriate.

Public Transport

- 7.49 Improvements to public transport including bus and rail services have a key role to play in encouraging fewer car journeys. If bus and rail can be convenient, frequent, reliable and reasonably priced, people are more likely to make a conscious effort to leave their car at home and catch a bus or train instead.
- 7.50 Whilst the Local Plan has no influence over the price of public transport it can influence how convenient it is to use, how frequently it runs and to some extent how reliable it is.

Bus Services

- 7.51 Parts of West Oxfordshire are well-served by bus services including premium routes between Carterton, Witney, Eynsham and Oxford and between Chipping Norton, Woodstock and Oxford. However, journey times can be unreliable because of congestion within Witney, at Eynsham and approaching Oxford.
- 7.52 Providing high quality, frequent bus services as well as good waiting facilities and up to date service information is critical to encouraging greater passenger use by making public transport an attractive travel choice.
- 7.53 Discussions have been held with Oxfordshire County Council and the main bus operators through the preparation of the 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 and increased frequencies of services.
- 7.54 The County Council have identified a need for a remote park and ride in West Oxfordshire to alleviate congestion on the approaches to Oxford. A potential site has been identified at Eynsham and this is included in the Council's IDP. It is anticipated that the park and ride site will be delivered in conjunction with the improvements that are proposed to the A40 as part of the Oxfordshire science transit project, part of which is focused on tackling the current traffic problems between Eynsham and the Wolvercote roundabout on the edge of Oxford.
- 7.55 These and other potential public transport improvement schemes are identified in the 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, we will ensure that where necessary, new development is supported by

improvements to bus services and facilities either provided directly as part of the development or through an appropriate financial contribution.

Rail Services

- 7.56 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, which included new platforms at Charlbury and Ascott under Wychwood.
- 7.57 There is one passenger station on the Oxford/Birmingham line at Tackley and seven 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.
- 7.58 Notably, none of the three main towns (Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton) is directly served by rail although there are bus links to Kingham station from Chipping Norton and to Long Hanborough from Witney.
- 7.59 Oxfordshire County Council's draft rail 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, particularly in line with the emerging LTP4 and the proposed final rail strategy.
- 7.60 It is important not to consider rail and bus services separately because in some instances it may be possible to deliver an integrated approach with seamless transition from one journey which may be by train onto the next which may be by bus. Making it easier to access public transport by bike or on foot is also important.

Community Transport

- 7.61 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).
- 7.62 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.

Active Travel (Walking and Cycling)

- 7.63 Alongside improvements to public transport, encouraging more active forms of travel including walking and cycling is essential to reducing car use. It also has the added benefit of encouraging more healthy lifestyles and helping to tackle health concerns including rising rates of obesity.
- 7.64 The provision of high quality, well-designed and maintained pedestrian and cycle facilities as well as the provision of information such as clear signage is critical to encouraging more walking and cycling. The planning system has a key role to play in this regard by ensuring that new development is supported by appropriate levels of investment in new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle infrastructure.
- 7.65 At present, West Oxfordshire is reasonably well-served in terms of walking and cycling facilities, although most of these linkages are focused on the main towns of Witney and Carterton including in particular routes installed as part of the Madley Park and Shilton Park developments.
- 7.66 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. Increased traffic levels on these quiet roads may prevent vulnerable road users from accessing these routes safely.
- 7.67 We have in discussion with Oxfordshire County Council, 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).
- 7.68 The County Council have also identified the potential 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.
- 7.69 We will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, developers and other relevant partners to deliver attractive, new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes and facilities within the District including through new development.

Policy T3 – Public Transport, Walking and Cycling

All new development will be located and designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

Where opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport are more limited, other measures will be sought to help reduce car use as appropriate (e.g. measures to promote home working or the opportunity for linked trips e.g. through mixed-use development).

New development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of new and/or enhanced public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure to help encourage modal shift and promote healthier lifestyles.

Development that fails to make adequate provision of measures to encourage the use of non-car modes of transport will not be favourably considered.

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

- Increase the use of bus, rail and community transport through the provision of improved services, facilities and information including specific schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan, the IDP and the draft Rail and Bus Strategies for Oxfordshire; and**
- Provide safe and convenient travel within and between the network of towns and villages in West Oxfordshire, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users, users of public and community transport including specific schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan and IDP**

Parking Provision

- 7.70 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.
- 7.71 In this regard 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.
- 7.72 We can also influence parking through our approach towards the provision of off-street parking. National policy suggests that local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate provision for motorcycles. In addition to the quality and cost of parking provision, we can influence the amount of parking available.
- 7.73 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.

- 7.74 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.
- 7.75 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. The Council is preparing a parking strategy that will help to inform future decisions about the quantum and distribution of parking needed within the District.
- 7.76 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.

Policy T4 – Parking Provision

The Council will work with partners to provide, maintain and manage an appropriate amount of off-street public car parking, particularly to support our town and village centres and to address issues of congestion and air quality.

Parking in new developments will be provided in accordance with the County Council's adopted parking standards and should be sufficient to meet increasing levels of car ownership.

Proposals for new off street public car parking areas will be supported in accessible locations where they would help to ensure the continued vitality and viability of town centres, where they would support visitor and tourist facilities and attractions or where the local environment is being seriously damaged by on-street parking and alternative parking provision is essential.

Development proposals which significantly increase car parking demand will be expected to make appropriate public car parking provision or equivalent financial contributions.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL AND HERITAGE ASSETS

Our environmental objectives include:

- CO9 Promote inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free communities.**
- CO14 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.**
- CO15 Reduce the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.**
- CO16 Achieve improvements in water and air quality.**
- CO17 Minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.**

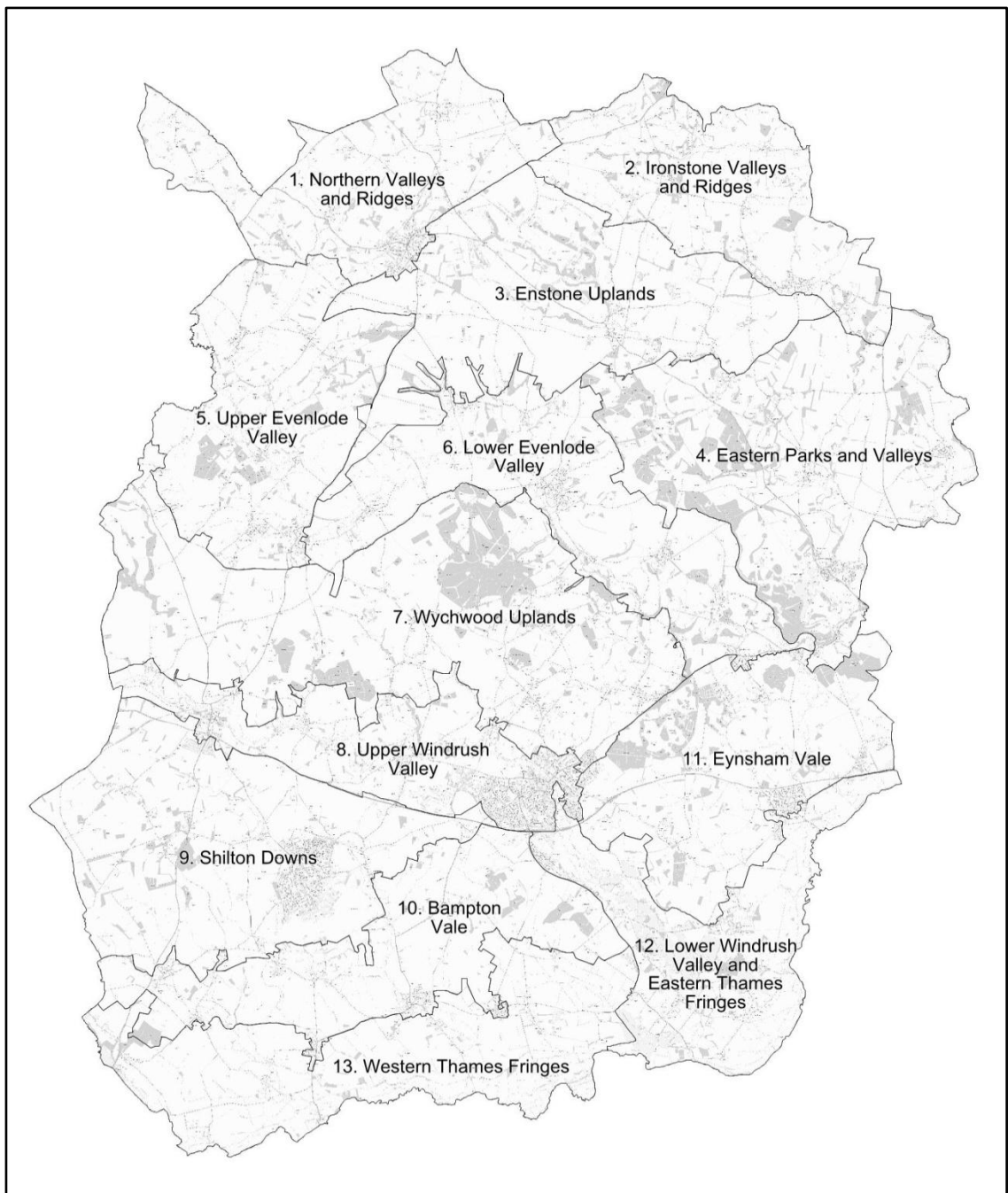
- 8.1 A key characteristic of West Oxfordshire is the quality and diversity of its natural and historic environment. One of the biggest challenges for the Local Plan is to protect, sustain and enhance this environment, while at the same time accommodating necessary development. This section sets out 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

- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 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 development would affect its setting. Advice from the Cotswolds Conservation Board, including the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan (endorsed by the District Council as supplementary guidance and is a material consideration) and Landscape Character Assessment, Strategy and Guidelines, is invaluable.

8.4 Natural England has undertaken a high-level assessment of the country's landscapes, identifying and describing the distinct areas and highlighting opportunities in useful profile publications. West Oxfordshire falls within two of these National Character Areas: NCA 107 Cotswolds and NCA 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales (latest profiles published March 2013 and June 2014 respectively). Complementing these profiles, a more detailed local character assessment is included in the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (WOLA) which describes the landscape characteristics of different areas within the District, giving guidance on landscape enhancement, planning and development. Figure 8.1 shows the 13 Character Areas identified in the assessment.

Figure 8.1 – Landscape Character Areas



- 8.5 The NCA profiles and the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment together with guidance in the West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD, 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.
- 8.6 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).
- 8.7 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.
- 8.8 It is important that these existing natural features and their settings are protected, managed and, where appropriate, supplemented by new planting of local native species, at the individual site-scale through to the wider landscape-scale. As an example of an irreplaceable habitat, ancient woodland, in particular, needs special care with buffers of additional planting of native trees of at least 15 metres between woodland and development³¹.
- 8.9 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 and will feed into the early review of this Local Plan. In the interim, the CPRE's Tranquillity Map of Oxfordshire is a useful guide in assessing areas of tranquillity.
- 8.10 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 restore the landscape character and mix of habitats associated with the Royal Hunting Forest of Wychwood). These three areas, together with the Cotswolds AONB, will continue to be identified for special landscape protection and enhancement (see Figure 8.2).

³¹ Natural England Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland 2012

Figure 8.2 – Special Landscape Policy Areas



Policy EH1 - Landscape Character

The quality, character and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's natural environment, including its landscape, cultural and historic value, 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 and their settings, such as stone walls, trees, hedges, woodlands, rivers, streams and ponds. Conditions may be imposed on development proposals to ensure every opportunity is made to retain such features and ensure their long-term survival through appropriate management and restoration.

Proposals which would result in the loss of features, important for their visual, amenity, or historic value will not be permitted unless the loss can be justified by appropriate mitigation and/or compensatory measures which can be secured to the satisfaction of the Council.

When determining development proposals within or impacting upon the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, great weight will be given to the conservation 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 Project Area.

Biodiversity

- 8.11 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, which support a wide range of legally protected species and other wildlife. 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 SAC³².
- 8.12 However, the bulk of 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 decline of biodiversity by 2020), it is important that

³² 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 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.

biodiversity is carefully considered in relation to all development proposals. British Standards BS 42020 'Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development', provides clear guidance on biodiversity conservation and enhancement, the application of which is encouraged by the Council as good practice.

- 8.13 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).
- 8.14 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 protection³³) and in combination to wider ecological networks. Within the NPPF, Section 11 and Paragraph 118 are of particular relevance, along with the accompanying PPG.
- 8.15 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, meadows, ponds and floodplains 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.
- 8.16 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 8.3). 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 UK priority habitats.
- 8.17 In planning terms, they can be considered as potential areas of ecological constraint but, more positively, as areas of ecological opportunity. Development proposed within or close to a CTA should identify the biodiversity constraints and opportunities and show how the proposal will help to achieve the aims of the CTA. West Oxfordshire target areas include the Upper Windrush and Wychwood Forest.

³³ ** 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.

- 8.18 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 through partnership working. The Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership – Wild Oxfordshire – will help to identify and establish new, locally determined NIAs in the county. The CTAs, Strategic Green Infrastructure and Natural Character Areas are likely to form the core of these NIAs. The Cotswolds Ecological Networks Partnership has already identified two Cotswolds NIAs; extensive parts of West Oxfordshire are covered by their Cotswolds Valleys NIA.
- 8.19 Figure 8.4 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. In 2014 the important sites in West Oxfordshire included one international site (part of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation), 31 national sites (two national nature reserves and 29 Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and 123 local sites (16 Local Geological Sites, 2 Local Nature Reserves, 98 Local Wildlife sites (LWSs) and 7 proposed LWSs). The number and location of sites change over time as surveys and re-surveys take place. A living list of Local Wildlife Sites is available on the Thames Valley Environmental Records website³⁴.

³⁴ <http://www.tverc.org>

Figure 8.3 – Conservation Target Area and Nature Improvement Areas

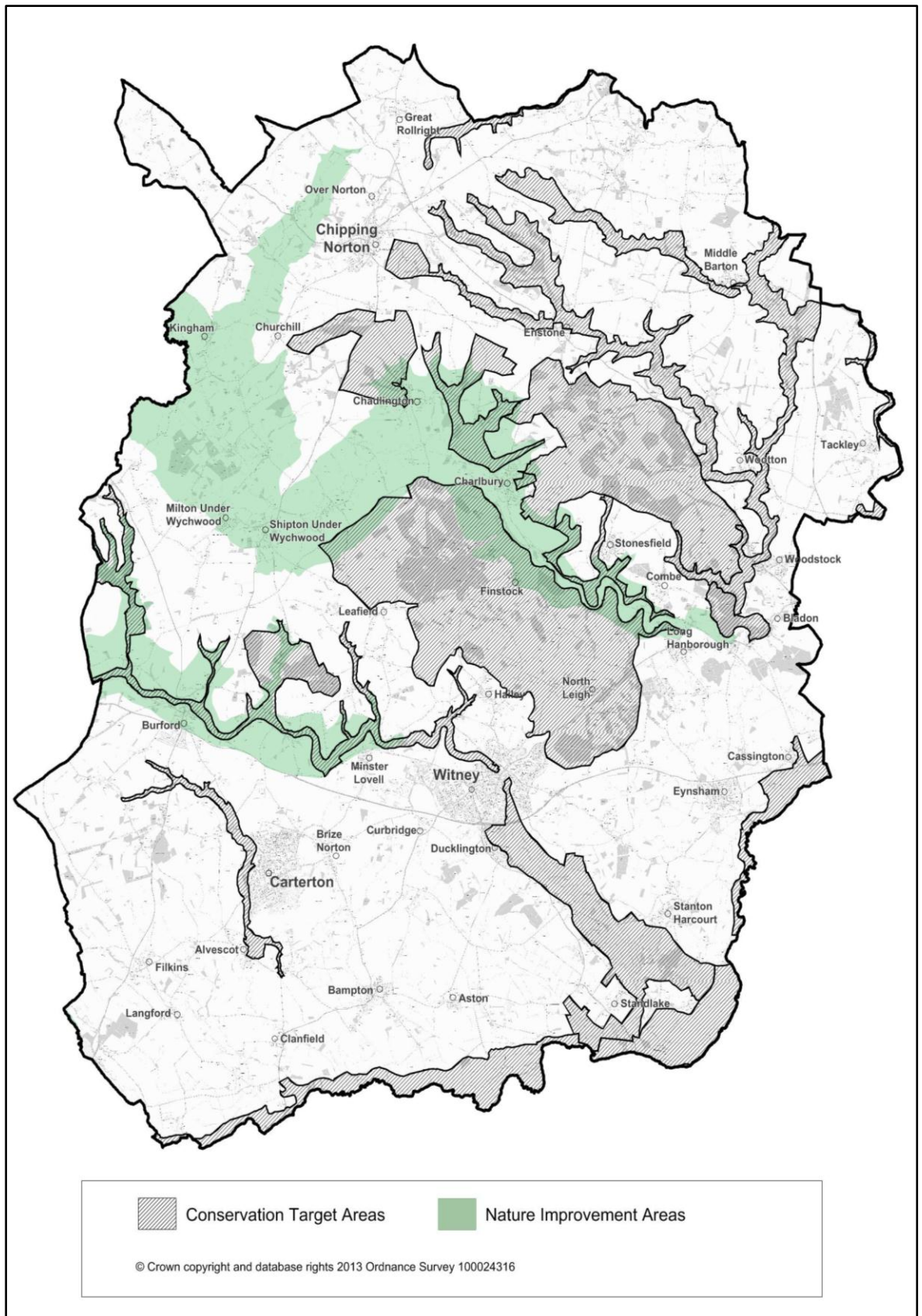
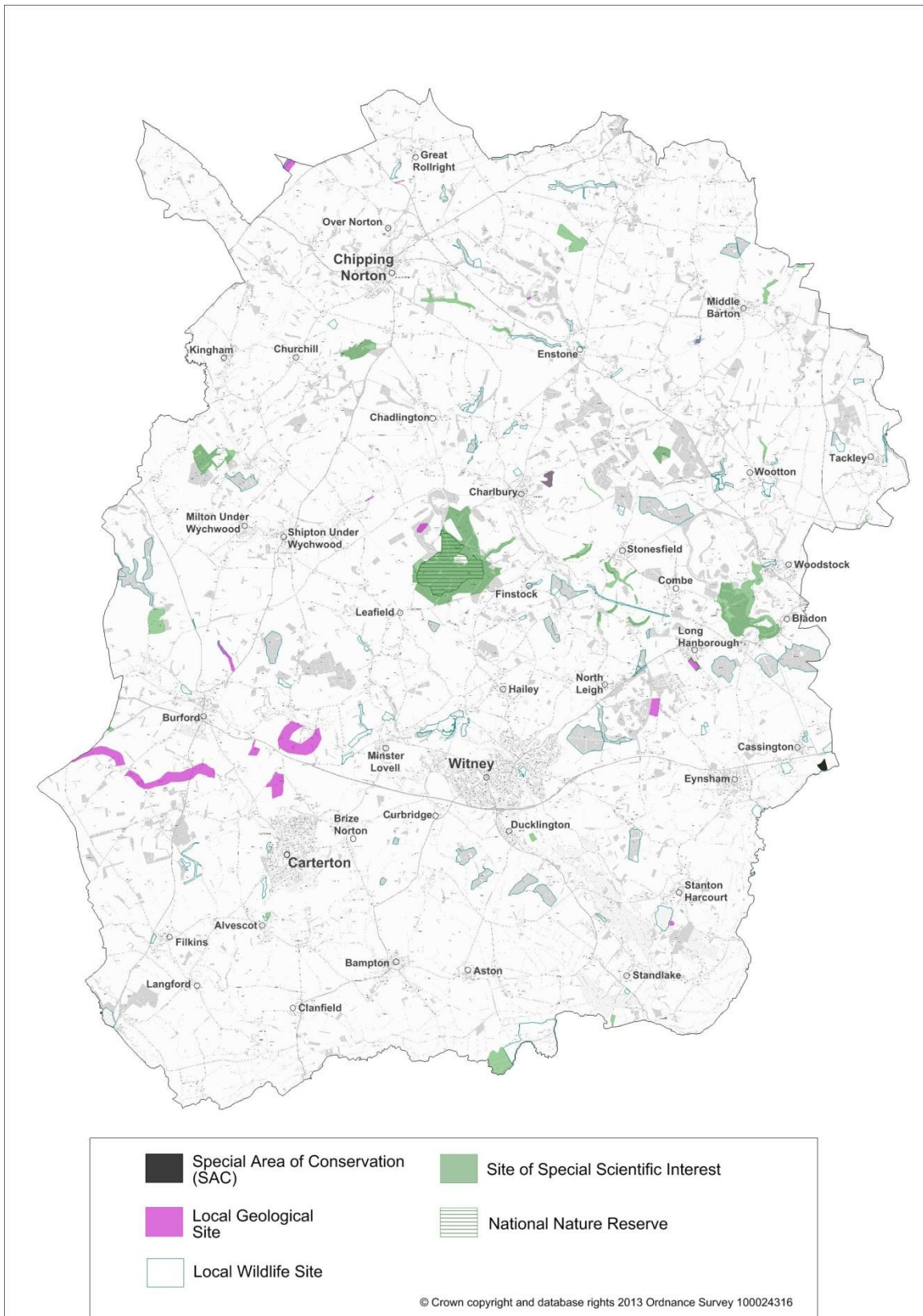


Figure 8.4 – Local Ecological Networks



- 8.20 Development proposals affecting or related to these and other ecologically important areas will be expected to ensure that any potential harm is avoided. However in exceptional cases when harm cannot be avoided then the proposed works will need to be fully mitigated and compensated in order to include enhancements. Some potential areas of improvement are identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). In order to ensure there is no net loss to biodiversity, the incorporation of biodiversity in and around developments will be a requirement.
- 8.21 Only when all methods of avoidance and on-site mitigation have been fully explored and proven to the LPA that they cannot be satisfactorily achieved on site will biodiversity offsetting be considered for an exceptional development case. Biodiversity offsetting is a mechanism used to secure compensation for impacts of development for the creation or restoration of important habitats elsewhere. Not all habitats, however, can be re-created; ancient woodland, for example, is irreplaceable, having evolved over centuries, with a complex interdependency of geology, soils, hydrology, flora and fauna.
- 8.22 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 integral bird and bat boxes, such as planting of native trees, shrubs and wildflowers and providing wildlife friendly landscaping such as green walls, roofs and balconies.

Policy EH2 - Biodiversity

The biodiversity of West Oxfordshire shall be protected and enhanced to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity, including by:

- giving sites and species 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, either alone or in combination, on the Oxford Meadows SAC, particularly in relation to air quality and nitrogen oxide emissions and deposition;**
- protecting and mitigating for impacts on priority habitats and protected species and their importance individually and as part of a wider network;**
- avoiding loss, deterioration or harm to locally important wildlife and geological sites and sites supporting irreplaceable habitats (including ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees), UK priority habitats and priority species, except in exceptional circumstances where the importance of the development significantly and demonstrably outweighs the harm and the harm can be mitigated through appropriate measures and a net gain in biodiversity is secured;**
- ensuring development does not prevent the achievement of the aims of the Conservation Target Areas (CTAs);**

- promoting the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, particularly within the CTAs;

- taking all opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of the site or the locality, especially where this will help deliver networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure and UK priority habitats and species targets and meet the aims of Conservation Target Areas;

All developments will be expected to provide towards the provision of necessary enhancements in areas of biodiversity importance.

Public Realm and Green Infrastructure

- 8.23 Green infrastructure consists of green areas in both rural and urban settings and fulfils a wide variety of environmental, social and economic functions. Green infrastructure can include nature reserves, designated sites, recreation grounds, parks and open spaces, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and many other green areas. Good quality, accessible space is highly valued by the public. The condition of the public realm (which includes areas as diverse as Burford High Street, Woodstock's Market Square 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 and bring neighbourhoods together, contributing to the economic and social wellbeing of an area. Often no single authority, agency or owner has control over – or responsibility for – the management of such areas. Their provision, maintenance and enhancement forms a fundamental aspect of good design (see also Policy OS4). Such areas can be further enhanced by the provision of public art projects (usually created by visual artists and craftspeople for a specific site).
- 8.24 Protecting and securing improvements to the public realm is an important component to achieving sustainable communities. The NPPF emphasises that development should promote a network of public places and green spaces which are attractive, accessible, safe, uncluttered, work effectively for all users and provide a high quality landscape/townscape. (The design section of PPG provides useful additional guidance³⁵.) Further benefits come from these areas being integrated through walkways, cycleways, rights of way, open spaces and natural and green corridors.
- 8.25 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.

³⁵ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/design/>

- 8.26 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 Cotswolds Save Our Magnificent Meadows Campaign, the Chimney Meadows Living Landscape Project and Conservation Target Areas. A Green Infrastructure Study (2011) has been undertaken for West Oxfordshire and 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.
- 8.27 The 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.

Policy EH3 – Public Realm and Green Infrastructure

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

Public realm and publicly accessible green infrastructure network considerations should be integral to the planning of new development. New development should not result in the loss of existing green infrastructure unless it can be demonstrated that replacement provision can be provided which will improve the green infrastructure network in terms of its quantity, quality, accessibility and management arrangements.

Development proposals will be expected to provide or contribute towards the provision of necessary improvements to the District’s multi-functional network of green infrastructure (including Conservation Target Areas) and open space, providing opportunities for walking and cycling within the built-up areas and connecting settlements to the countryside through a network of footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes.

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.**

**** Regard will be had to the Open Space Study (2013) and Playing Pitch Strategy (2014) for West Oxfordshire**

Sport, Recreation and Children's Play

- 8.28 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.
- 8.29 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 Policy EH3 - Public Realm and Green Infrastructure and Policy OS5 - Supporting Infrastructure).
- 8.30 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 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, having regard to the West Oxfordshire Open Space Study (2013) and Playing Pitch Strategy (2014).

Decentralised, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development

- 8.31 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 (see Policy OS3). 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.
- 8.32 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.

- 8.33 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.
- 8.34 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.
- 8.35 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.
- 8.36 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.
- 8.37 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.
- 8.38 In the Cotswolds AONB small scale renewable energy development is encouraged both by the Council and by the Cotswolds Conservation Board, provided it is consistent with conserving and enhancing the landscape and natural beauty of the area. In 2014 the Board published a Renewable Energy Position Statement which expands upon policies in the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2012-18 and includes guidance on where renewable energy developments should be located.

- 8.39 The Board recognises that different forms of renewables require different infrastructure, which in turn has different landscape and other implications; what might be appropriate development within the AONB and its setting must be based on full account being taken of the likely impacts, through the production of thorough landscape and visual impact assessments and environmental impact assessments, as necessary. Overall, due to the potential significant adverse effect on natural beauty, medium to large scale renewable energy developments will not generally be appropriate within the AONB (or in locations beyond where such development would affect its setting and character).
- 8.40 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.
- 8.41 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 include the provision of 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.
- 8.42 With challenging renewable electricity and heat targets, decentralised energy systems will become increasingly important, especially within the allocated Strategic Development Areas. A feasibility assessment will be required for such sites. Given the wider local benefits, the use of woody biomass will, in particular, need to be investigated.

Policy EH4 - Decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy development

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

Renewable or low-carbon energy development should be located and designed to minimise any adverse impacts, with particular regard to conserving the District's high valued landscape and historic environment. 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).**

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

An energy assessment or strategy which assesses viability for decentralised energy systems, including consideration of the use of local wood fuel biomass and other renewable energy initiatives will be required for:

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

Water and Flood Risk

- 8.43 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.
- 8.44 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.
- 8.45 The Council is working with other partners as part of Defra's catchment based approach to improving the quality of the water environment. West Oxfordshire falls within two catchment areas: the Evenlode and the Windrush.
- 8.46 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.
- 8.47 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 Level 1 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.
- 8.48 A Level 2 SFRA for Witney has been produced in relation to the north Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) and West End Link providing further detail on flood risk in the town. A countywide study has also been undertaken into flooding from surface runoff,

groundwater and ordinary watercourses: the Oxfordshire Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment.

- 8.49 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 (that cannot be met in any other way), an absence of suitable alternatives and flood risk can be satisfactorily addressed.
- 8.50 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.
- 8.51 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.
- 8.52 Both elements of the test will have to be passed for development to be allocated or permitted.
- 8.53 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.
- 8.54 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. In 2014 the Government made clear that it expected SuDS to be provided in all new development, being given particular priority for developments in areas at risk of flooding.
- 8.55 The use of SuDS will be required as part of all major development, unless demonstrated to be inappropriate. An important consideration in the provision and design of SuDS is that there are clear arrangements in place for ongoing maintenance. Advice should be sought from Oxfordshire County Council, the relevant lead local flood authority.

8.56 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. Policy OS3 - Prudent Use of Natural Resources seeks to maximise the efficient use of water.

Policy EH5 – 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 (including sewer flooding and surface water 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 manage 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.**

Environmental Protection

8.57 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

- 8.58 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.
- 8.59 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 Policy EH2 - Biodiversity).

Contaminated Land

- 8.60 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.
- 8.61 Contamination of land can also have an impact on water quality. The Environment Agency will seek appropriate controls to protect the water environment, in particular with the Source Protection Zone for Chipping Norton. 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

- 8.62 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 Policy OS3 advocate the prudent use of natural resources including soils. (Defra's Code of practice on the sustainable use of soils provides advice to the construction sector on the protection of soil resources.) In addition, Policy EH6, 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

- 8.63 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.
- 8.64 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

- 8.65 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

- 8.66 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).

Water Resources

- 8.67 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.
- 8.68 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, and in particular the Source Protection Zone for Chipping Norton potable water abstraction, needs to be achieved at all times.

Policy EH6 - Environmental Protection

Proposals which are likely to cause pollution or 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) the elevations 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.

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

- 8.69 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 and in particular on the water environment with regard to loss due to evaporation. Increased emphasis must be placed upon more sustainable construction methods than use of primary land-won aggregates.
- 8.70 The future minerals strategy for Oxfordshire is being pursued by the County Council through its Minerals and Waste Development Framework. We will continue to engage with the County Council in relation to this issue. 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

- 8.71 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 re-cycling bins (Policy OS3).
- 8.72 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 (Dix 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.

- 8.73 The need for and location of new waste management facilities will be addressed through the County Council’s Minerals and Waste Development Framework. Some new facilities may be satisfactorily accommodated on existing employment sites.

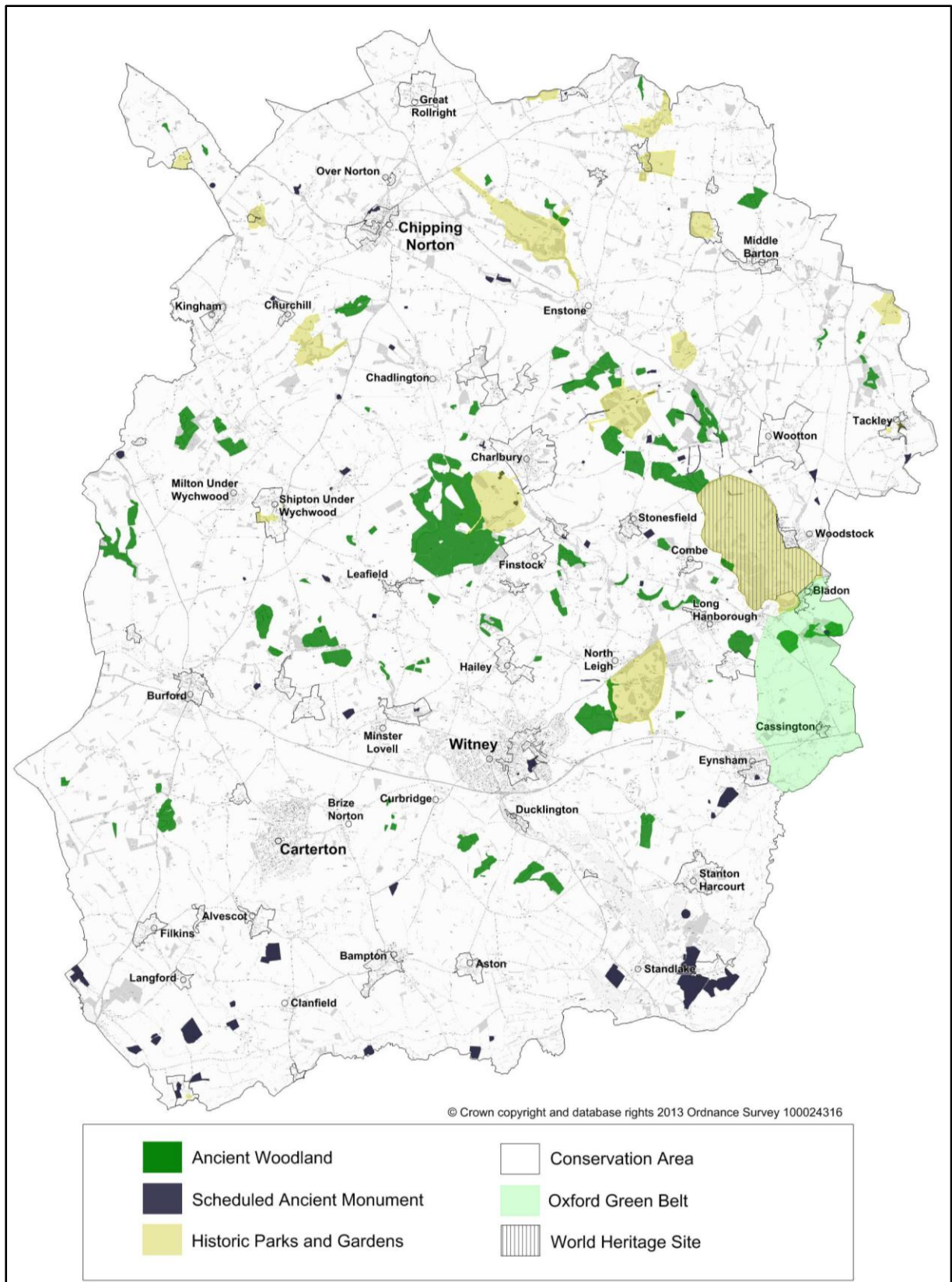
Historic Environment

- 8.74 West Oxfordshire is fortunate to benefit from an extremely rich and varied historic environment. This plays a key role in defining the distinctive character of the District and the individuality of its settlements, contributing greatly to the area’s culture, economy and tourism and 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, cultural or artistic interest: all contribute to local identity.
- 8.75 Features of heritage significance including buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and landscapes and their settings are referred to as ‘heritage assets’. Heritage assets may be classed as ‘designated’ or ‘non-designated’. Designated heritage assets have statutory protection and include Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings. Non-designated heritage assets, such as locally listed buildings, do not have statutory protection, but nonetheless represent a crucially important aspect of the District’s heritage, and play a defining role in the local character of an area.
- 8.76 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, Conservation Area Appraisals and existing and emerging Historic Landscape Characterisation studies provide further analysis of the District’s character.
- 8.77 Designated heritage assets in West Oxfordshire include the Blenheim World Heritage Site, almost 3,200 Listed Buildings (2934 of Grades II interest, 211 Grade II* and 43 Grade I), 50 Conservation Areas, 149 Scheduled Monuments and 12 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens (see Figure 8.5). The significance of these assets is inherent in their designation, and some features of the assets form part of the designation record. Figure 8.6 shows the distribution of heritage assets within West Oxfordshire.

Figure 8.5: Registered Parks and Gardens of special historic interest

Blenheim Palace	I	Kelmscott Manor	II
Chastleton House	II*	Kiddington Hall	II
Cornbury	II*	Rousham	I
Cornwell Manor	II	Sandford Park	II
Ditchley	II*	Sarsden House	II*
Eynsham Hall	II	Shipton Court	II
Great Tew	II	Swerford	II
Heythrop	II*	Tackley	II*

Figure 8.6 – Heritage Assets in West Oxfordshire



- 8.78 Non-designated heritage assets are features of the historic environment that make a fundamental contribution to the distinctive character and appearance of the area in which they are located (in terms of their siting, design and use of materials). 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, taking account of a range of criteria, such as age, historic interest, building materials, architectural quality, original features of note and the contribution they make to their immediate and wider setting.
- 8.79 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment is a critically important part of sustainable development. Heritage assets - whether designated or non-designated - are irreplaceable features of the historic environment, whose effective conservation delivers a wide range of social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits. At the national level there is a presumption that heritage 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 generations³⁶.
- 8.80 This general principle of protection and enhancement will apply in West Oxfordshire. When considering development proposals there will therefore be a strong presumption in favour of protecting, sustaining and enhancing our heritage assets and their settings. The weight to be attached to that presumption, when assessed against meeting other needs, will be dependent on:
- The significance of the heritage asset: whether it is a designated heritage asset (and its position in the hierarchy of designated assets) or a non-designated heritage asset;
 - Its value in terms of its historic and architectural interest and appearance; and
 - The contribution of that part of the asset to be affected by the proposed development to the significance of the heritage interest, appearance and setting of the asset as a whole.
- 8.81 If the heritage asset is designated and has statutory protection, planning judgements will be set against the requirements of the relevant national legislation. If the heritage asset is non-designated, planning judgements will/ should be made on the basis of a thorough assessment of the historical and architectural interest, appearance and setting of the heritage asset.
- 8.82 The setting of a heritage asset, i.e. the surroundings within which it is experienced, can be an important element of its significance. Views of and from an asset will contribute to this but setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, vibration, smell and lighting from other nearby land uses. The historic relationship between places can also influence the setting. For example, the buildings in Witney associated with the blanket industry and wool trade are not all visible from each other yet nonetheless have a historic connection that affects the significance of each. When assessing development proposals within the setting of a heritage asset, careful consideration must be given to the implications of cumulative change.

³⁶ Section 12 of the NPPF and national guidance, for example, from Historic England, Natural England and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, are particularly relevant.

- 8.83 In order 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 and its setting, developers 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 full and proper understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting;
 - The heritage asset is being put to the optimum viable use consistent with its physical conservation, and the conservation of its character and setting;
 - Opportunities to sustain, enhance, to better reveal or avoid or minimise harm to the significance of the asset have been taken; and
 - The need to be met by the development could not be met in a more beneficial or less harmful way.
- 8.84 As a general principle, in assessing the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, the more important the asset, the greater the weight given to its conservation. For designated heritage assets, all levels of harm, including total destruction, minor physical harm, and harm through change to setting should be avoided. Harm to designated heritage assets will/ should be permitted only in exceptional circumstances, and would require a clear and convincing justification on the grounds of public benefits that outweigh that harm, taking account of the great weight that must be given to conservation.
- 8.85 In line with the NPPF, only in ‘exceptional’ circumstances should there be substantial harm to or loss of Grade II listed buildings and registered parks and gardens; and only in ‘wholly exceptional’ circumstances in the case of assets of the highest significance, including Grade I or II* listed buildings and registered parks and gardens, and Blenheim World Heritage Site. A separate policy on the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site is set out in Section 9 (Policy EW1 applies).
- 8.86 Substantial harm to, or total loss of, the significance of a designated asset should be avoided, and would only be approved in exceptional circumstances, and if substantial public benefits can be demonstrated that outweigh the harm or loss or all four tests set out in paragraph 133 of the NPPF can be met (see footnote to Policy EH7). A key factor in determining what constitutes substantial harm is if the adverse impact goes to the heart of why an asset is worthy of designation and, thus, special protection.
- 8.87 New development in Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets should preserve or enhance their setting, particularly those features which make a positive contribution to the character of the area and better reveal the significance of an asset.
- 8.88 Information submitted in support of development proposals affecting heritage assets in West Oxfordshire should include reference, where available, to the ‘historic environment record’ including: statutory designations; the Council’s Conservation Area Appraisals and the West Oxfordshire Design Guide; known archaeological sites and monuments kept by the

Oxfordshire County Council; local consultations, and detailed exploratory and survey work, including archaeological field evaluations and building recording, 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.

- 8.89 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 affected, and of any archaeology or historic fabric revealed in the course of development. The record and any recovered archaeological artefacts will need to be maintained to contribute to knowledge and understanding of the asset.
- 8.90 Policy EH7 summarises the Council's overall approach to the District's historic environment. (Policies OS2 and OS4 address the historic environment within the context of the Plan's overall strategy.) Sustainable development means safeguarding and seeking improvements to the quality of this historic environment and its heritage assets for this and future generations. One of the best ways to secure the upkeep of many heritage assets is to keep them in active, viable and appropriate use, where this can be achieved without causing harm to the character, fabric or setting of the heritage asset, and where a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness can be successfully maintained. This 'constructive conservation approach' requires a thorough understanding of what makes a site important, and collaborative working between the local authority, owners, local community, developers, architects and other specialists (such as Historic England), in order to manage change in the most appropriate way.
- 8.91 The Council's aim to conserve and enhance our historic environment and local distinctiveness, and to positively manage change, will be informed by a series of measures which will help to improve the understanding of the District's historic environment. These include the review of the West Oxfordshire Design Guide, a programme of conservation area reviews, appraisals and management plans, the designation of new conservation areas where appropriate, and the identification of further non-designated heritage assets and the publication of local lists. Article 4 Directions will be used to protect areas where there is clear justification to introduce stricter controls.

Policy EH7 – Historic Environment

All development proposals should conserve or enhance the special character and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's historic environment, and preserve or enhance the District's heritage assets, and their significance and settings.

Proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets, such as locally listed buildings, will be assessed on the basis of the significance of the heritage asset and the scale of harm or loss to that heritage asset. The Council's Conservation Area Appraisals should be used as a guide when assessing the significance of a heritage asset.

Proposals that will lead to harm to the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset or its setting will be resisted, unless a clear and convincing justification can be made to outweigh that harm.

Proposals that will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of the significance of a heritage asset or its setting, will be refused, unless the harm is outweighed by substantial, demonstrable public benefits or all the four tests set out in the NPPF are met*.

* Paragraph 133 of the NPPF:

1. There is no viable use of the heritage asset that can be found in the medium term, including through marketing to find alternative owners
2. The heritage asset is preventing all reasonable uses of the site
3. Public support for or ownership of the asset is demonstrably not possible; and
4. The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use

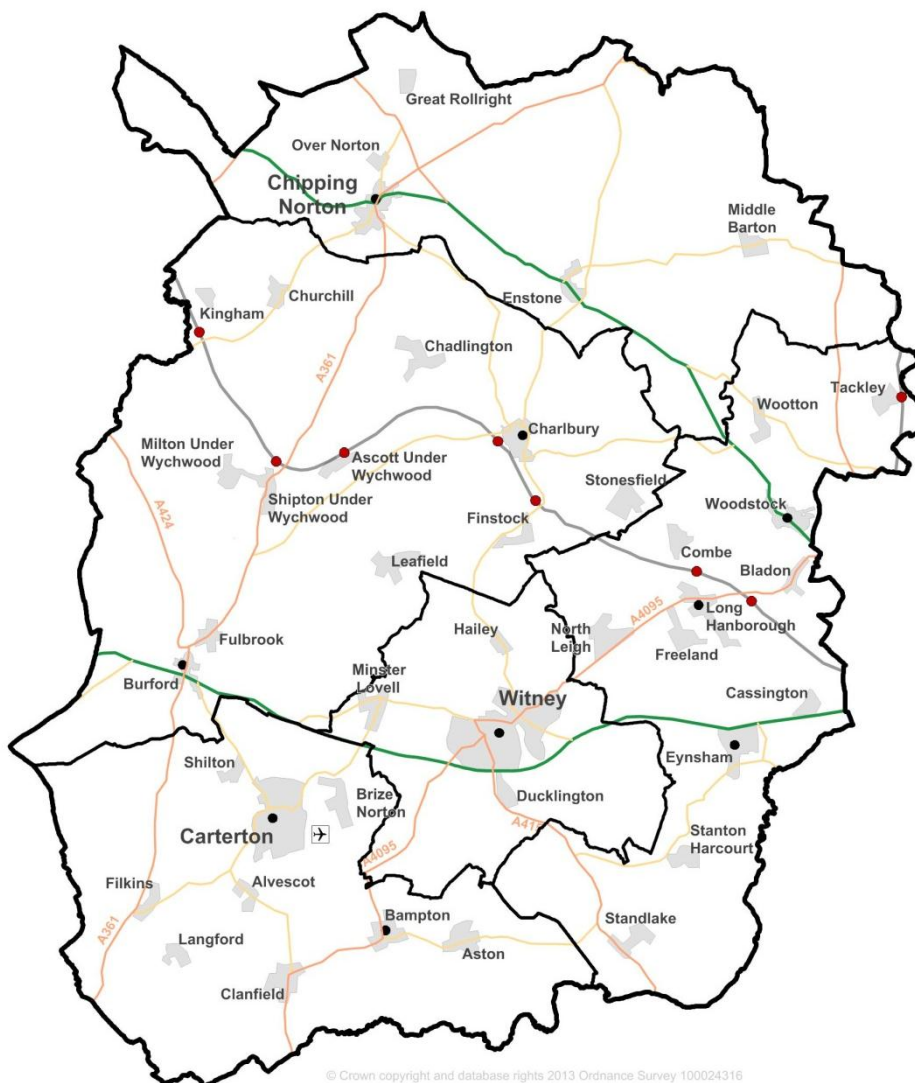
9. Strategy at the Local Level

9.1.1 For the purpose of this Local Plan, the District has been divided into 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

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

Figure 9.1 – Sub-Area Plan



9.1.3 In this section of the Local Plan we consider each sub-area in turn, identifying the key issues, challenges and opportunities facing them and setting out the strategy for addressing these.

Witney Sub-Area

- 9.2.1 This is the smallest of the five-sub areas covering an area of around 7,000 hectares. However, it is the most heavily populated, containing around 33,000 people. The majority of residents (28,000) live in Witney a vibrant and historic market town famed for its association with the blanket industry. Witney is the District's largest town, acting as the main service centre and offering a broad range of housing and employment opportunities as well as key services and facilities including retailing, health care, leisure and culture.
- 9.2.3 The rest of the sub-area comprises a number of villages and hamlets on the fringes of Witney including Crawley, Hailey, Minster Lovell, Ducklington, South Leigh and Curbridge. Although these places offer some local facilities they naturally look to Witney for most essential services.

Figure 9.2 – Witney Sub-Area



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Housing

- 9.2.4 Most of the existing housing in this sub-area is located in Witney (around 12,000 dwellings) 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.

- 9.2.5 Property prices are relatively high (although not as high as some parts of the District) and there is considerable housing need³⁷ with about 550 households on the housing waiting list having identified Witney as their preferred location. The County Council has also identified Witney as its priority location for the provision of specialist housing for adults with care and support needs.
- 9.2.6 Whilst there are some further opportunities for housing within the built up area of the town, these are relatively limited and to accommodate future housing needs there is a need to develop on the fringes of the town on Greenfield land. This needs to be carefully balanced with the need to protect the town's setting and the separate identity of nearby villages.

Employment

- 9.2.7 The Witney sub-area plays an important economic role containing around 35% of the District's employment opportunities (almost 15,000 jobs). Notably, there are more job opportunities than resident workers³⁸. Whilst this is to be expected given the size and role of Witney, it does suggest a need to increase housing supply in order to provide a better balance of homes and jobs.
- 9.2.8 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.
- 9.2.9 Around 10 hectares of land remains on several sites within the large employment area to the west of the town. However, much of this is earmarked for the future expansion of existing businesses meaning it is not available to facilitate inward investment from outside of the District. An additional 10 hectares is proposed as part of the committed urban extension at West Witney (see Figure 9.6) and will meet a significant proportion of future business land requirements in the town, benefitting from improved access onto the A40 via a new junction at Down's Road (see below).

Transport

- 9.2.10 Transport is a key issue for the Witney sub-area which contains a number of important and well-used routes including the A40 the A4095 and A415. Although Witney has the best road connections and bus services in the District context, traffic congestion is a significant problem due to high car use particularly for journeys outside of Witney.

³⁷ People who cannot afford to buy or rent a suitable property at market prices

³⁸ Economic snapshot and outlook report

- 9.2.11 Improvements to the Ducklington Lane junction were implemented by Oxfordshire County Council in 2014 to help improve traffic flow, but problems persist in the historic core of the town around Bridge Street where the town's single river crossing creates a 'bottleneck' that causes delays to journey times and poor air quality.
- 9.2.12 A further key issue is the A40. Currently access to the A40 at Witney is relatively limited and the route is also heavily congested at peak times between Eynsham and the edge of Oxford. The A40 problems are seen as a major constraint to inward investment into the District as well as a great inconvenience for those sitting in long queues every day. A recent award of £35m through the Local Growth Fund will be used to facilitate improvements but at this stage the scope and nature of those improvements has not been determined.
- 9.2.13 Relieving congestion through investment in transport infrastructure is not only important in terms of public amenity and air quality, it is also essential to unlocking future housing provision and sustainable economic growth.

Retail and Leisure

- 9.2.14 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 as well as service uses. The town centre is performing well, maintaining a strong market share with low vacancy rates.
- 9.2.15 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.
- 9.2.16 Evidence³⁹ suggests there is capacity for additional shopping provision in Witney 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.

Environment and Heritage

- 9.2.17 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 Valley is a designated Conservation Target Area (CTA)⁴⁰ and includes the Windrush in Witney Project Area⁴¹ which provides guidance for the management of the area in order to protect and enhance its special landscape, character, ecological, cultural and recreational value.

³⁹ Retail Assessment 2012

⁴⁰ <http://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversity/conservation-target-areas/>

⁴¹ <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/329154/Windrush-in-Witney-project-Summary-leaflet.pdf>

- 9.2.18 Immediately to the south of the town is the Lower Windrush Valley Project Area, an area that has been transformed by sand and gravel extraction. The project was set up in 2001 and is a jointly funded initiative that seeks to strengthen and develop the evolving landscape of the valley, protect and enhance biodiversity, improve opportunities for countryside access and raise awareness of the issues that influence the valley environment.
- 9.2.19 Whilst representing a significant asset, the River Windrush and its tributaries create a flood risk and there have been several flood events in the Witney area with particularly severe flooding in July 2007.
- 9.2.20 The landscape surrounding the town is a mix of valley floor, valley side and open ridge and is generally sensitive to new development. 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.
- 9.2.21 In terms of the historic environment, as described above, Witney is an historic market town, famed for its association with the blanket industry with some of the former mill buildings having now been converted to new uses. A Conservation Area washes over much of the central area of the town and there are several scheduled monuments and numerous listed buildings. A number of the smaller settlements surrounding Witney also have designated Conservation Areas.

Infrastructure

- 9.2.22 Infrastructure provision within this sub-area is naturally focused on Witney as the District's main town. Witney offers a significant range of infrastructure including key roads, public transport, schools, health care, museum, library, sports pitches, informal open space, allotments, leisure centre and so on.
- 9.2.23 The growth of Witney in recent years has placed these services and facilities under increasing pressure and careful consideration is needed in terms of the impact of additional housing and business growth. This is a particularly important consideration for Witney which is intended to accommodate the majority of future development in the District to 2031.

Scope for Future Expansion

- 9.2.24 Opportunities for major development within the built up area of the town are relatively limited. This means that development on the fringes of the town will be required to meet future needs. Land to the west of the town (north Curbridge) is already committed and will deliver 1,000 homes and 10 hectares of new business land. The remaining options considered through the Local Plan process are to the south, east, north-east and north of the town.

Key Issues – Summary

9.2.25 Drawing on the brief profile outlined above we can identify a number of key issues and challenges to be addressed in relation to the Witney sub-area. These include:

- This is the smallest of the five sub-areas but is the most densely populated with most people living in the main town Witney;
- Witney is a key service centre with other nearby settlements looking to it for their principal needs;
- Witney is a vibrant and historic town and the protection of its setting and the individual identities of nearby villages is a key consideration;
- Major housing development has taken place at Witney in the last 30 years doubling the population;
- Property prices although not as high as some parts of the District are still high compared to the national average;
- There is a high level of affordable housing need with Witney being the preferred location for almost half of the Council's housing waiting list;
- Witney is a priority location for the provision of specialist housing for adults with care and support needs;
- This sub-area plays an important economic role, particularly Witney which provides most of the District's job opportunities with a particularly strong presence of manufacturing and engineering;
- There is currently an imbalance of homes and jobs with more job opportunities than resident workers;
- Although there is additional business space available, much of this is already earmarked for the expansion of existing businesses rather than inward investment;
- Witney is a key shopping and leisure destination with scope for additional shopping provision in the medium to long-term although parking capacity in the Town Centre is an issue at peak times;
- Traffic congestion is a key issue for this area both in the centre of Witney and on the A40;
- Flood risk is an important issue due to the presence of the River Windrush;
- This is an environmentally sensitive area with a number of local designations and a small element of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- There are significant mineral resources (sand and gravel) within the Lower Windrush Valley and the after-use of quarry sites presents good opportunities for suitable forms of informal recreation;
- Heritage is also an important issue in this area with a number of Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings;
- There is an extensive range of infrastructure primarily at Witney but major growth in recent years has placed this under increasing pressure and future development will need to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place;
- Relatively limited development opportunities within Witney mean that the development of Greenfield land on the edge of the town will be required to meet future needs.

Strategy

9.2.26 Having regard to the profile and key issues outlined above, the strategy for the Witney sub-area is set out below.

Housing

9.2.27 In terms of future housing provision the indicative requirement for this sub-area is 3,700 new homes in the period 2011 – 2031. In accordance with the overall strategy, the majority of these new homes will be located at Witney which is ranked as the District's most sustainable settlement⁴² and offers a number of opportunities for further development.

9.2.28 It is anticipated that the overall requirement will be met through a combination of homes already completed (2011 – 2014), existing commitments, sites identified in the Council's SHLAA⁴³, windfall development and two allocated Strategic Development Areas (SDAs). This is summarised in the table below.

Table 9.1 – Anticipated Housing Delivery in the Witney Sub-Area

Witney sub-area indicative housing requirement	3,700
Homes already completed (2011 – 2014)	154
Existing planning commitments as of 1 st February 2015 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• West Witney (1,000)• Coral Springs (185)• Buttercross Works (148)*• Springfield Nursery (36)• Other permissions (198)	1,567
East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)	400
North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)	1,000
Identified SHLAA capacity	164
Windfall allowance (25 per year 2015 – 2031)	400
Total	3,685

Past completions, existing commitments, SHLAA sites and windfall

9.2.29 In the first three years of the plan period (2011 – 2014) a total of 154 homes were completed in the Witney sub-area. As of 1st February 2015, a further 1,567 homes are already committed⁴⁴ through the planning process. The largest of these sites is West Witney (north Curbridge) which was allocated as a reserve site in the adopted Local Plan and will deliver 1,000 new homes plus 10 hectares of new employment land.

⁴² West Oxfordshire Settlement Sustainability Report 2014

⁴³ Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

⁴⁴ i.e. already benefit from planning permission or a resolution to grant planning permission subject to a legal agreement.

9.2.30 In addition, the Council's SHLAA (June 2014) identifies capacity for around 164 new homes on a number of sites in Witney. These include:

- Bus Depot and Garage, Corn Street
- Scrap Yard, West End
- Welch Way
- Thames Water Depot, Dark Lane
- Woodford Way car park
- Land at the Woolgate Centre

9.2.31 It is also considered appropriate to include a 'windfall' allowance to cater for unidentified sites expected to come forward for housing over the period of the Local Plan. Based on past evidence, a reasonable estimate is that such schemes would provide 25 homes per year within the Witney sub-area over the remaining period of the Local Plan (2015 – 2031) thereby providing an additional 400 new homes.

Strategic Development Areas (SDAs)

9.2.32 Because there is relatively limited capacity for further housing development within the built up area of Witney, it will be necessary for development to take place on undeveloped land on the edge of the town. Land to the west of Witney (north Curbridge) was identified as a reserve site in the previous Local Plan and is now a firm commitment, expected to deliver 1,000 homes in the period up to 2023 at a rate of around 150 per year.

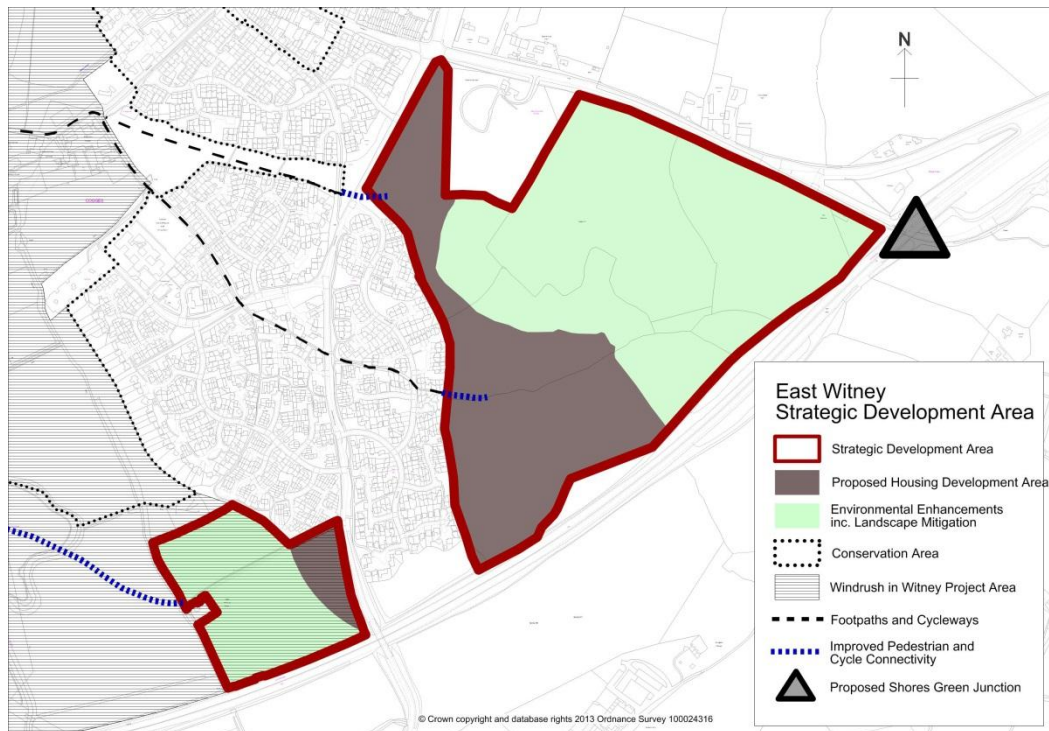
9.2.33 Throughout consultation on this Local Plan, views have been sought on four further options for expanding Witney including land to the south, east, north-east and north of the town. Following detailed consideration and analysis, the Council has concluded that land to the east of Witney which falls within Witney Parish and land to the north of Witney which falls within Hailey Parish, represent the most sustainable options for future strategic growth. As such it is proposed that these sites are allocated for 400 homes and 1,000 homes respectively.

East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) – 400 homes (Witney Parish)

9.2.34 Land to the east of Witney is allocated for the delivery of 400 new homes. The site has no significant environmental or heritage constraints, is well-located in relation to the Town Centre and provided the extent, scale and design of development is sensitively controlled, will not have a significant landscape impact. Importantly, the development will be required to deliver west facing slip roads at the Shores Green junction onto the A40 which will allow traffic using the junction to travel both east and west.

9.2.35 The proposed allocation is shown below (note: the extent of the developable area shown is indicative only).

Figure 9.3 – East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)



9.2.36 The allocation is split across two separate sites. A small parcel of land served off the Stanton Harcourt Road will provide a limited development of around 30 homes. The inclusion of this land within the allocation will help to facilitate the provision of links to the Town Centre across the Windrush Valley thereby increasing the integration of the overall development with the existing built area. It will also provide early revenue for the developer to help fund the infrastructure needed to bring forward the larger part of the site.

9.2.37 The remaining homes (c. 370) will be provided on the land known as Cogges Triangle, subject to delivery of the Shores Green junction improvements. The precise quantum of development will depend on a number of issues including landscape impact, surface water run-off and traffic impact. A balanced mix of housing types including affordable housing will be sought together with the provision necessary infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the development.

Policy WIT1 – East Witney Strategic Development Area (400 homes)

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

- a) about 400 homes with a balanced and appropriate mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including affordable housing. This will include c.30 homes on land adjacent to Stanton Harcourt Road (subject to landscape impact and flood risk) and c.370 homes on land at Cogges Triangle (subject to landscape impact and surface water run-off).**

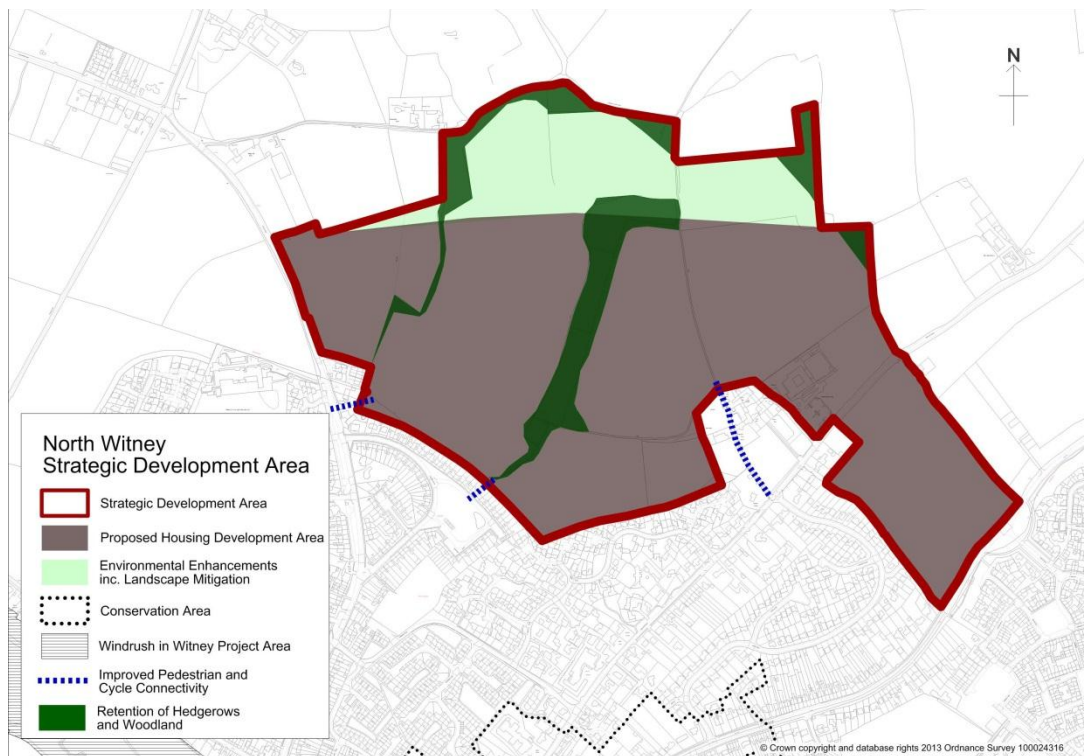
- b) development to be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities with the necessary improvements to the Shore's Green junction onto the A40 and related highway measures to be delivered prior to the completion of any housing on the Cogges Triangle part of 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 consistent with the aims and objectives of the Windrush in Witney Project.**
- d) the provision of appropriate landscaping measures to mitigate the potential impact of development and associated infrastructure.**
- e) the provision of appropriate financial contributions towards primary and secondary education capacity enhancements.**
- f) biodiversity enhancements including arrangements for future maintenance.**
- g) provision of appropriate green infrastructure including allotments.**
- h) appropriate measures to mitigate traffic noise.**
- i) appropriate measures to mitigate flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods to ensure that post-development surface water run-off rates are attenuated to achieve a reduction in greenfield run-off rates. The sustainable drainage systems should be designed to provide a biodiversity enhancement.**
- j) connection to the mains sewerage network which includes infrastructure upgrades where required including any necessary phasing arrangements.**
- k) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings.**
- l) the developer will be required to set aside 5% of the developable plots for those wishing to undertake custom/self-build.**

North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) – 1,000 homes (Hailey Parish)

9.2.38 Land to the north of Witney is allocated for the delivery of 1,000 homes. The site is considered to be well-related to the main services and facilities of Witney, has no major ecological or heritage constraints and based on the proposed quantum of growth, will not have a significant landscape impact. Importantly, the development will be required to deliver the West End Link (WEL) a second river crossing for Witney together with a new northern distributor road.

9.2.39 The proposed allocation is shown below (note: the extent of the developable area is indicative only).

Figure 9.4 – North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)



9.2.40 The site comprises two separate parcels, a larger area of land (49ha) between Hailey Road and New Yatt Road and a smaller parcel between New Yatt Road and Woodstock Road (7ha). It is anticipated that the smaller site will deliver up to 200 homes with the remaining 800 homes being provided on the larger site.

9.2.41 Key considerations for this site include flood risk, ecology, landscape impact, traffic impact, deliverability and phasing.

9.2.42 In terms of flood risk, evidence⁴⁵ suggests that there is scope to reduce surface water run-off from the site itself through the use of sustainable drainage and potential off-site enhancements. Although the associated West End Link falls within an area of designated floodplain, it is classed as ‘essential infrastructure’ and there are no sequentially preferable alternatives available (other than the Shores Green slip roads scheme which is also being taken forward).

9.2.43 Importantly, the West End Link could offer the potential to serve a ‘dual’ role not only in terms of transport but also in terms of flood risk mitigation – the concept of which has the support of Oxfordshire County Council and the Environment Agency. Any development proposal will need to be supported by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).

⁴⁵ North Witney and WEL Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2015)

- 9.2.44 With regard to ecology, evidence⁴⁶ suggests that both the site and the West End Link have no significant ecological constraints and that the proposed development presents a number of opportunities to deliver positive enhancements.
- 9.2.45 In terms of landscape impact, evidence⁴⁷ prepared in support of the Local Plan suggests that the proposed quantum of development (1,000 homes) is able to be accommodated on the site without undue adverse impact. A detailed landscape and visual impact assessment would however be required in support of any future application.
- 9.2.46 Traffic impact is a key consideration and any development will need to be supported by a detailed Transport Assessment (TA) and Travel Plan. Evidence⁴⁸ prepared in support of the Local Plan suggests that whilst not eliminating congestion in the central core of Witney around Bridge Street, the provision of the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road will, in combination with other strategic highway measures proposed at Witney, have a number of tangible benefits as well as mitigating the impact of the proposed development.
- 9.2.47 In terms of deliverability, there are no known constraints in terms of land assembly to prevent the site coming forward and evidence prepared in support of the Local Plan⁴⁹ suggests that the scheme is a financially viable proposition.
- 9.2.48 With regard to phasing, it is proposed that the larger part of the site will be phased to come forward later in the plan period after 2021. This phased approach will:
- help to ensure that housing delivery is provided evenly across the whole of the Local Plan period;
 - ensure the traffic impact of the scheme is minimised by allowing for the new Down's Road junction and Shores Green improvements to come forward first;
 - allow time for the east and west Witney schemes to come forward in advance (and thereby avoid market saturation in the Witney area); and
 - allow time for the West End Link element of the scheme to be phased in ahead of the majority of development coming forward.

⁴⁶ North Witney and WEL Preliminary Ecological Assessment (2015)

⁴⁷ Kirkham Associates report

⁴⁸ Technical Note: Witney Development and Infrastructure Strategic Modelling (White Young Green October 2014)

⁴⁹ Aspinall Verdi – SDA appraisal North Witney (2015)

Policy WIT2 – North Witney Strategic Development Area (1,000 homes)

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

- a) about 1,000 homes with a balanced and appropriate mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including affordable housing. This will include c.200 homes on land between New Yatt Road and Woodstock Road and c.800 homes on land between Hailey Road and New Yatt Road
- b) development on the larger part of the site between New Yatt Road and Woodstock Road to be phased to come forward in the period post-2021 in accordance with the timing of supporting infrastructure and facilities including delivery of the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road;
- 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 the town centre and other key destinations;
- d) the provision of a new primary school on-site (1.5FE (including foundation stage) with 2FE core facilities to enable future expansion of the school together with financial contributions towards secondary school capacity as appropriate;
- e) the provision of appropriate landscaping measures to mitigate the potential impact of development including a positive landscape framework to create a new town edge;
- f) retention of important on-site hedgerows and plantation woodland;
- g) biodiversity enhancements including arrangements for future maintenance;
- h) provision of appropriate green infrastructure including allotments;
- i) appropriate measures to mitigate flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods to ensure that post-development surface water run-off rates are attenuated to achieve a reduction in greenfield run-off rates. The sustainable drainage systems should be designed to provide a biodiversity enhancement.
- j) all development should be steered to areas at least flood risk within Flood Zone 1 and flood alleviation measures to reduce flood risk associated with the Hailey Road Drain should be incorporated where appropriate.
- k) connection to the mains sewerage network which includes infrastructure upgrades where required including any necessary phasing arrangements.
- l) ensuring that the construction of the West End Link has no harmful impact on biodiversity and provides for enhancements to biodiversity where feasible;
- m) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings.

n) the developer will be required to set aside 5% of the developable plots for those wishing to undertake custom/self-build.

Alternative Options

- 9.2.49 Two other main options have been considered for the expansion of Witney including land to the south and land to the north east of the town. Having regard to the overall housing requirement and evidence prepared in support of the Local Plan⁵⁰ these sites have not been allocated.
- 9.2.50 Land to the south of Witney which straddles the boundaries of Ducklington and Curbridge Parishes, whilst physically proximate to the town centre and main employment areas in the south is segregated from the town by the A40. There are concerns regarding noise, odour and landscape impact and unlike the alternative options, the scheme would not deliver any strategic highway improvements for Witney.
- 9.2.51 Land to the north east of Witney which straddles the boundaries of Witney Parish and South Leigh Parish is highly sensitive in terms of landscape impact and importantly, in terms of deliverability, there is some uncertainty in relation to the assembly of land needed to provide satisfactory access arrangements onto Jubilee Way.

Employment

- 9.2.52 The Witney sub-area plays an important role in terms of the West Oxfordshire economy, with Witney itself accommodating a significant proportion of the District's job opportunities.
- 9.2.53 In accordance with the overall strategy, Witney will be the main focus for additional business and employment opportunities over the period of the Local Plan. There is 10 hectares of existing business land to the west of the town but much of this is unavailable having been set aside for the expansion of existing businesses. An additional 10 hectares of new business floorspace will be provided as part of the committed urban extension at West Witney (north Curbridge).
- 9.2.54 It is anticipated that the provision of new employment land could also facilitate the upgrading of Witney's existing employment land 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.
- 9.2.55 We will seek the retention of existing employment sites and support in principle, the modernisation of premises to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
- 9.2.56 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.

⁵⁰ West Oxfordshire Assessment of Strategic Site Options Update (February 2015); Sustainability Appraisal of Pre-Submission Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan (Enfusion February 2015)

Transport

- 9.2.57 Transport is a key issue for the Witney sub-area which includes a number of key routes. Congestion within the town and further afield on the A40 are known to be significant problems. The Local Plan therefore proposes a number of measures to help alleviate congestion and improve the flow of vehicular traffic.
- 9.2.58 A number of strategic highway improvement schemes are proposed to complement the improvements that were made to the Ducklington Lane junction in 2014. These include:
- Downs's road junction – the provision of a new 'all movements' junction onto the A40 at Downs' Road to the west of Witney. This will be delivered as part of the committed urban extension to the west of Witney (north Curbridge).
 - Shore's Green Slip Roads - the provision of west facing slip roads at the Shore's Green junction onto the A40 to the east of Witney. This will be delivered as part of the proposed East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)
 - West End Link – the provision of a new road link between Woodford Way and West End creating a second river crossing for Witney. This will be delivered as part of the proposed North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)
 - Northern Distributor Road – the provision of a new road link between Hailey Road and Woodtock Road via New Yatt Road. This will be delivered as part of the proposed North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)
- 9.2.59 It is anticipated that this 'package' of strategic highway improvements will help to mitigate the impact of planned housing and business growth in Witney and provide a significant improvement to the flow of vehicles in and around the town. Other 'non-strategic' highway improvements will be sought as appropriate through new development including those identified in the IDP.
- 9.2.60 Provision will also be made for improved public transport provision in the Witney sub-area including the frequency and coverage of bus services. This will be accompanied by measures to promote the use of public transport including improved waiting facilities and cycle parking.
- 9.2.61 Improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes and the provision of new routes will be sought where appropriate. This will include the potential provision of a new cycle route between Witney and Carterton as identified in the IDP.
- 9.2.62 Parking capacity will be kept under review with additional provision to be sought from new developments where necessary. Parking will also be managed in order to try and reduce car use for short journeys.

Retail and Leisure

- 9.2.63 Witney will be the 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 Policy E6, new town centre development in Witney will follow the 'town centre first approach'.
- 9.2.64 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 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.
- 9.2.65 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.
- 9.2.66 We will 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.
- 9.2.67 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 be required to contribute to increasing public car parking provision alongside improvements to bus, pedestrian and cycle infrastructure.
- 9.2.68 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.

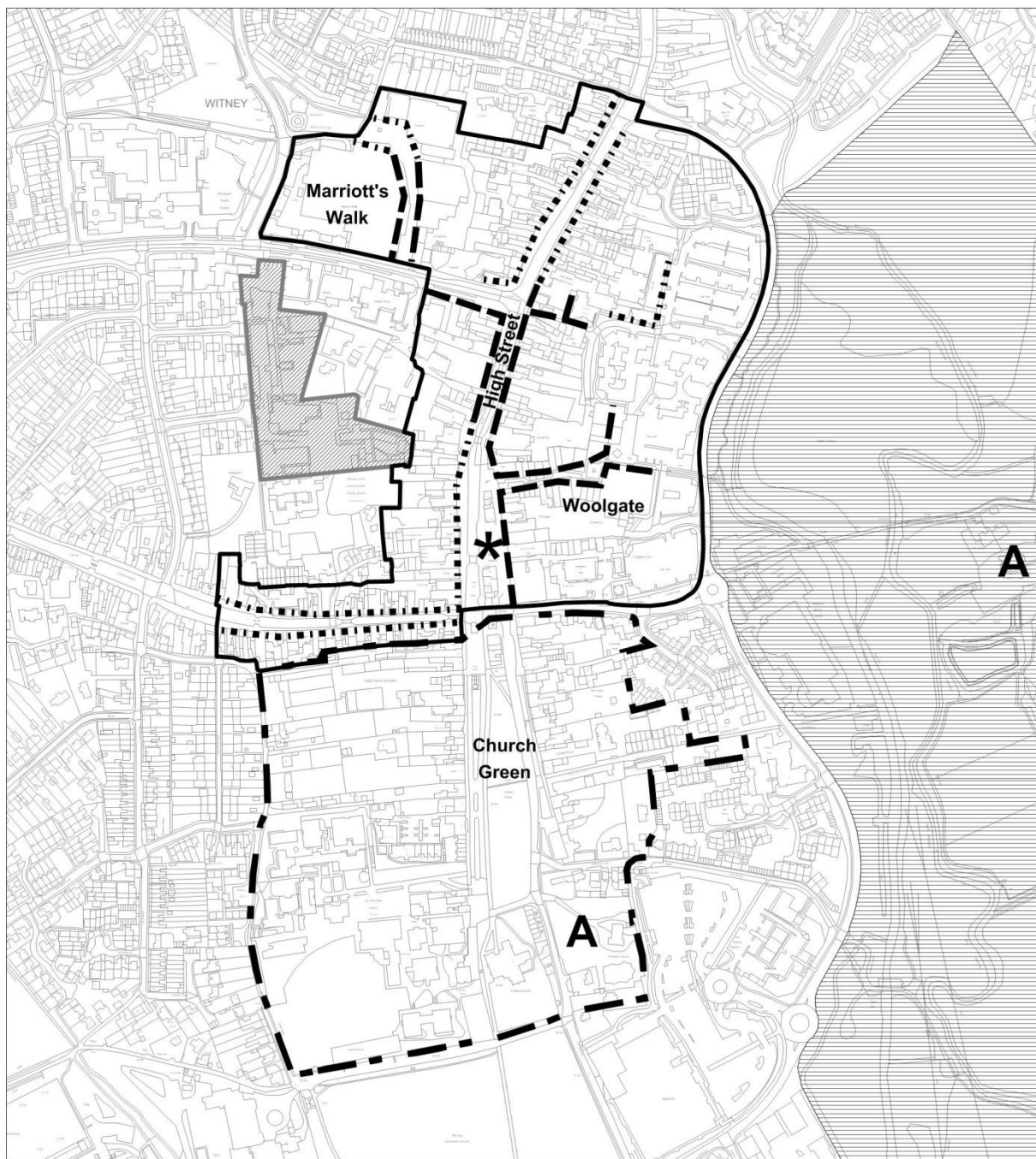
Policy WIT3 – Witney Town Centre Strategy

The overall objective is to maintain and enhance Witney Town Centre providing an accessible, attractive and diverse shopping, visitor and evening economy offer and the principal shopping and leisure destination for West Oxfordshire and the surrounding area. This will be achieved by:









- Maintaining a strong and diverse shopping core with a good mix of retailers, 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.
- Promoting 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. The loss of town centre uses from secondary shopping frontages will be resisted.
- Investigating 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.
- Maintaining and enhancing the Market Square as an attractive public space which can be used for other purposes at other times.
- Seeking 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.
- Enhancing 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.
- Ensuring 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 9.5 – Witney Town Centre Strategy



WITNEY Town Centre

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
|  | 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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Environment and Heritage

- 9.2.69 The Witney sub-area is environmentally sensitive including part of the Cotswolds AONB, the Upper and Lower Windrush Conservation Target Areas, the Windrush in Witney Project Area and the Lower Windrush Valley Project. It also includes some areas of ancient woodland.
- 9.2.70 In determining future development proposals, the Council will have significant regard to the potential impact on the environment, particularly where the proposed development would affect a designated area. In accordance with Policy EH1 and national policy, any proposed development within the AONB will be expected to conserve landscape and scenic beauty and major developments will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest.
- 9.2.71 Where applicable, development will be expected to have regard to the aims and objectives of the Windrush in Witney Project and Lower Windrush Valley Project and where appropriate, make a positive contribution either directly as part of the development or through an appropriate financial contribution.
- 9.2.72 In accordance with national policy and Policy EH7 all new development will be expected to conserve or enhance the special character and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's historic environment and preserve or enhance the District's heritage assets and their significance and settings.

Infrastructure

- 9.2.73 Infrastructure capacity is a key consideration for this sub-area. Witney has accommodated significant growth in the last 30 years more than doubling its population. As the key focus for growth within the Local Plan, it is essential that further development at Witney is supported by appropriate investment in new and improved infrastructure.
- 9.2.74 A number of strategic transport improvements are set out above but other forms of supporting infrastructure will also be needed including education, health, open space, community facilities and so on.
- 9.2.75 Some of these will be provided directly as part of new developments (e.g. a new primary school as part of the north Witney SDA) whilst others will be provided indirectly through developer contributions and other potential sources of funding.
- 9.2.76 The Council has prepared an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which seeks to quantify the infrastructure improvements that will be needed to support the planned level and distribution of growth set out in the Local Plan. This will form the basis upon which future decisions regarding the provision of new or improved infrastructure will be made along with the Council's CIL regulation 123 list once introduced.
- 9.2.77 In accordance with Policy OS5, we will seek to ensure that all new development within the Witney sub-area is supported by appropriate and timely provision of necessary supporting infrastructure.

Policy WIT4 – 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 3,700 new homes to be focused on Witney and to include affordable housing and homes designed to meet a range of different needs including older people.

a Strategic Development Area of around 400 dwellings on the eastern side of Witney (see Policy WIT1)

a Strategic Development Area of around 1,000 dwellings to the north of Witney (see Policy WIT2)

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 and landowners/developers to deliver improvements to key highway infrastructure to reduce traffic and pollution in the historic core and to improve the general flow of traffic and access to primary transport routes, with priority on delivering the A40/Downs Road junction (all traffic movements), Shore's Green junction (west facing slip roads) the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road and other supporting highway improvement measures

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 landowners/developers and partners such as the Environment Agency to deliver flood mitigation measures

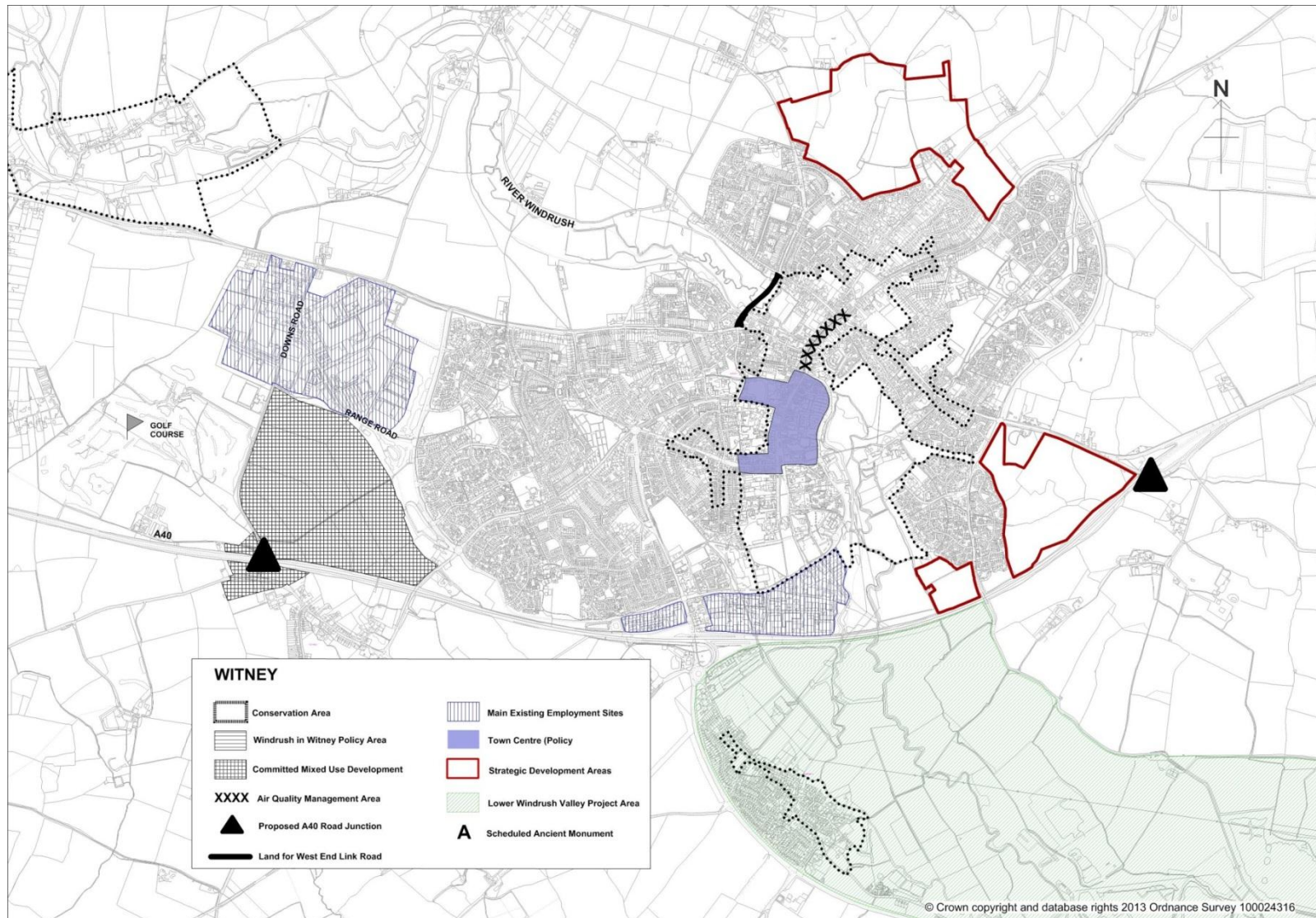
protection and enhancement of the market town character and setting of Witney, neighbouring villages and the Windrush Valley, including the particularly vulnerable gap between Witney and Ducklington

development on land within or where it would be visible from the Windrush in Witney Policy Area will be required to 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 in accordance with the IDP

Figure 9.6 – Witney Sub-Area Strategy



Carterton Sub-Area

- 9.3.1 This is the second smallest of the five sub-areas covering just over 13,000 hectares. It is however well-populated containing around 25,000 people, the majority of which (16,000) live in Carterton, 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.
- 9.3.2 Carterton offers a good range of services and facilities including a country park, leisure centre, employment, housing and retail. Part of the town'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 4,000 personnel of which approximately 2,000 live on the base.
- 9.3.3 There are a scattering of villages outside of Carterton, the largest being Bampton which has a relatively small population of about 2,500 but enjoys a good range of community activities and available services and is a designated rural service centre. Other settlements include Brize Norton, Shilton, Alvescot, Filkins, Langford, Clanfield, Kelmscott and Aston.

Figure 9.7 – Carterton Sub-Area



Housing

- 9.3.4 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. A further 1,000 new homes are currently proposed through two committed schemes on the edge of Carterton.
- 9.3.5 Although many RAF 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). Some of this housing is built at low density and poorly designed and the redevelopment of MOD housing has been highlighted as a priority throughout the preparation of this Local Plan.
- 9.3.6 One of the sites (REEMA North) has recently been cleared to provide 200 new homes for service personnel. Once the development is complete (expected in 2016) the adjoining site (REEMA Central) will be made available to the open market for potential redevelopment for housing.
- 9.3.7 House prices in Carterton are relatively low compared with other parts of the District though there is still a significant need for affordable housing with 149 people on the Council's waiting list having identified the town as their preferred location.
- 9.3.8 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.

Employment

- 9.3.9 The Carterton sub-area plays an important economic role within the District. The main sector of the local economy is Government services which accounts for 26% of total employment. This is largely a reflection of RAF Brize Norton which lies immediately to the south of the town and employs around 4,000 personnel. The second largest sector is distribution (including retail) at 17%. Manufacturing is relatively poorly represented compared to West Oxfordshire as a whole comprising just 6.5% of employment in this area.
- 9.3.10 Economic activity rates are high at over 80%. However, there is an imbalance of homes and jobs with the number of resident workers outweighing the number of jobs. Carterton has 24% of the District's economically active population compared with just 13% of the District's employment. Witney by contrast only accounts for 29% of the District's economically active population, but for 35% of the jobs. It is likely therefore that many Carterton residents will be looking to Witney as a source of employment⁵¹.

⁵¹ West Oxfordshire Economic Snapshot and Outlook Report CAG (2015)

- 9.3.11 In terms of existing business land provision, Carterton accommodates several large employment sites including the Carterton South Industrial Estate built in the 1970s and the more recent Ventura Park and West Oxfordshire Business Park.
- 9.3.12 Although Carterton has witnessed some renewal of its industrial stock in recent times (e.g. Ventura Park) and has a range of buildings to suit varied needs, the availability of small, starter units is limited.
- 9.3.13 In terms of undeveloped business land, there is a relatively limited supply currently with around 1.5 acres (0.6ha) available at Ventura Park, and 7.9 acres (3.2ha) at West Oxfordshire Business Park. The Town Council has expressed a desire to increase the supply of available business land in Carterton in order to attract additional inward investment, capitalising on the aviation linkages with RAF Brize Norton. This is key aim of the emerging Carterton masterplan and is supported by the Council's economic evidence⁵² which suggests that Carterton should be identified as a priority location for new employment land provision.

Transport

- 9.3.14 Transport is an important issue for the Carterton sub-area which includes a number of key routes including the A361 and A4095 with the A40 running along the northern edge of the area. Carterton is relatively remote from the primary road network and whilst the A40 is a short distance to the north, it 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.
- 9.3.15 The County Council's aspiration is to improve access to Carterton from the A40 to help unlock economic potential and better meet the needs of RAF Brize Norton. The B4477 Brize Norton Road has been identified in the County Council's draft Local Transport Plan (LTP4) as the preferred route for upgrading to 'A' road standard together with the provision of west facing slip roads at the A40 junction.
- 9.3.16 In terms of public transport, Carterton is well served by bus services including the premium S1 and S2 services to Witney and Oxford. Of those commuting out of Carterton to work, around 17% travel by bus. Oxfordshire County Council have identified a number of potential improvements to bus services in the Carterton sub-area including improvements to the frequency of services to Witney and Oxford, improved frequency of buses to Swindon, new bus stops close to the RAF main gate and improving the environment and quality of bus stops along these routes, pedestrian and cycle paths to them and the facilities available such as cycle parking. The area has no rail services.
- 9.3.17 As a relatively small town, walking and cycling are realistic and attractive travel options in Carterton. Of those living and working in the town, 30% travel by foot and 20% by bicycle. Carterton already 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 County Council's draft Local Transport Plan (LTP4) seeks to improve and

⁵² West Oxfordshire Economic Snapshot and Outlook Report CAG (2015)

promote this network and identifies a number of potential new routes within the town as well as the provision of a high quality cycle route between Carterton and Witney.

Retail and Leisure

- 9.3.18 Carterton has a relatively small town centre for its size, primarily serving a convenience and service role. The food retail offer is good with three supermarkets located close to the town centre. However, the town centre lacks a varied choice and range of non-food retailers and provides only a limited number of multiple retailers. As a result, a significant amount of shopping trade leaks to other centres such as Witney and the centre remains vulnerable to out of centre development.
- 9.3.19 Evidence⁵³ suggests that there is scope to provide an enhanced range and choice of non-food retailers in Carterton Town Centre and that this should be a priority for the Local Plan. It also highlights the potential to enhance the leisure offer through the provision of bars and restaurants to increase visitor numbers and dwell time.
- 9.3.20 Importantly, due to the nature of the town centre environment, Carterton is less constrained than the historic town centres of Witney and Chipping Norton and therefore has good physical capacity to accommodate future retail and leisure proposals.
- 9.3.21 Evidence⁵⁴ suggests there is also potential to improve the quality of the town centre environment, an objective that has also been identified in design work undertaken on behalf of the Town Council in 2013 and more recently in the emerging Carterton masterplan.
- 9.3.22 Leisure facilities in Carterton include the Carterton Leisure Centre and the Kilkenny Lane 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 (as is proposed as part of the committed urban extension to the east of the town).
- 9.3.23 The provision of additional sports pitches at Carterton for leisure use is a long-standing objective of the Town Council and the Council's evidence⁵⁵ confirms that there is a shortage of playing pitches serving the town.

Environment and Heritage

- 9.3.24 There are relatively few environmental considerations within this sub-area compared to other parts of the District. Much of the area to the south of Carterton is however designated as a 'mineral consultation area' due to the presence of extensive sand and gravel resources.
- 9.3.25 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.

⁵³ Retail Study (2012)

⁵⁴ Economic Snapshot and Outlook (January 2015)

⁵⁵ 2013 Open Space Study

There are also mineral resources to the north of Carterton including an active limestone quarry (Burford Quarry).

- 9.3.26 The River Thames runs along the southern boundary of the sub-area and presents positive potential opportunities for tourism and leisure uses although 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.
- 9.3.27 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 to the District's CTAs are highlighted in the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
- 9.3.28 Noise from RAF Brize Norton is 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

- 9.3.29 As the District's second largest town, Carterton offers a good range of services and facilities including a Leisure Centre, library, several primary schools, a secondary school, open space, sports pitches and health care facilities.
- 9.3.30 Careful consideration must be given to the impact of future development on the capacity of existing infrastructure. Other than transport, the main infrastructure requirements for Carterton relate to education and leisure.
- 9.3.31 Whilst Carterton currently has some spare capacity, the primary schools have experienced rapid growth in pupil numbers in recent years which will feed into the secondary school. 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 be provided as part of the committed housing scheme on land to the east of Carterton.
- 9.3.32 There is a very active secondary school in Carterton with expanding sixth form facilities although many older pupils travel to schools at Witney or Burford. The catchment of the secondary school will be extended to include the committed housing site to the east of Carterton which will help to support the provision of improved facilities at the school. Any further long-term significant development in Carterton may necessitate the expansion of the secondary school.
- 9.3.33 In the villages surrounding Carterton there is limited capacity within existing schools at present.

9.3.34 There is an identified need for a new fire station at Carterton and the Town Council has identified a need for a new cemetery as well as additional open space.

Scope for Further Expansion

9.3.35 There are some opportunities for further development within the built up area of Carterton. It is anticipated that the redevelopment of the two MOD sites, REEMA North and REEMA Central will deliver a net gain of around 400 new homes across the two sites. Subject to the requirements of the MOD and viability considerations, there may also be some potential to redevelop other areas of MOD housing in Carterton over the period of the Local Plan. This would present the opportunity to increase densities and raise environmental and design standards.

9.3.36 Whilst there are opportunities within Carterton, in order to meet the identified housing requirement for this sub-area it will be necessary to expand the existing urban area through development on Greenfield land. It is anticipated that this will take place on two sites which are both already committed through the planning process including land to the east of Carterton (700 homes) and land to the north-west (316 homes).

9.3.37 Alternative options to the north and west of the town have been promoted through the Local Plan process and in the case of the latter through an outline planning application.

Key Issues – Summary

9.3.38 Drawing on the brief profile outlined above we can identify a number of key issues and challenges to be addressed in relation to the Carterton sub-area. These include:

- A relatively small but well-populated sub-area most of whom live in Carterton, the District's second largest town.
- Housing in Carterton is relatively inexpensive compared to other parts of the District but there is still a high level of affordable housing need.
- RAF Brize Norton is a major influence on the town and an integral part of the local economy – there are opportunities to exploit the links with the base (e.g. attraction of aviation related industries to Carterton).
- There has been pressure for infill development in recent years.
- There may be some long-term potential to redevelop areas of MOD housing subject to service accommodation requirements and viability considerations.
- There is currently an imbalance with more workers than jobs which leads to out-commuting.
- There is currently limited availability of business land opportunities within the town including a lack of small starter units.
- The town centre offer is relatively poor given the size of the town. Food retail is well provided for but there is a lack of quality non-food retailers.
- There is also a lack of other related leisure uses including bars, coffee shops and restaurants.
- The Town Centre has the physical capacity to accommodate a range of new uses.

- Carterton is relatively remote from the primary road network and can currently only be accessed via 'B' roads.
- There is reasonable bus provision but no rail services within the sub-area.
- As a relatively small town, the scope for walking and cycling in Carterton is good and there are some reasonable links already, however a number of improvements are needed.
- This is an environmentally sensitive area including the presence of sand and gravel resources and flood risk.
- There is potential to further enhance leisure and tourism opportunities along the River Thames which runs along the southern boundary of the sub-area.
- The Shill Brook Valley is designated as a Conservation Target Area and presents the opportunity for enhancement.
- The Country Park is a key local asset and has the potential to be expanded.
- Noise from RAF Brize Norton is an important environmental consideration in this area.
- There is increasing pressure on primary school capacity.
- Secondary school capacity exists at present but there could be a need to expand in the future depending on levels of growth in the town.
- There are a number of identified infrastructure needs for Carterton including additional playing fields, allotments, a cemetery and fire station.

Strategy

9.3.39 Having regard to the profile and key issues outlined above, the proposed strategy for the Carterton sub-area is set out below.

Housing

9.3.40 In accordance with the overall strategy, future development within this sub-area will be focused predominantly at Carterton which as the district's second largest town, offers a good range of services facilities and represents a sustainable location for future development.

9.3.41 However, a distinctive characteristic of Carterton is the current imbalance of housing and job opportunities. In short, there are fewer jobs than resident workers which lead to a relatively high level of out-commuting (60%). This is in contrast to Witney which accommodates the majority of the District's job opportunities (around 35%).

9.3.42 In light of this, the proposed quantum of housing in the Carterton sub-area is lower than the Witney sub-area and to help the current imbalance of homes and jobs, there will be a particular focus on additional business land provision (see below).

9.3.43 It is anticipated that the overall housing requirement for this area (2,600 homes) will be met through a combination of homes already completed, existing commitments, sites identified in the Council's SHLAA, windfall development and an allocated Strategic Development Area (SDA). This is summarised in the table below.

Table 9.2 – Anticipated Housing Delivery in the Carterton Sub-Area

Carterton sub-area indicative housing requirement	2,600
Homes already completed (2011 – 2014)	135
Existing planning commitments as of 1 st February 2015 including:	1,821
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land east of Carterton (700) • REEMA North (200) • Milestone Road (263) • Carterton Petrol Station (42) • New Road, Bampton (160) • North West Carterton (316) • Saxel Close, Aston (38) • Other permissions (102) 	
REEMA Central Strategic Development Area (SDA)	200
Identified SHLAA capacity	15
Windfall allowance (25 per year 2015 – 2031)	400
Total	2,571

Past completions, existing commitments, SHLAA sites and windfall

9.3.44 In the first three years of the plan period (2011 – 2014) a total of 135 homes have already been completed in the Carterton sub-area. As 1st February 2015, a further 1,821 homes already benefit from planning permission or resolution to grant permission subject to Section 106.

9.3.45 The largest of these sites is land to the east of Carterton which was the subject of a draft local plan allocation in 2012 and 2014 and now benefits from a resolution to grant outline planning permission for 700 homes. A further 316 homes are also committed on land to the north west of Carterton with 200 new homes also proposed for service families on the MOD REEMA North site in Carterton.

9.3.46 In addition, the Council’s SHLAA (June 2014) has identified capacity for around 15 new homes on a couple of small sites within the Carterton sub-area. These are assessed in detail in the SHLAA (available separately) and include the following:

- Pear Tree Farm, Filkins and Broughton Poggs
- Land off the Elms, Langford

9.3.47 It is also considered appropriate to include a ‘windfall’ allowance to cater for unidentified sites that are likely to come forward for housing over the period of the Local Plan. Based on past evidence, a conservative estimate is that such schemes would provide 25 homes per year within the Carterton sub-area over the remaining period of the Local Plan (2015 – 2031) thereby providing an additional 400 new homes.

Strategic Development Areas (SDAs)

9.3.48 A single Strategic Development Area (SDA) is proposed within the Carterton sub-area, the REEMA Central site in Carterton which is expected to deliver a net increase of around 200 new homes. This will complement the committed urban extension schemes to the east and north-west of the town which between them will deliver just over 1,000 new homes.

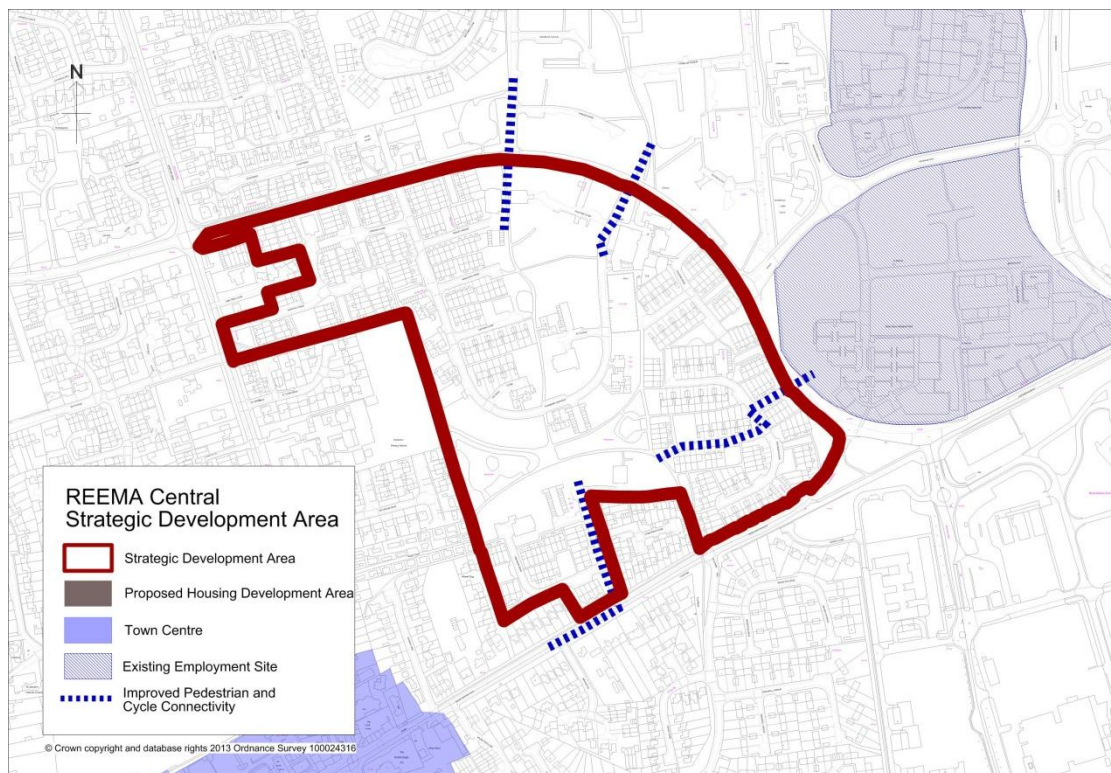
REEMA Central Strategic Development Area (SDA) – 200 homes (Carterton Parish)

9.3.49 The REEMA Central site currently accommodates a number of existing MOD properties but has been declared surplus to requirements pending the redevelopment of the adjoining REEMA North site for 200 service family homes. Once that scheme is complete (expected 2016) the REEMA Central site will be made available to the open market.

9.3.50 The site is previously developed land and is very close to the town centre. It represents a sustainable development opportunity and its potential redevelopment has been well-supported through previous consultation. Given the relatively high existing use value of the site, complete redevelopment, whilst desirable, may not be financially viable.

9.3.51 A more likely outcome is a potential for some redevelopment, combined with new build infill development on the parts of the site that are currently undeveloped. It is anticipated that the net increase in housing on the REEMA Central site is likely to be around 200 new homes. The proposed allocation is shown in Figure 9.7 below.

Figure 9.8 – REEMA Central Strategic Development Area (SDA)



9.3.52 In the longer term there may be some potential for further redevelopment of MOD housing in Carterton. There are several existing areas where the density of development is relatively

low and the quality of the housing stock and surrounding environs relatively poor. At this stage however, none of those properties have been declared surplus to requirements so they cannot be relied upon to deliver additional housing to meet the indicative target for this area.

Policy CA1 – REEMA Central Strategic Development Area (SDA)

Land at REEMA Central to accommodate a sustainable, integrated community that forms a positive addition to Carterton. Proposals for development should be consistent with the following:

- a) a net increase of about 200 homes with a range of residential accommodation to meet identified needs including affordable housing.**
- b) provision of high quality pedestrian and cycle links to the Town Centre and other key destinations.**
- c) contribution towards education and indoor and outdoor leisure provision in the local area.**
- d) appropriate provision for green infrastructure.**
- e) necessary supporting transport infrastructure, including proposals to mitigate the impact of traffic associated with the development.**
- f) connection to the mains sewerage network which includes infrastructure upgrades where required including any necessary phasing arrangements.**
- g) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings.**
- h) the developer will be required to set aside 5% of the developable plots for those wishing to undertake custom/self-build.**

Alternative Options

- 9.3.53 Two other main options have been considered for the expansion of Carterton including land to the north and west of the town. Having regard to the overall housing requirement and evidence prepared in support of the Local Plan⁵⁶ these sites have not been allocated.
- 9.3.54 Land to the north of Carterton which falls within Brize Norton Parish is considered to be poorly related to the town, relatively remote from the town centre and segregated by the Kilkenny Lane Country Park. It is poorly served by public transport and development in this location would require significant improvements to the Burford Road.
- 9.3.55 Land to the west of Carterton which straddles the boundaries of Carterton and Alvescot Parishes is segregated from the town by virtue of the Shill Brook Valley and major

⁵⁶ Insert reference

development in this location would be poorly related to the town and have a harmful landscape impact.

Employment

- 9.3.56 At present there is an imbalance of homes and jobs in the Carterton sub-area with fewer job opportunities than economically active residents. This leads to relatively high levels of out-commuting to other locations including Witney.
- 9.3.57 There is a clear need to increase the supply of business land in Carterton. At present there is a relatively limited supply with around 1.5 acres available at Ventura Park, and 7.9 acres at West Oxfordshire Business Park. This could be quickly filled if one or two large employers were to move to the area.
- 9.3.58 Carterton Town Council has expressed a clear desire to increase the supply of business land in Carterton in order to attract inward investment, increase job opportunities and reduce levels of out-commuting. This aim is a key theme of the emerging masterplan for the town. The Council's own economic evidence confirms that Carterton is in need of additional business land provision to help address the current imbalance of homes and jobs and as such the Local Plan seeks to address this situation.
- 9.3.59 In accordance with the overall strategy and supporting evidence, Carterton will be a focus for additional business and employment opportunities within the District. The Council will work with landowners, developers and the Town Council to secure the provision of at least 10 hectares of additional business land over the period of the Local Plan.
- 9.3.60 One option is to re-locate the existing leisure facilities on the corner of Monahan Way and Carterton Road to an alternative location (potentially linked to other related facilities) and to use the site for employment instead. This would create an effective business 'cluster' with the existing Ventura and West Oxfordshire business parks nearby. Any such proposal would be subject to replacement provision of the existing leisure facilities in a suitable, accessible location.
- 9.3.61 The Council will work with relevant partners including Carterton Town Council to consider this option further and to also investigate the possibility of other sites that could be brought forward for business use.
- 9.3.62 It is anticipated that the provision of new employment land could also facilitate the upgrading of some of the town's existing employment land stock through the provision of modern business premises enabling businesses to move and expand. There may be potential for example for the redevelopment of the older Carterton South Industrial Estate in the medium to longer term.
- 9.3.63 We will therefore seek the retention of existing employment sites and support in principle, the modernisation of premises to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

9.3.64 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 subject to Policy E2.

Transport

9.3.65 Transport is a key issue for the Carterton sub-area which includes a number of key routes. Whilst not as congested as Witney, the central areas of Carterton are prone to some congestion and importantly the town is poorly connected to the strategic road network including the A40. The Local Plan therefore seeks to improve access to and from the town, promote greater use of walking cycling and public transport and reduce congestion in the Town Centre.

9.3.66 In terms of improving access to the Town, the County Council has established that the B4477 Minster Lovell Road should be prioritised for upgrading from a B classification road to 'A' classification. This will have a number of benefits including a diversion of military freight vehicles from less suitable routes including the Town Centre. Complementary measures in the surrounding rural area may also be sought to support this scheme.

9.3.67 The proposed upgrade will be complemented by the provision of west facing slip roads at the A40/B4477 Minster Lovell junction in order to serve operations at RAF Brize Norton and help support future employment growth at Carterton.

9.3.68 In terms of walking and cycling, the size of Carterton means that these represent realistic alternatives to the private car which is reflected in the relatively high proportion of residents who currently walk or cycle to work locally. There are however opportunities for further improvements which the Council will seek to introduce in partnership with the County Council, the Town Council, developers/landowners and other relevant parties.

9.3.69 Where appropriate, new development will be required to provide necessary improvements, either directly or via a financial contribution. The Council will continue to support the concept of a cycle route between Witney and Carterton and funding will be sought from new development and other potential sources.

9.3.70 In terms of public transport, Carterton is reasonably well-served by bus although there is scope to improve the frequency of services as well as providing new bus stops in appropriate locations, improved links to waiting facilities and improved quality of waiting facilities such as cycle parking. We will therefore work with the County Council as highway authority to secure such improvements including as part of new development where appropriate.

9.3.71 In terms of congestion in the Town Centre, no definitive measures are proposed at this time but the proposed improvements to the B4477 outlined above will help to reduce the numbers of military freight vehicles travelling through the Town Centre. We will continue to work in partnership with the County Council and Town Council to determine other appropriate measures to improve the environment of the town centre.

Retail and Leisure

- 9.3.72 Despite recent improvements, for a town of its size, Carterton's town centre offer remains below par, particularly in terms of comparison (non-food) retail and supporting complimentary uses such as coffee shops, bars and restaurants.
- 9.3.73 The Town Council is keen to turn Carterton Town Centre into a more vibrant and attractive retail and leisure destination. This was a key theme of some design work undertaken on behalf of the Town Council in 2012⁵⁷. One of the recommendations was to provide a new public space and site for the weekly market adjacent to the Town Hall and this has now been implemented.
- 9.3.74 Other recommendations relating to the Town Centre included:
- Improving linkages to the town centre from the rest of the town;
 - Improving the quality of the public realm;
 - Creating attractive, safe and uncluttered streets and spaces for all users of the town centre, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists;
 - Improving the cross roads at the heart of the town;
 - Maintaining and mending the continuity of building frontages to enclose streets and other public spaces to ensure lively and safe places;
 - Improving legibility (way finding and distinctiveness);
 - A complementary and wider range of uses that add to the life and vitality of the town centre, both in the day and at night; and
 - Adding cycle parking and maintaining levels of car parking to serve the town centre
- 9.3.75 Five distinct areas were identified as priorities for action including; the main streets, the cross roads, the market square and adjoining links, the north parade along the Burford Road and the south parade along the Black Bourton Road. A number of recommendations were made for each of these areas including new and improved frontages, better connectivity and an overarching desire to bind the centre together better as a 'single place'.
- 9.3.76 More recently, the Town Council has commissioned a masterplan for Carterton, the emerging draft of which highlights an aspiration to improve the range and quality of shops in Carterton and provide quality restaurants, pubs and night time activities. One of the key principles of the masterplan is to deliver a vibrant and attractive town centre.
- 9.3.77 The masterplan includes a Town Centre strategy which seeks to secure the future role of the town centre, ensure its vitality and viability, widen and secure the retail offer, reduce the number of vacancies and prevent against unsuitable out of town development that would undermine the role of the town centre as well as marketing Carterton as a destination and clear brand.
- 9.3.78 Specific recommendations include:

⁵⁷ Transform Places

- New development opportunities to attract new shops and improve the town centre offer with potential redevelopment sites on Burford Road and Alvescot Road;
- New development opportunities to encourage quality restaurants, cafes and pubs to be located in the town centre;
- Community hub to encourage social networking and address shortfall in youth and community facilities;
- Highway improvements including increased junction capacity and new crossing arrangements at the cross roads;
- New seating and cycle parking;
- Property and public realm enhancement along the main streets to improve the character and resident and visitor experience and bind the centre together as a single place;
- Rationalise existing car parking to the rear of North Parade to ensure efficient use and potential for flexible space for festivals and events;
- Inter-lined features of public art and lighting;
- Interpretation boards or plaques highlighting the history of the town or promoting a town attraction;
- Way finding strategy to include finger post sign or homing beacon to provide orientation; and
- Animation point or passive area with seating along main streets.

9.3.79 The District Council is entirely supportive of improvements being sought to Carterton Town Centre and will work in partnership with the Town Council and other relevant parties to achieve this. Some of these measures are outside the scope of the planning system although many can be directly influenced through new development and the Local Plan therefore has a key role to play.

9.3.80 In order to retain and promote the vitality and viability of the Town Centre, the Local Plan identifies a Primary Shopping Frontage along the southern side of Alvescot Road, part of Black Bourton Road and including the Co-op (see Figure 9.8). This primary area is intended to provide the principal focus for retail uses within the town and the loss of shops to other uses will be resisted.

9.3.81 Secondary Shopping Frontages are identified along the Burford Road, the northern edge of Alvescot Road and part of Black Bourton Road. These areas are intended to include a wider range of shops, leisure uses and services which complement the primary shopping offer of the centre (see Figure 9.8).

9.3.82 The extent of the primary and secondary frontages will be kept under review and redefined if necessary (for example where the redevelopment of an area for retail development would warrant it being included within the primary shopping frontage area).

9.3.83 The Local Plan also supports in principle the redevelopment of a number of opportunity sites within the Town Centre of Carterton. These sites are identified on Figure 9.8 and include the existing shopping parade along Burford Road which represents an underutilised space with

the potential for a much improved frontage to Burford Road and more efficient use of the space potentially in the form of a mixed-use development.

9.3.84 Further opportunities exist along the western edge of Black Bourton Road and the southern edge of Alvescot Road. These present similar opportunities for improved, active frontages with a mix of different uses, together with a much more efficient use of space.

9.3.85 Other town centre improvement measures to be sought by the District Council in partnership with Carterton Town Council include:

- Provision of improved access, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, whilst not precluding the potential for pedestrianisation;
- Improved linkages from the Town Centre to other parts of the town;
- Improvements to the main crossroads area including vehicular, cycle and pedestrian movements and improvements to the adjoining public realm and building frontages;
- The promotion of a distinct and continuous tree-lined 'green avenue' along the main streets;
- The provision of 'gateway' features to properly demarcate arrival into the Town Centre;
- Retention and provision of convenient and sufficient car parking to cater for current and future requirements (to be kept under review);
- Support in principle for the provision of new mixed-use developments of suitable and complementary uses;
- Improved legibility and orientation for residents and visitors; and
- Improvements to the quality of the public realm including the provision of public art and improved street furniture.

9.3.86 The proposed Town Centre strategy is summarised in Policy CA2 below.

Policy CA2 – Carterton Town Centre Strategy

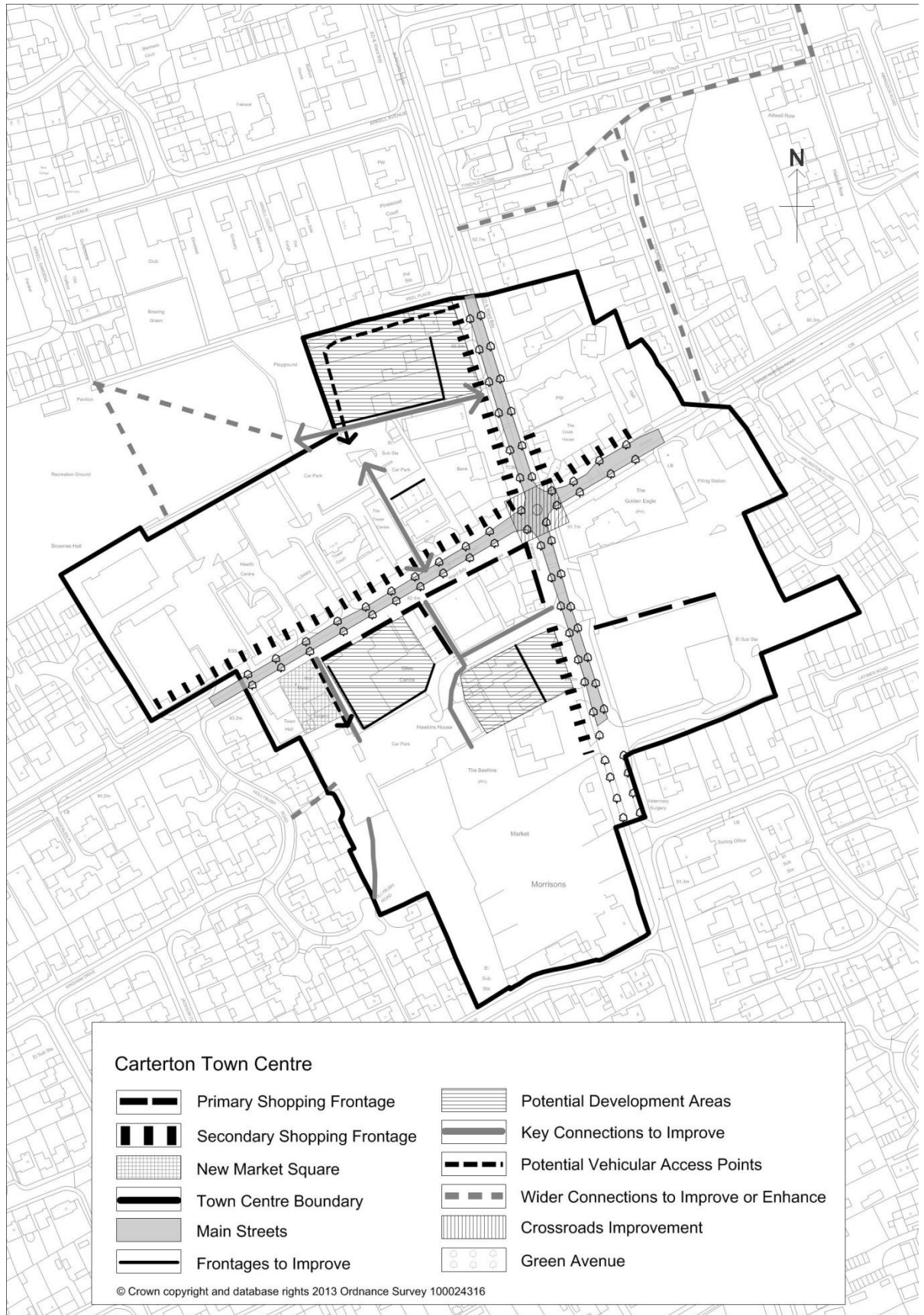
Carterton Town Centre will become the local retail centre of choice for those living and working in the town and surrounding villages:

- **Provide a wider range of well integrated shops, eating and drinking establishments, 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.**
- **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 along the northern side of Alvescot Road, Burford Road and the western side of Black Bourton Road. 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.**
- **Potential redevelopment of a number of opportunity sites including land on the western side of Burford Road, the southern side of Alvescot Road and the western side of Black Bourton Road. To provide more active and vibrant frontages and efficient use of available space potentially through mixed-use development of complementary uses.**
- **The main streets will be promoted as a distinctive tree-lined 'green avenue' with gateway features used to demarcate arrival into the Town Centre.**
- **Improvements to the main crossroads to facilitate vehicular, pedestrian and cycle movement and improve the quality of the surrounding environs.**
- **Improvements to the quality of the public realm including the provision of public art and street furniture.**

Developer contributions and funding from other potential sources will be sought towards these and other Town Centre improvements as appropriate.

Figure 9.9 – Carterton Town Centre Strategy



Environment and Heritage

- 9.3.87 Whilst perhaps not as environmentally sensitive as some parts of the District, there are some important environmental considerations in the Carterton sub-area including the extensive mineral consultation area in the south, the Shill Brook Valley Conservation Target Area (CTA) flood risk and noise from RAF Brize Norton.
- 9.3.88 In relation to mineral extraction the Council will continue to liaise with the County Council as mineral planning authority and the Lower Windrush Valley Project in relation to the future extraction of sand and gravel within the Lower Windrush Valley and related after-use for alternative purposes. We will seek to ensure that new development does not unreasonably sterilise mineral resources or be detrimentally affected by the winning of minerals within this area.
- 9.3.89 In terms of the Shill Brook CTA, in accordance with the overarching aims of the designation we will seek to restore biodiversity and landscape through the restoration and management of habitat. New development will not be permitted where it would have a negative impact on the Shill Brook Valley and where appropriate, we will seek to secure improvements to it through new development.
- 9.3.90 With regard to the River Thames we will seek to support tourism and leisure proposals which are sensitive to and where appropriate enhance the ecological, landscape and heritage value of the River Thames.
- 9.3.91 The issue of flood risk will be carefully considered throughout the Carterton sub-area in accordance with national policy and Policy EH5 of this Local Plan.
- 9.3.92 Noise related to RAF Brize Norton is to some extent an inevitable fact of life for settlements close to the airbase. However, we will seek to ensure that new developments are not adversely affected by noise from the base in accordance with national policy and Policy EH6 of this Local Plan.
- 9.3.93 In terms of the historic environment, this sub-area includes a number of heritage assets including ancient woodland, several Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and numerous listed buildings. In accordance with national policy and Policy EH7 all new development will be expected to conserve or enhance the special character and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's historic environment and preserve or enhance the District's heritage assets and their significance and settings.

Infrastructure

- 9.3.94 There are a number of identified infrastructure needs for Carterton including additional open space, the second phase of the leisure centre, a new fire station, cemetery, enhancement of the Shill Brook Conservation Target Area, allotments, education, pedestrian and cycle links, public transport, highway improvements, public art etc.
- 9.3.95 Some of these will be provided directly as part of new developments (e.g. a new primary school as part of the committed urban extension to the east of Carterton) whilst others will

be provided indirectly through developer contributions and other potential sources of funding.

- 9.3.96 The Council has prepared an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which seeks to quantify the infrastructure improvements that will be needed to support the planned level and distribution of growth set out in the Local Plan. This will form the basis upon which future decisions regarding the provision of new or improved infrastructure will be made along with the Council's CIL regulation 123 list once introduced.
- 9.3.97 In accordance with Policy OS5, we will seek to ensure that all new development within the Carterton sub-area is supported by appropriate and timely provision of necessary supporting infrastructure.

Policy CA3 – Carterton Sub-Area Strategy

The focus of new housing, supporting facilities and additional employment opportunities 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 2,600 new homes to be focused on Carterton and to include affordable housing and homes designed to meet a range of different needs including older people.

redevelopment of existing sub-standard MOD housing including a Strategic Development Area of about 200 dwellings (net) at REEMA Central (see Policy CA1)

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. Working in partnership with the Town Council and landowners to identify further opportunities for business land provision within and adjoining Carterton with the aim of delivering at least 10 hectares of high quality business land over the period of the Local Plan

a stronger and more attractive and well-connected town centre in accordance with the Carterton Town Centre development strategy (Policy CA2)

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 upgrading of the B4477 Minster Lovell Road to A-road standard and supporting complementary measures plus the provision of west facing slip roads at the junction of the B4477 and A40. Developer contributions and other potential sources of funding will be sought as appropriate.

Enhancing the frequency and coverage of bus services to key destinations as well as the quality of waiting facilities and improving conditions throughout the town for pedestrians and cyclists.

maintaining, enhancing and extending the green buffer on the northern edge of Carterton including between Carterton and Brize Norton village

protection and enhancement of the biodiversity and leisure value of the Shill Brook Valley

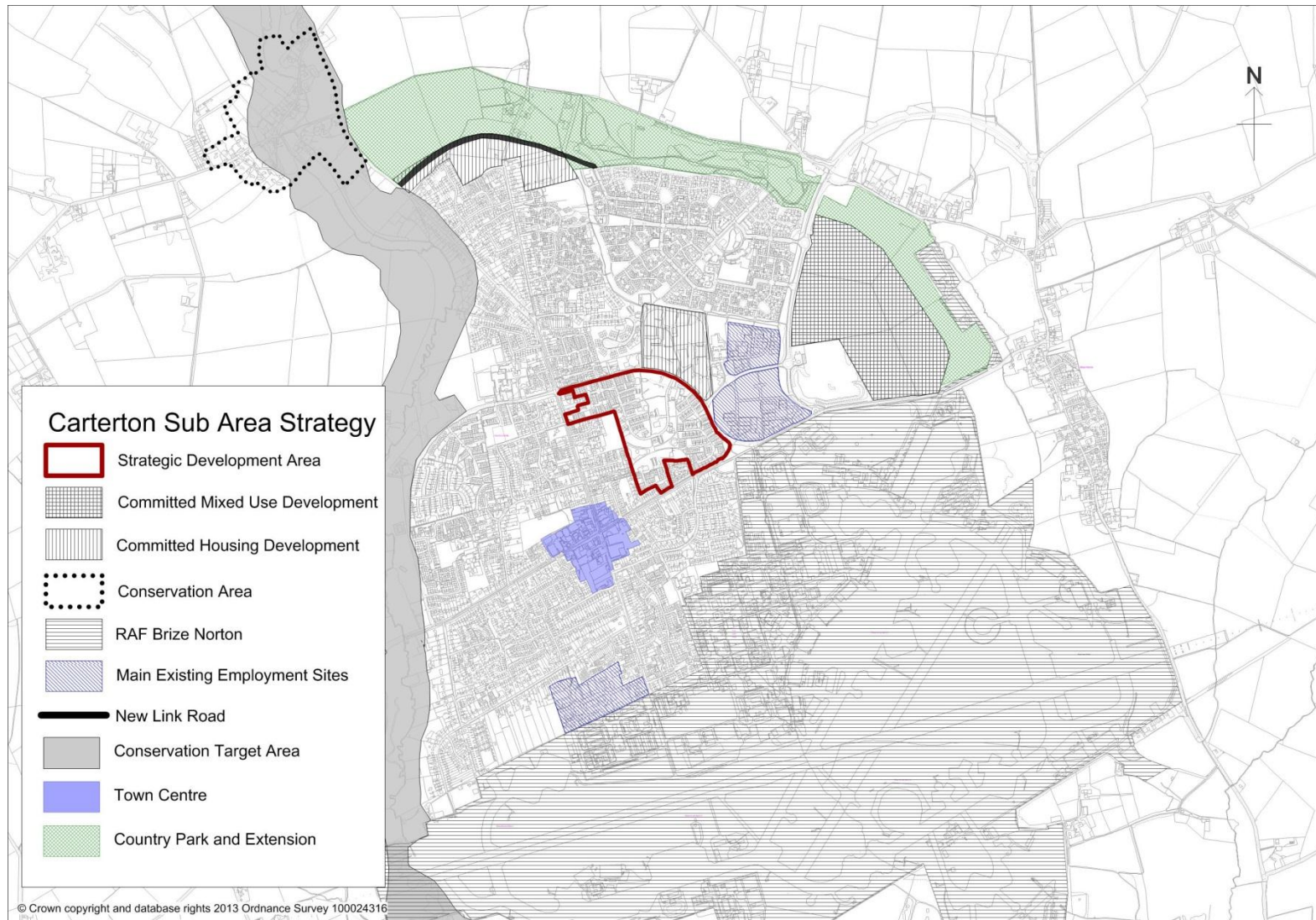
protection and enhancement of the character and setting of Carterton and the identity of neighbouring villages

avoiding development which will be at risk of or increase the risk of flooding and working with landowners/developers and partners such as the Environment Agency to deliver flood mitigation measures

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 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 9.10 Carterton Sub-Area Strategy



Chipping Norton Sub-Area

- 9.4.1 This is the second largest of the five sub-areas covering just over 15,000 hectares. The population is however relatively low with just 13,000 residents half of which live 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.
- 9.4.2 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, a leisure centre with indoor pool (alongside retaining the community run outdoor swimming pool), a golf course and numerous sports clubs and societies. A youth centre has also opened.
- 9.4.3 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.

Figure 9.11 – Chipping Norton Sub-Area



Housing

- 9.4.4 Most of the housing within this sub-area is located in Chipping Norton (about 3,000 houses). 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.
- 9.4.5 House prices are relatively low compared with much of the District but housing affordability remains a key issue with around 98 of those on the Council's housing waiting list having identified Chipping Norton as their preferred location.
- 9.4.6 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.

Employment

- 9.4.7 Chipping Norton prides itself upon being a 'working town', although the number of people living and working in the town has decreased since the 2001 Census from over 50% to just 36%. Levels of home working in this sub-area remain high with around 35% of workers working at or mainly from home.
- 9.4.8 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.
- 9.4.9 There is very limited land available for new business development in Chipping Norton – an issue highlighted in the Council's latest economic evidence⁵⁸. There is a small undeveloped plot of 0.1ha remaining at Cromwell Park, 0.4ha allocated but unavailable at the highway depot off the Banbury Road and 2ha of previously permitted business land on the former Parker Knoll site also unavailable. There remains demand for additional business units, including good quality small industrial units and office space.
- 9.4.10 Elsewhere in the sub area there is a large mainly industrial area at Enstone Airfield and Lotus F1 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.

⁵⁸ West Oxfordshire Economic Snapshot and Outlook (2015) - CAG

Transport

- 9.4.11 Transport is a key issue for this sub-area. 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.
- 9.4.12 An Air Quality Action Plan was approved in October 2008 and contains a range of measures aimed at improving air quality, primarily through reduction of HGV movements through promoting alternative routes. The requirement for a bypass for the town to ease the impact of lorries on the town centre has been previously assessed but not taken forward.
- 9.4.13 In terms of public transport, Chipping Norton is not served by rail but there is a railbus to nearby Kingham Station. Chipping Norton has a good range of bus services for a rural market town but there are some deficiencies in the service network.
- 9.4.14 In terms of pedestrian access, the close proximity between key locations have the potential to make positive contributions towards accessibility across Chipping Norton, though, this is hindered due to the topography and relatively poor connections within the residential areas. Legibility, way-finding and permeability are key issues, particularly within residential areas for pedestrians to access local services, schools, employment areas and the town centre.
- 9.4.15 There are no cycle links to Chipping Norton from the surrounding settlements and within the town some roads are too narrow for cycle paths. Although cyclists can use bridleways, restricted byways and byways (along with horse riders) these often do not connect up safely with roads that are safe to use. Some of the country lanes around Chipping Norton are quiet and attractive for cycling, but the main A and B roads are busier and less attractive.
- 9.4.16 The availability of public car parking in Chipping Norton has been identified as a key constraint affecting the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Retail and Leisure

- 9.4.17 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.
- 9.4.18 Evidence⁵⁹ suggests that the town centre food shopping role is important and helps to support the range of other shops and services as people undertake linked trips to other shops in addition to their food shopping. The town's convenience goods offer will be enhanced through an extension of the existing Co-op and the provision of a new Aldi on the Banbury Road. Evidence suggests there is little capacity for further convenience goods floorspace at Chipping Norton in the period to 2029.

⁵⁹ West Oxfordshire Retail Assessment (2012)

- 9.4.19 In terms of non-food (comparison goods) shopping, Chipping Norton's offer is strong for a town of its size and evidence suggests that there is capacity to support additional comparison goods retail floorspace in the period to 2029.
- 9.4.20 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.

Environment and Heritage

- 9.4.21 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). There are a number of historic parks and gardens including the Great Tew Estate which comprises parkland of late-16th-century origin. A small proportion of the sub-area also falls within the designated Wychwood Project Area which aims to revive the landscape character and mix of habitats found in the area during the middle-ages.
- 9.4.22 Chipping Norton includes a number of locally listed and 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 much of the central area of the town.

Infrastructure

- 9.4.23 Other than the transport issues outlined above, one of the main infrastructure considerations in this sub-area is education. There are currently 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 adequate capacity at secondary school level.
- 9.4.24 Additional affordable homes are also 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.
- 9.4.25 Library provision in the town is relatively poor and the emerging Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan identifies a local aspiration to address this through a civic space which also hosts IT services, public education, local history and well-being centre. Further infrastructure priorities that have been identified include increased car parking capacity, bus terminal, household recycling centre, improved pedestrian links and play areas for children including a skate park, outdoor gym, green spaces/pocket parks.

Scope for Further Expansion

- 9.4.26 The scope for further significant expansion at Chipping Norton is relatively limited. Much of the town and surrounding land to the north and west falls within the Cotwolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which whilst not precluding the possibility of development, clearly influences the ability of the town to grow.
- 9.4.27 Land to the east of the town is located outside of the AONB and offers the only opportunity for significant urban expansion.
- 9.4.28 Within the town there are a number of further development opportunities utilising previously developed (brownfield) land. 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.
- 9.4.29 Outside Chipping Norton, opportunities for further development in the rest of the sub-area are relatively limited due to the nature and size of the settlements and lack of suitable and deliverable land for development.

Key Issues – Summary

- 9.4.30 Drawing on the brief profile outlined above we can identify a number of key issues and challenges to be addressed in relation to the Chipping Norton sub-area. These include:
- A relatively large but sparsely populated sub-area with most people living in Chipping Norton, the District's third largest town.
 - Chipping Norton has an important heritage as a centre of the wool and tweed industries with an extensive Conservation Area and numerous listed buildings plus a scheduled monument.
 - The area has a strong and vibrant community spirit.
 - Surrounding villages look to Chipping Norton which acts as a service centre although Chipping Norton itself looks to Banbury for higher order services and facilities.
 - Provision of new housing in the town has been relatively modest in the past.
 - Housing in Chipping Norton is relatively inexpensive compared to other parts of the District but there is still a high level of affordable housing need.
 - Chipping Norton is generally known as a 'working town' but the number of people living and working in the town has fallen from 50% to 36% since 2001.
 - Levels of home working in the area remain high with around 35% working at or mainly from home.
 - There is very limited business land available to meet future needs.
 - There is a potential opportunity for the modernisation of older employment land stock on the western side of the town.
 - HGV movements through the town are a significant issue in terms of amenity and air quality.
 - The town has no direct rail service although there is a rail bus to Kingham.
 - Bus services are reasonable for a rural market town but there is scope for enhancement.
 - There are no cycle routes into the town and routes within the town itself are poor.

- The town offers good scope for walking given close the proximity of key locations but this is hindered by the topography of the town and poor connections.
- Chipping Norton has a strong convenience goods (food) retail offer which supports the comparison goods (non-food) retail within the town through linked trips. There is limited capacity for further food retail floorspace but scope for additional non-food retail floorspace within the town.
- The availability of adequate public parking capacity is a key constraint in Chipping Norton.
- Chipping Norton as a main service centre offers a good range of services and facilities but a number of infrastructure requirements have been identified including additional primary school capacity, affordable housing, library provision and additional public car parking.
- There is some potential for the utilisation of previously developed land within the town but not enough to meet future housing requirements and as such an urban extension will be needed.

Strategy

9.4.31 Having regard to the profile and key issues outlined above, the strategy for the Chipping Norton sub-area is set out below. Regard should also be had to the emerging Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Housing

9.4.32 In accordance with the overall strategy, the majority of future housing development within this sub-area will be located at Chipping Norton which is the District's third largest town and offers a good range of services and facilities. 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.

9.4.33 It is anticipated that the overall housing requirement (1,800 homes) will be met through a combination of homes already completed, existing commitments, sites identified in the Council's SHLAA, windfall development and an allocated Strategic Development Area (SDA). This is summarised in the table below.

Table 9.3 – Anticipated Housing Delivery in the Chipping Norton Sub-Area

Chipping Norton sub-area indicative housing requirement	1,800
Homes already completed (2011 – 2014)	87
Existing planning commitments as of 1 st February 2015 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cromwell Park (96) • Penhurst School (101) • Rural exception sites (8) • Other permissions (164) 	369

East Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area (SDA)	600
Identified SHLAA capacity	350
Windfall allowance (25 per year 2015 – 2031)	400
Total	1,806

Past completions, existing commitments, SHLAA sites and windfall

9.4.34 In the first three years of the plan period (2011 – 2014) a total of 87 homes have already been completed in the Chipping Norton sub-area. As of 1st February 2015, a further 369 homes already benefit from planning permission or resolution to grant permission subject to Section 106.

9.4.35 In addition, the Council’s SHLAA (June 2014) has identified capacity for around 350 new homes on a number of sites in Chipping Norton. These are assessed in detail in the SHLAA (available separately) and include the following:

- Land south of Walterbush Road/Cotswold Crescent
- Former Castle View Care Home and Ambulance Station
- Former Parker Knoll Site/Rockhill Farm London Road (see below)
- Land at the Pillars, Banbury Road

9.4.36 The possible provision of housing on the former Parker Knoll site (which has been previously reserved for business use) would be dependent on an alternative replacement site being identified for business use elsewhere. A potential site for employment use exists to the north-east at Rockhill Farm on London Road (see Figure 9.11). Alternatively the Rockhill Farm site itself could itself be used for housing with the former Parker Knoll site brought forward for business use. Bringing them both forward for housing would not be appropriate given the identified need for additional business space.

9.4.37 It is also considered appropriate to include a ‘windfall’ allowance to cater for unidentified sites that are likely to come forward for housing over the period of the Local Plan. Based on past evidence, a reasonable estimate is that such schemes would provide 25 homes per year within the Chipping Norton sub-area over the remaining period of the Local Plan (2015 – 2031) thereby providing an additional 400 new homes.

Strategic Development Areas (SDAs)

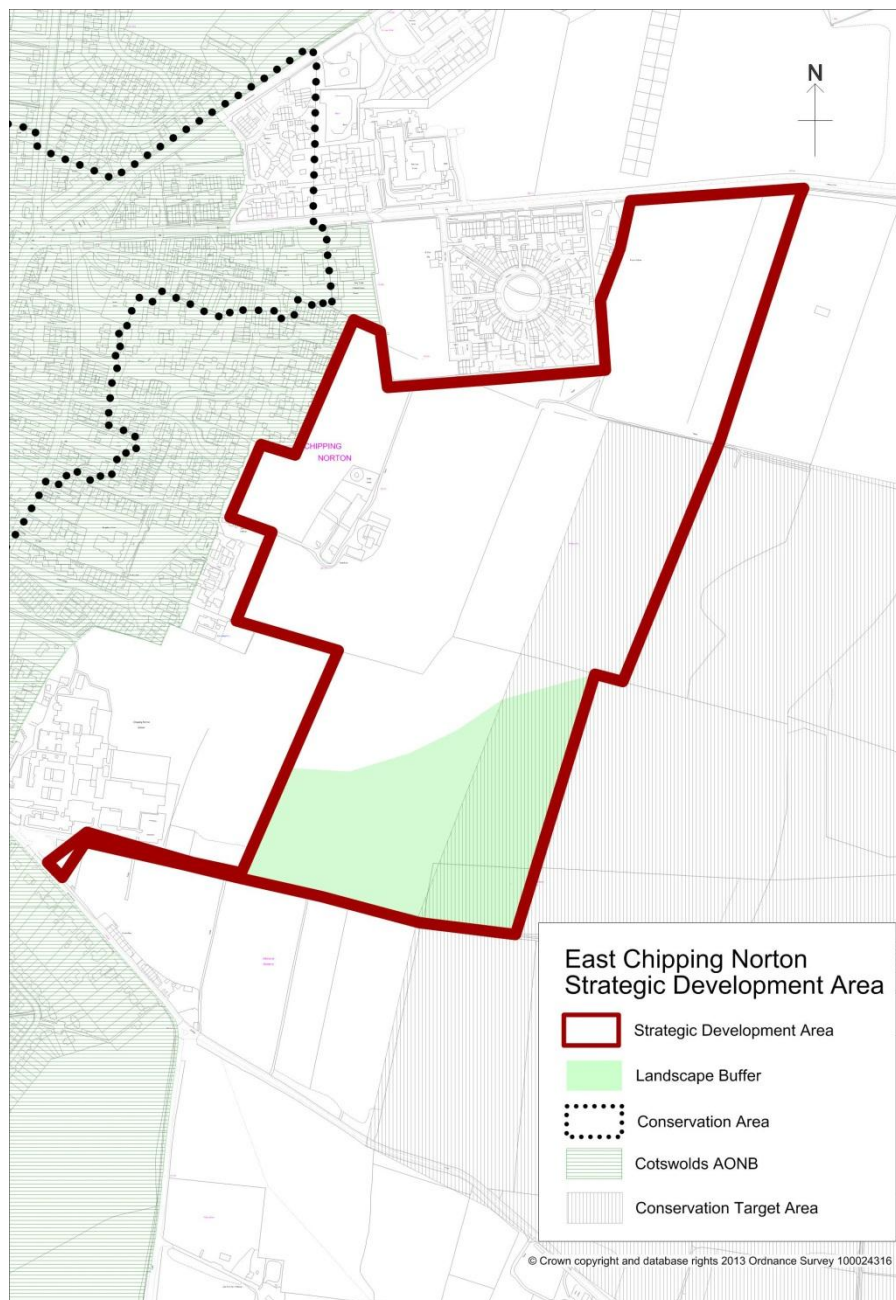
9.4.38 Although there are some opportunities to redevelop brownfield land within Chipping Norton to provide new housing, this will not be sufficient to meet the indicative housing requirement for this sub-area. As such there is a need to consider potential options on the edge of the town. In this regard, the land to the east of the town is generally accepted as the only potential direction in which strategic growth can occur because the other sides of the town fall within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

9.4.39 The site has been subjected to rigorous assessment including Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and is considered to represent a sustainable development opportunity. Further explanation is provided below. Regard should also be had to relevant supporting background evidence.

Land East of Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area (SDA) - 600 homes (Chipping Norton Parish)

- 9.4.40 Land to the east of Chipping Norton which falls within Chipping Norton Parish has been identified as a potential option for growth throughout the preparation of this Local Plan. In response to the increased housing requirement suggested by the Oxfordshire SHMA (2014) the Council consulted on the inclusion of the site in a local plan consultation paper published in August 2014.
- 9.4.41 The draft allocation (500 homes) attracted a number of comments which have since been carefully considered. The Council's assessment of the site has been updated and the Council is satisfied that there are no reasons to preclude the site from the local plan.
- 9.4.42 The site represents a sustainable development opportunity to help meet the future housing needs of West Oxfordshire. It is located within comfortable walking and cycling distance of Chipping Norton Town Centre, it lies outside the AONB, is not affected by flooding or heritage assets and there are no significant constraints to the site coming forward. It is also owned primarily by Oxfordshire County Council who are actively promoting the site.
- 9.4.43 As such, this Local Plan allocates the land to the east of Chipping Norton for the provision of a sustainable urban extension. The indicative capacity of the site has been increased to 600 new homes in order to meet the overall housing target. It is considered that this quantum of development can be accommodated on the site without undue harm in terms of landscape impact subject to appropriate mitigation. It will also help to ensure the viability of a new primary school to be delivered as part of the allocation.
- 9.4.44 The proposed allocation is shown below (note: the extent of the developable area shown is indicative only).

Figure 9.12 – Land East of Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area (SDA)



- 9.4.45 Key considerations for this site include landscape impact, access arrangements, school capacity and the need to create a sustainable, mixed community that integrates effectively with the existing town.
- 9.4.46 In terms of landscape impact, it will be necessary to demonstrate through a landscape led approach to the siting, layout and mass and scale of the development that the proposed quantum of development can be accommodated without undue landscape and visual impact.
- 9.4.47 With regard to access, it is unlikely that a vehicular access can be achieved through the existing residential area to the west or via the track to the south running adjacent to the secondary school. Vehicular access is therefore likely to be achieved from two points, via

Trinity Road onto London Road and via Fowlers Barn onto London Road. The onus will be on the developer to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the County Council as highway authority that satisfactory vehicular access can be achieved.

- 9.4.48 In terms of school capacity, because primary school capacity in Chipping Norton and the surrounding areas is relatively limited, it is a requirement of any proposed development on this site that a new primary school will be provided. The site is close to the existing secondary school where there is adequate capacity to absorb additional pupil numbers.
- 9.4.49 With regard to the mix of uses on the site, given the scale of development proposed it is anticipated that this development will provide a balanced, mixed community with a new school, local centre and other supporting facilities. The scale and mix of uses in the local centre would be intended to meet the needs of the development and not compete with the Town Centre. There is also good potential for the development to include an element of additional business space.
- 9.4.50 Other facilities will be sought as part of the overall mix of development including open space, play facilities and any other requirements identified as being necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

Policy CN1 – East Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area (600 homes)

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

- a) about 600 homes with a balanced and appropriate mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including affordable housing;**
- b) provision for additional business floorspace of around 1.5 ha as part of the overall quantum and mix of development;**
- c) the provision of appropriate landscaping measures to mitigate the potential impact of development;**
- d) satisfactory vehicular access arrangements to be agreed in principle with the highway authority and demonstrated through a robust Transport Assessment (TA);**
- e) the provision of a new primary school on-site (1.5FE (including foundation stage) with 2FE core facilities to enable future expansion of the school);**
- g) provision of local convenience shopping, community and leisure facilities through the creation of a local centre, with due consideration given to any potential impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre;**
- h) green space and biodiversity enhancements including arrangements for future maintenance;**
- i) appropriate measures to mitigate flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods to ensure that post-development surface water run-off rates are attenuated to**

achieve a reduction in greenfield run-off rates. The sustainable drainage systems should be designed to provide a biodiversity enhancement.

j) connection to the mains sewerage network which includes infrastructure upgrades where required including any necessary phasing arrangements.

k) mitigation measures to ensure there is no detrimental impact on groundwater quality

l) 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;

m) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings; and

n) the developer will be required to set aside 5% of the developable plots for those wishing to undertake custom/self-build.

Employment

9.4.51 There is an identified shortage of business land in Chipping Norton. As such, a key element of the local strategy for the sub-area is to increase the supply of business land in suitable, accessible locations.

9.4.52 A number of opportunities have been identified including the proposed SDA to the east of the town which it is anticipated could provide around 1.5ha. In addition, there is the scope to utilise the former Parker Knoll site (1.95ha) and land at Rockhill Farm (2.75ha) for business use as well as the highway depot (0.4ha) and the remainder of the previous Local Plan allocation north of London Road (0.7ha). Total additional provision if all of these sites were to be used for business use would be around 7.3ha.

9.4.53 We will also support the retention of the existing older business sites on the western side of the town and other key employment sites within the rural areas. The principle of modernisation and improvement to ensure premises remain fit for purpose is supported.

9.4.54 New 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.

Transport

9.4.55 Transport is an important issue for the Chipping Norton sub-area. Key issues to address include the impact of HGV movements through the town centre on air quality and amenity, the existence of deficiencies in existing bus services, relatively poor pedestrian and cycling opportunities within the town and the surrounding area and car parking capacity.

9.4.56 In terms of HGV movements, Oxfordshire County Council have commissioned a feasibility study for the implementation of the lorry management measures identified in the Chipping

Norton Air Quality Action Plan. They also propose to conduct a review of the environmental weight restrictions across the County paying particular attention to those areas which are subject to high and significant levels of HGV traffic. This will focus on places which currently do not have any restrictions in force including Chipping Norton.

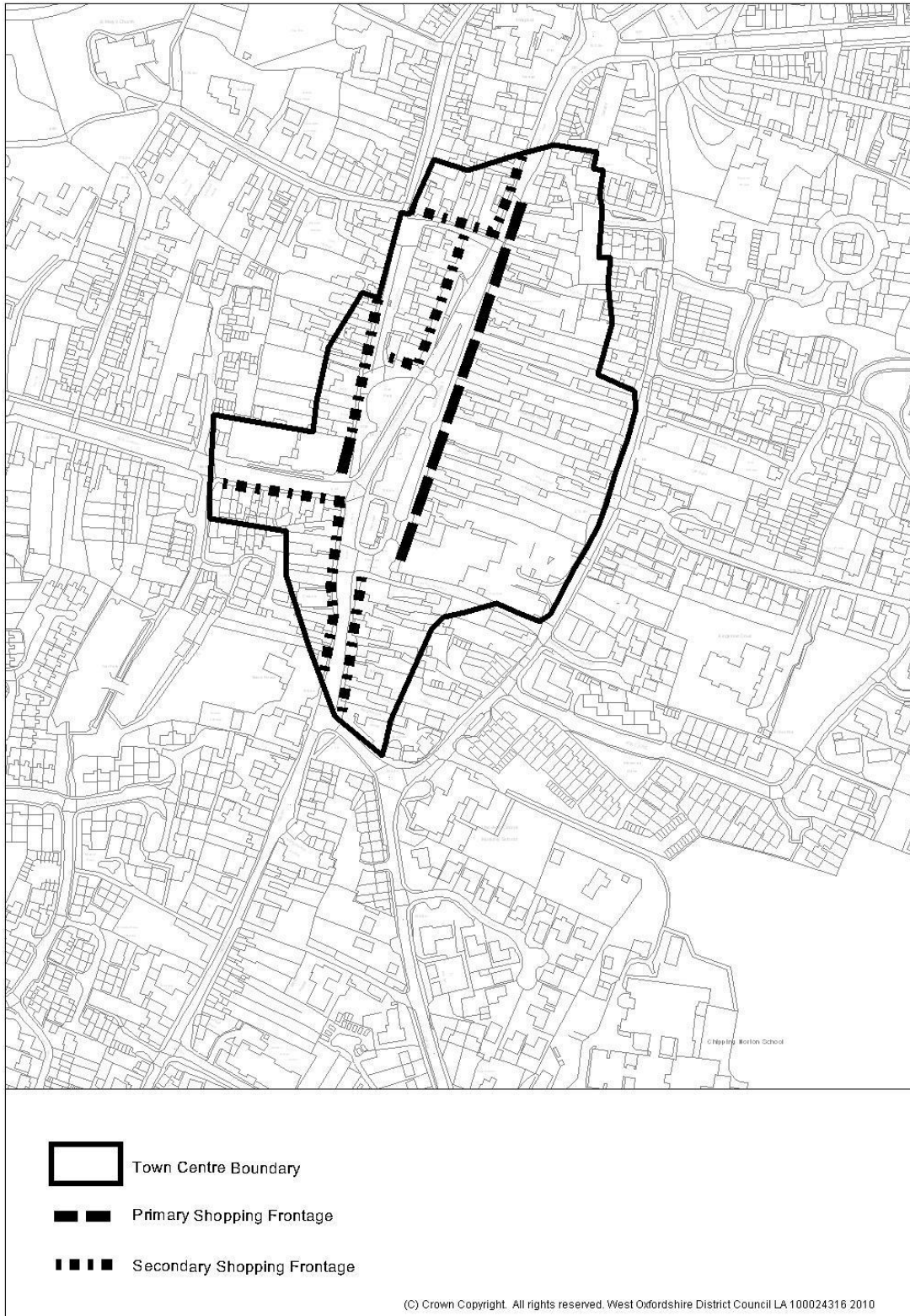
- 9.4.57 We will therefore work in partnership with the County Council, Chipping Norton Town Council and other relevant parties to implement the necessary improvements to alleviate the impact of HGVs on the Town Centre.
- 9.4.58 In terms of bus service provision, Chipping Norton is reasonably well-served for a rural market town but there is scope for further enhancement. In the emerging Neighbourhood Plan the Town Council has identified the potential provision of a new bus terminal under their identified infrastructure requirements. We will therefore work with the Town Council, County Council and bus operators to improve the range, frequency and speed of bus services to key destinations as well as seeking to improve the quality and availability of waiting facilities and considering the potential provision of a new bus terminal. Where appropriate, we will seek the provision of improvements to bus services through new development either directly as part of the development or through an appropriate financial contribution.
- 9.4.59 In terms of walking and cycling, the relatively compact nature of the town means there is good scope for encouraging more active forms of travel which will also have a number of health benefits. We will work with the County Council to identify necessary improvements to facilitate the movement of pedestrians and cyclists in and around the town and surrounding areas including new and enhanced routes as well as the provision of cycle parking at key destinations.
- 9.4.60 Public car parking capacity in Chipping Norton will be further assessed in 2015 as part of the Council's emerging Parking Strategy. Improvements to the efficiency and availability of public car parking in Chipping Norton will be sought as appropriate.

Retail and Leisure

- 9.4.61 Chipping Norton is the main focus for retail and leisure activities within this sub-area. The town has a strong and diverse retail offer but remains vulnerable to out of centre development. We will through the Local Plan therefore seek to safeguard and reinforce the role of Chipping Norton Town Centre.
- 9.4.62 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.
- 9.4.63 There may be potential for further proposals in the town centre 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.

9.4.64 Parking availability will be further assessed with any necessary improvements identified as appropriate.

Figure 9.13 – Chipping Norton Town Centre



Environment and Heritage

- 9.4.65 The sub-area is environmentally sensitive containing a large proportion of AONB, areas of ancient woodland, historic parks and gardens and part of the Wychwood Project Area. In accordance with national policy and relevant policies of this Local Plan we will ensure that these areas are safeguarded from the harmful impact of inappropriate forms of development.
- 9.4.66 In accordance with Policy EH1 and national policy, any proposed development within the AONB will be expected to conserve landscape and scenic beauty and major developments will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest.
- 9.4.67 The historic environment is also a key consideration in this sub-area with several Conservation Areas, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens and numerous listed buildings. In accordance with national policy and Policy EH7 all new development will be expected to conserve or enhance the special character and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's historic environment and preserve or enhance the District's heritage assets and their significance and settings.

Infrastructure

- 9.4.68 There are a number of identified infrastructure needs for Chipping Norton including additional public car parking, primary education, leisure facilities, library provision, play facilities, public transport improvements and pedestrian and cycle links.
- 9.4.69 Some of these will be provided directly as part of new developments (e.g. a new primary school as part of the proposed Strategic Development Area to the east of the town) whilst others will be provided indirectly through developer contributions and other potential sources of funding.
- 9.4.70 The IDP seeks to quantify the infrastructure improvements that will be needed to support the planned level and distribution of growth set out in the Local Plan. This will form the basis upon which future decisions regarding the provision of new or improved infrastructure will be made along with the Council's CIL regulation 123 list once introduced. CIL revenues passed to local communities including the Town Council will be able to be spent on locally identified infrastructure priorities including those identified in the emerging Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 9.4.71 In accordance with Policy OS5, we will seek to ensure that all new development within the Chipping Norton sub-area is supported by appropriate and timely provision of necessary supporting infrastructure.

Policy CN2 – Chipping Norton Sub-Area Strategy

The focus of new housing, supporting facilities and additional employment opportunities 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 the sub-area should be consistent with the strategy which includes:

Delivery of around 1,800 new homes to be focused on Chipping Norton to include affordable housing and homes designed to meet a range of different needs including older people.

A strategic mixed-use development area of around 600 dwellings on the eastern side of Chipping Norton (see Policy CN1)

Retention and where appropriate modernisation of existing business premises together with the provision of additional business land of at least 4.5 hectares and up to 7.3 hectares located on the eastern side of the town.

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 the range, frequency and speed of bus services to key destinations.

improving conditions throughout the town and surrounding areas 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.

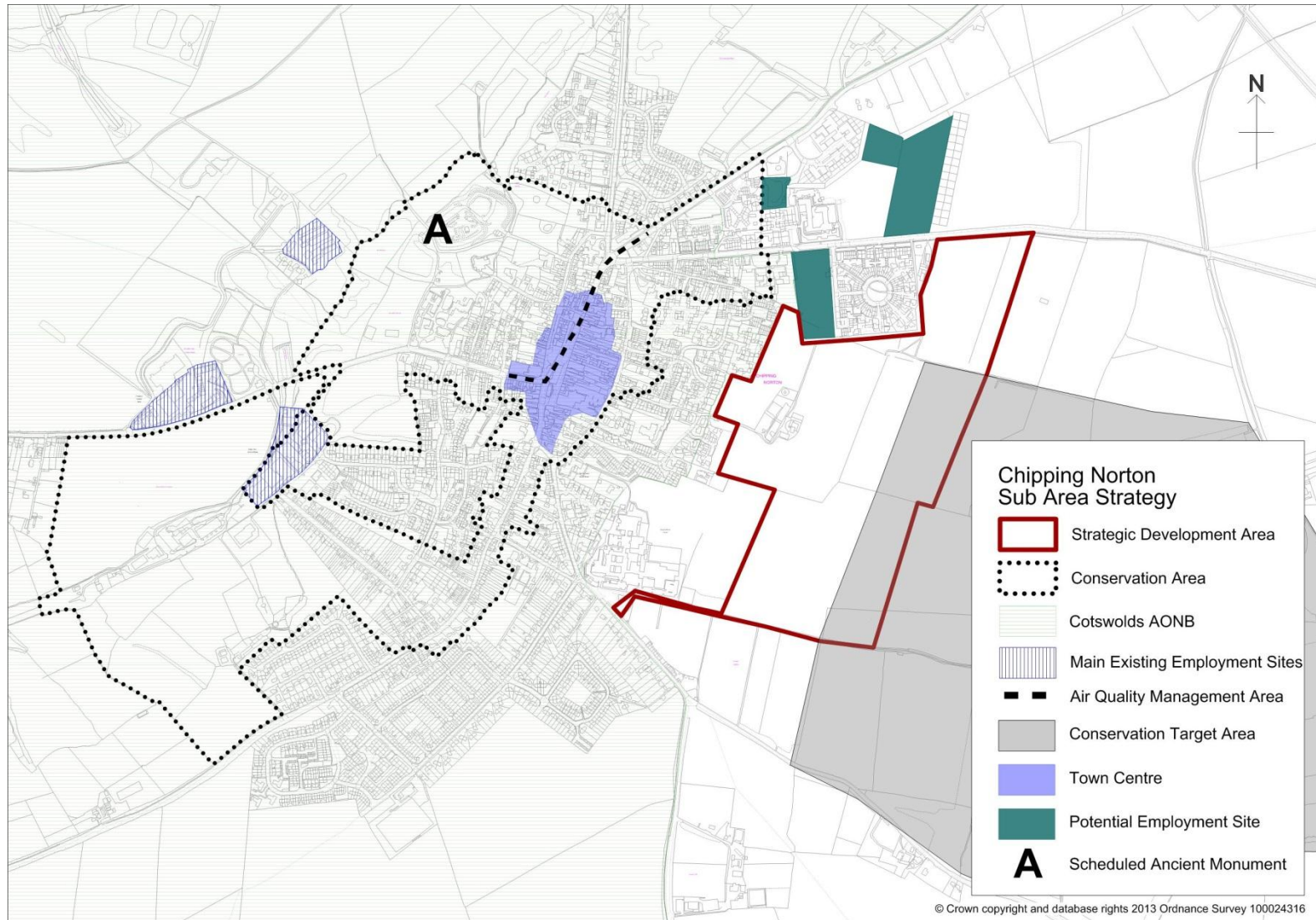
management of public car parking areas and the provision of adequate public car parking capacity to help support the town centre.

ensuring that new development makes appropriate and timely provision for necessary supporting infrastructure.

provision of new education and community facilities.

Redevelopment of suitable previously developed sites within the town provided they are not of high environmental value and the loss any existing use would not conflict with other relevant plan policies.

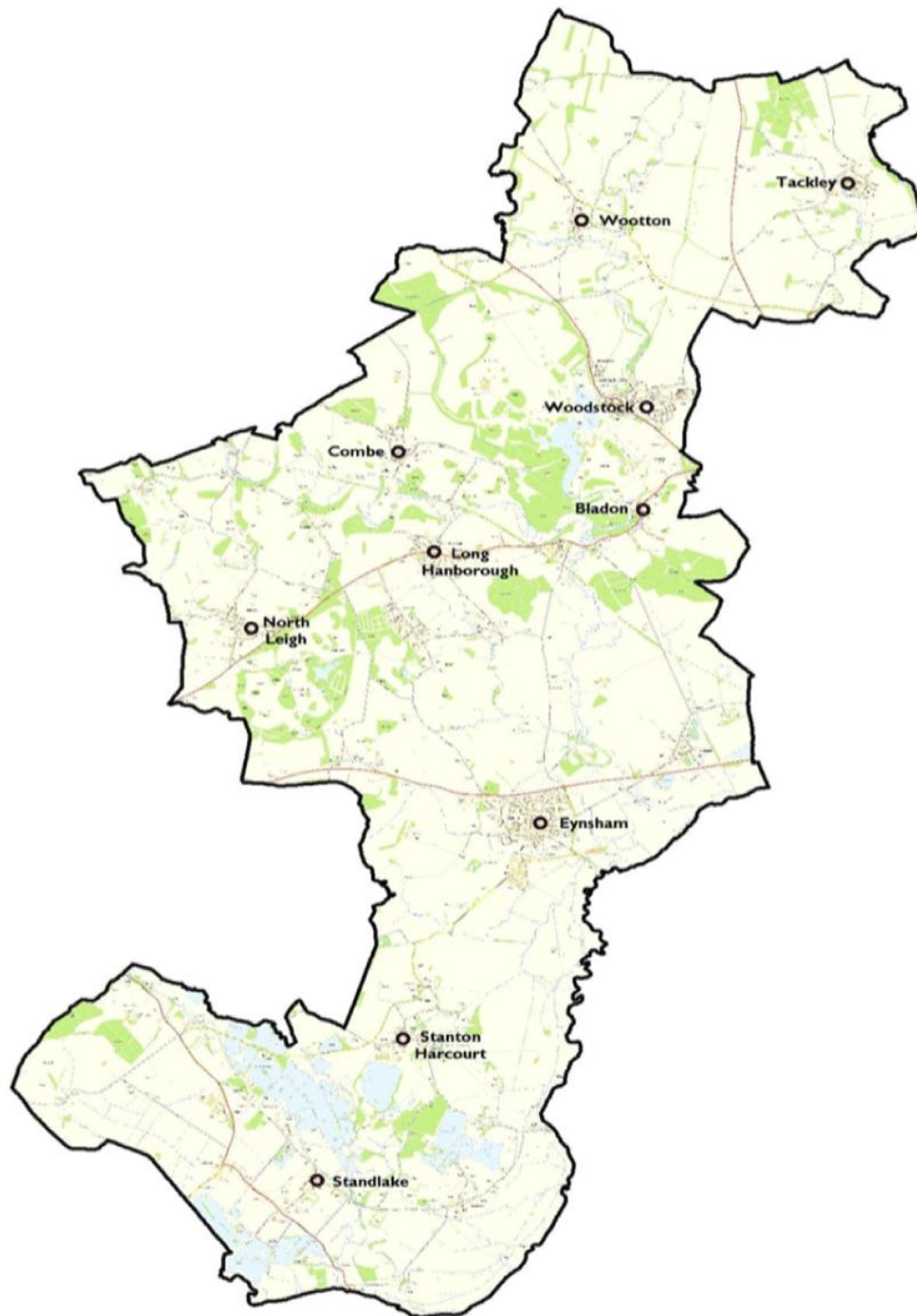
Figure 9.14 – Chipping Norton Sub-Area Strategy



Eynsham – Woodstock Sub-Area

- 9.5.1 This is the third largest sub-area covering around 14,000 hectares and accommodating a population of around 21,000 people. 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.
- 9.5.2 Long Hanborough developed as a linear village along the now A4095 and is one of the smaller designated 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. Primary school capacity is however an issue.
- 9.5.3 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 there are almost 200 listed buildings. The Blenheim World Heritage Site (WHS) 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).
- 9.5.4 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.

Figure 9.15 – Eynsham – Woodstock Sub-Area



Housing

9.5.5 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 to the east and an affordable housing development completed to the west are the most significant residential developments to have taken place in recent years.

- 9.5.6 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 railway station just to the east of the village.
- 9.5.7 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 permission has been granted for new residential development to the east of the town adjacent to Marlborough school and significant developer interest remains on land to the south east of the town on land abutting the District boundary.

Employment

- 9.5.8 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. Evidence⁶⁰ suggests that Eynsham is a key employment location and alongside Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton, should cater for the bulk of demand for business premises within the District.
- 9.5.9 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.
- 9.5.10 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.
- 9.5.11 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. As a result around 30% of workers in this sub-area travel to work in Oxford. This contributes towards traffic congestion along key routes including the A40 and A44.

⁶⁰ West Oxfordshire Economic Snapshot and Outlook (2015) – CAG

Transport

- 9.5.12 As outlined above, transport is a key issue for this sub-area. The A40 runs east-west through it and significant congestion occurs between Eynsham and Oxford at peak times. This also has a knock-on effect as drivers choose to avoid the A40 by using the A4095 through Long Hanborough and Bladon before joining the A44 just south of Woodstock. This leads to large volumes of through traffic in those villages and congestion on the A44 approaches to Oxford.
- 9.5.13 A further key issue for Eynsham is the congestion caused at peak times by the Swinford Toll Bridge to the south east as drivers opt to use the B4044 as a further alternative to the A40 for travel into and beyond Oxford.
- 9.5.14 Further pressure on the primary routes is caused by industrial traffic from the Lower Windrush area which often travels north, due to inadequate river crossings to the south (e.g. Newbridge).
- 9.5.15 Woodstock lies on the A44 and high through traffic levels (particularly lorries) have long been an issue for the town. An advisory route to divert freight traffic away from the A44 has been introduced and this has reduced some of the heavy goods traffic but not eliminated them.
- 9.5.16 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. Parking facilities have recently been expanded at Long Hanborough to improve capacity and there are aspirations for further improvements including platform lengthening, line redoubling and the provision of better station facilities.
- 9.5.17 Eynsham has access to very good bus services, with regular premium services to Oxford, Witney and Carterton. There is a need to improve bus journey times however through Eynsham and approaching the Wolvercote roundabout on the edge of Oxford. Funding of £35m has been made available through the local growth fund and will be used to implement improvements. The County Council has identified the possibility of a park and ride site at Eynsham. Woodstock is served by the S3 premium bus service to Oxford, Charlbury and Chipping Norton.
- 9.5.18 Public transport in the south of the sub area is more limited however, due to the relative isolation of settlements from the rail network and the lack of bus service provision between villages and key destinations.
- 9.5.19 Opportunities for walking, cycling and riding within the sub area are generally good due to the close proximity of Witney and Oxford to key settlements in the area, as well as public transport links for onward travel and key visitor destinations near to towns and villages. There is a dedicated cycle route running along the A40 from Witney to Oxford.
- 9.5.20 The availability of car parking in town centres, particularly Woodstock has been consistently highlighted as a key issue throughout consultation on the Local Plan.

Retail and Leisure

- 9.5.21 The widest retail offer is 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.
- 9.5.22 Long Hanborough has a small number of shops and Eynsham is an important local service centre also providing 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.
- 9.5.23 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 but there is good potential for suitable forms of tourism and leisure activity.
- 9.5.24 The Lower Windrush Valley, particularly in the Stanton Harcourt/Standlake area, has long been associated with the extraction of sand and gravel and subsequent restoration to form lakes, providing an extensive area for windsurfing, fishing, watersports and bird watching. The Lower Windrush Valley Project 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.

Environment and Heritage

- 9.5.25 This is a sensitive area both in terms of the natural and historic environment. In relation to the natural environment, a small area of 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).
- 9.5.26 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. There are a number of other historic parks and gardens, conservation areas and scheduled monuments scattered across the sub-area.

Infrastructure

- 9.5.27 In addition to the transport issues outlined above, infrastructure considerations in this sub-area include primarily 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.
- 9.5.28 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, Bladon and Long Hanborough.
- 9.5.29 Like the rest of the District, there is a need for more affordable housing and housing for older people.

Scope for Further Expansion

- 9.5.30 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 three rural service centres, Eynsham, Woodstock and Long Hanborough.
- 9.5.31 At Eynsham there is some scope for further development within the existing built up area and on the fringe of the village including land to the west. The Council's evidence suggests that there is scope for additional business land provision to support the current economic role of Eynsham.
- 9.5.32 There is also some scope for further development at Long Hanborough although the capacity of the local primary school is a key 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.
- 9.5.33 Opportunities for development elsewhere in the sub-area are relatively limited and in accordance with the overall strategy, will be focused on the larger villages.

Key Issues - Summary

- 9.5.34 Drawing on the brief profile outlined above we can identify a number of key issues and challenges to be addressed in relation to the Eynsham - Woodstock sub-area. These include:
- This is the third largest sub-area and is well populated with most people living at the three main settlements of Eynsham, Woodstock and Long Hanborough.
 - House prices in this sub-area are amongst the highest in the District.

- This area is an important source of employment providing around 25% of the District's total number of job opportunities. Eynsham in particular is an important location for business.
- There are very strong linkages with Oxford, with a high proportion of residents working in the city and much of the economic activity forming part of the wider Oxford city region economy.
- Tourism plays an important role in terms of the economy in particular at Woodstock.
- Parking capacity is an important consideration in some locations including Woodstock.
- Extensive sand and gravel resources in the lower Windrush Valley mean this is a major area of mineral working much of which is designated as a mineral consultation area. Appropriate after-use of mineral sites is an important issue and opportunity.
- There is severe traffic congestion on the A40 between Eynsham and Oxford at peak times and on other key routes including the A4095 and A44.
- The area has good rail service availability with railway stations at Tackley, Combe and Long Hanborough.
- There are also some good bus services available although less so in the southern part of the sub-area where access to key bus routes is less proximate and convenient.
- This is an environmentally sensitive area including AONB, Green Belt, mineral consultation area and part of a special area of conservation (SAC).
- The area is also important in terms of heritage with Conservation Areas and a number of listed buildings in Long Hanborough, Eynsham and Woodstock and the Blenheim World Heritage Site (WHS) at Woodstock.
- There is an identified requirement for additional leisure provision in this area.
- Availability of adequate school capacity to accommodate future development is an issue in some locations.
- There is potential for further development primarily at the rural service centres of Long Hanborough, Eynsham and Woodstock.

Strategy

9.5.35 Having regard to the profile and key issues outlined above, the strategy for the Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area is set out below.

Housing

9.5.36 In accordance with the overall strategy additional housing development in this sub-area will be focused primarily at Eynsham, Long Hanborough and Woodstock as designated rural service centres, with any additional development steered mainly towards the larger villages.

9.5.37 The indicative housing requirement for this sub-area is 1,600 homes in the period 2011 – 2031. It is anticipated that this will be met through a combination of homes already completed, existing commitments, sites identified in the Council's SHLAA and windfall development. No sites are proposed to be allocated through the Local Plan at this stage. This is summarised in the table below.

Table 9.4 – Anticipated Housing Delivery in the Eynsham - Woodstock Sub-Area

Eynsham - Woodstock sub-area indicative housing requirement	1,600
Homes already completed (2011 – 2014)	315
Existing planning commitments as of 1 st February 2015 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land north of Marlborough School (58)• Rural exception sites (35)• Other permissions (297)	387
Identified SHLAA capacity	529
Windfall allowance (25 per year 2015 – 2031)	400
Total	1,631

Past completions, existing commitments, SHLAA sites and windfall

9.5.38 In the first three years of the plan period (2011 – 2014) a total of 315 homes have already been completed in the Eynsham - Woodstock sub-area. As of 1st February 2015, a further 387 homes already benefit from planning permission or resolution to grant permission subject to Section 106.

9.5.39 In addition, the Council's SHLAA (June 2014) has identified capacity for up to 529 new homes. These include:

- Land at Church Road, Long Hanborough
- Land west of Eynsham
- Land east of Woodstock

9.5.40 It is also considered appropriate to include a 'windfall' allowance to cater for unidentified sites that are likely to come forward for housing over the period of the Local Plan. Based on past evidence, a reasonable estimate is that such schemes would provide 25 homes per year within the Eynsham - Woodstock sub-area over the remaining period of the Local Plan (2015 – 2031) thereby providing an additional 400 new homes.

Employment

9.5.41 The Council's economic evidence highlights the importance of the Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area for employment and business. This area has a skilled resident workforce a number of whom are employed in managerial positions and has a strong functional relationship with Oxford City and the Oxford City Region.

9.5.42 No site allocations are proposed at this stage but the Council will work with landowners and developers as well as Town and Parish Councils to identify suitable opportunities in appropriate, sustainable locations including through the anticipated early review of this Local Plan. These will be focused on the rural service centres with a particular focus on Eynsham. Existing sites will be safeguarded in accordance with Policy E1 and the Council will

support in principle the potential modernisation of existing business premises to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

9.5.43 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.

9.5.44 The importance of the tourist economy particularly to Woodstock is recognised and appropriate uses to reinforce that role will be supported in principle. The Council will also work with relevant partners to further investigate the opportunity for appropriate forms of tourist activity relating to the River Thames.

Transport

9.5.45 Transport is an important issue in this area. Traffic congestion on the A40 and A44 is severe at peak times. HGV movements through Woodstock have long been a concern for the town. Rail connectivity is relatively good with a number of stations on two lines. However, bus services in some areas are relatively limited and those available in the larger settlements including Eynsham experience journey time delays due to congestion on the A40 and surrounding road network. Walking and cycling opportunities are reasonable including a high quality link from Eynsham to Oxford along the A40. There is however scope for further enhancement. Parking is a key consideration with capacity at Woodstock having been highlighted through consultation as a particular concern.

9.5.46 In terms of the highway network, we will work in partnership with the County Council to take forward necessary improvements with the A40 being the top priority. The award of £35m through the Local Growth Fund offers the potential to make a significant improvement to the current situation which would have benefits for other areas if traffic using those could be encouraged to remain on the A40 instead of seeking alternative quicker routes. We will work with the County Council and other relevant partners to ensure the funding is used in a timely and effective manner. The IDP identifies the potential provision of a park and ride site at Eynsham which could come forward as part of a package of improvement measures.

9.5.47 We will also work with the County Council to consider what measures could be introduced to reduce the impact of HGV traffic at Woodstock.

9.5.48 In terms of public transport we will work with rail providers and other relevant parties to consider any necessary enhancements to stations and station facilities including parking availability. With regard to bus services we will seek to ensure that the coverage, frequency and speed of bus services within this sub-area is maximised. The County Council has aspirations to upgrade existing bus stops, enhance frequencies, improve journey times and where appropriate, we will seek public transport improvements from new development either directly or through a financial contribution. The bus route from Woodstock to Burford through Long Hanborough and Witney will be promoted, to provide better access to key tourist destinations and the national rail network.

9.5.49 Active travel will be positively encouraged to capitalise on the proximity of this sub-area to Oxford City. Existing pedestrian and cycle routes will be safeguarded and opportunities for

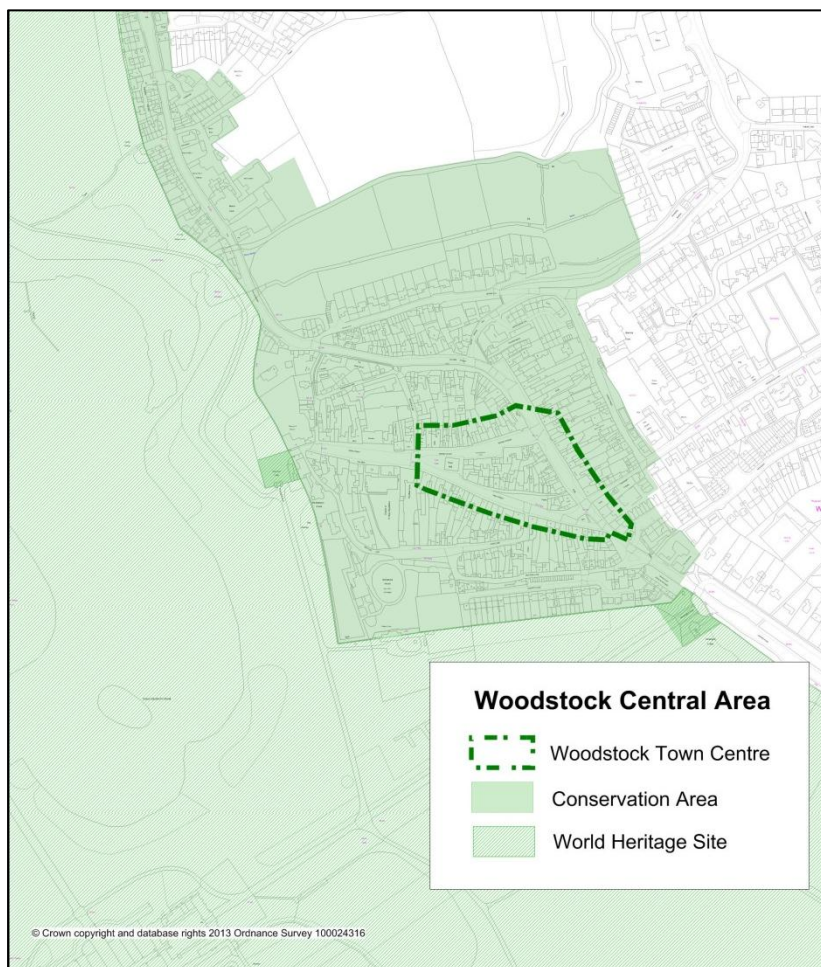
new and enhanced routes will be identified. Where appropriate, we will seek walking and cycling schemes from new development either directly or through a financial contribution. Initial work has been instigated by a local group called 'bikesafe' looking at the potential to introduce a dedicated cycle route along the B4044 Eynsham Road. The Council will work with the group and other relevant partners including the County Council to further consider the merits and possibility of this scheme being taken forward.

9.5.50 Parking capacity will be further considered through the Council's emerging Parking Strategy and any necessary enhancements will be incorporated into the Council's IDP.

Retail and Leisure

9.5.51 The primary focus for retail and leisure provision will be the rural service centres with a particular focus on Woodstock and Eynsham. A Town Centre boundary is defined for Woodstock (see Figure 9. 12) and the loss of shops of other town centre uses within the centre will be resisted. New retail proposals will be considered in accordance with the Town Centre first approach set out in Policy E5 and the NPPF.

Figure 9.16 – Woodstock Town Centre Boundary



- 9.5.52 Suitable and compatible forms of leisure will be positively encouraged in this area. We will work with the County Council, mineral operators and the Lower Windrush Valley Project in relation to leisure uses within the Lower Windrush Valley.
- 9.5.53 The Council will work with partners including 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. Better access including car parking is one element that could be improved to support leisure and recreation.

Environment and Heritage

- 9.5.54 This sub-area has a number of environmental sensitivities including part of the Oxford Green Belt, the Oxford Meadows SAC nearby, part of the Cotswolds AONB, several areas of ancient woodland and the Lower Windrush Valley Conservation Target Area.
- 9.5.55 Proposals affecting the Green Belt will be determined in accordance with national policy. Proposals within or affecting the AONB will be determined in accordance with Policy EH1 and the NPPF. Any proposed development within the AONB will be expected to conserve landscape and scenic beauty and major developments will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest.
- 9.5.56 The Council will work with partners in relation to the Lower Windrush Valley CTA and where appropriate, development will be expected to make a positive contribution either directly or through a financial contribution.
- 9.5.57 In accordance with national policy and Policy EH7 all new development will be expected to conserve or enhance the special character and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's historic environment and preserve or enhance the District's heritage assets and their significance and settings. Particular regard will be had to the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site.

Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site

- 9.5.58 Following international evaluation, in 1987 the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site was 'designated' by the 11th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Helsinki. UNESCO's operational guidelines state that 'World Heritage Sites are places of outstanding universal value to the whole of humanity.'
- 9.5.59 Outstanding universal value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries.' Through the designation, UNESCO recognised that Blenheim Palace and its landscaped Park represented a new style of planning and architecture which went on to have a great influence worldwide. The Palace is set in a Park designated by 'Capability' Brown, regarded as a masterpiece of the highest order and widely considered to be a 'naturalistic Versailles'. Together, the Palace and the Park are unique in the world.

- 9.5.60 World Heritage Sites are designated heritage assets of the highest importance. In line with the NPPF, the OUV of the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site, its setting, integrity and authenticity, will be protected, conserved and enhanced and its sustainable use promoted.
- 9.5.61 The Site is a valuable asset of local, national and international significance, providing a wide variety of benefits, including contributing to conservation, biodiversity, access and a sense of community and place. There are also substantial economic benefits to West Oxfordshire and the surrounding region, with, for example, Blenheim attracting over 600,000 tourists each year and bringing investment into local businesses. The Estate itself is one of the largest employers in the area.
- 9.5.62 A World Heritage Management Plan has been produced for Blenheim Palace which aims to sustain and conserve the OUVs of the Site, recognising the wide variety of possible benefits achievable through positive management. The Plan is a pioneering document, delivering both the requirements of a World Heritage Site Management Plan and those of a Heritage Management Plan in one integrated approach. Given its importance in helping to sustain and enhance the significance of the World Heritage Site, the involvement of key stakeholders and its on-going monitoring and reviewing, the Management Plan is a material planning consideration when assessing development proposals.
- 9.5.63 The Blenheim Palace World Heritage Management Plan:
- sets out a vision for the sustainable future of the historic, scenic, scientific, cultural and social qualities of Blenheim Palace and Park, such that it will protect both World Heritage Site designation and the National Heritage designation;
 - provides guidance to the Estate trustees and their advisers on practical management planning, to help plan and prioritise tasks and to inform annual financial and operational plans;
 - ensures the careful maintenance and conservation (and enhancement where possible) of the Palace and Park, its associated buildings and grounds, informed by continued historical and scientific research;
 - adopts an holistic approach to conservation of the site which balances its many and varied qualities;
 - encourages high standards in the restoration of historic features and design of any appropriate new developments, features or landscaped areas which may be proposed in the future.
- 9.5.64 The vision for Blenheim Estate in the Management Plan is to:
- maintain and manage the Palace and Park to preserve and enhance their character and, where necessary, repair significant buildings or replant parts of the Park in accordance with the objectives of the Management Plan;
 - use management practices that are consistent with the above and which are designed to conserve the heritage qualities of the plan area and its OUV through appropriate and sustainable policies and practices;
 - protect the existing opportunities for public access including existing public rights of way within the Park and the access arrangements to the Palace and grounds;

- enhance the qualities of visitor facilities and achieve new levels of excellence in visitor management and related experiences as one of the UK's top tourism destinations;
- interpret and present the history of Blenheim Palace and Park to a larger and more diverse audience, and continue to promote high quality education programmes.

9.5.65 UNESCO emphasise the importance of protecting 'the immediate setting' of a World Heritage Site and of 'important views and other areas or attributes that are functionally important as a support to the Property'. The Management Plan considered these issues and concluded that one of the unique qualities of the Site is that it is self-contained.

9.5.66 The Palace and Park are contained within walled grounds. The Blenheim Palace wall extends around the boundary of the World Heritage Site and is some nine miles in length. Views into it and from it are largely obscured by the wall, by trees and by undulating topography of the landscape.

9.5.67 There are, however, a number of places from where there are important views both into and from Blenheim Palace. These are identified in the Management Plan. The setting of the site will be protected through Policy EW1 (see below) and also through other designations: Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Ancient Woodland, Oxford Green Belt and Conservation Areas at Woodstock and Bladon.

Policy EW1 – Blenheim World Heritage Site

The exceptional cultural significance (Outstanding Universal Value) of the Blenheim World Heritage Site will be protected, promoted and conserved for current and future generations.

Accordingly, proposals which conserve and enhance the attributes and components that comprise the Outstanding Universal Value of the Site, as identified in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value Statement and in line with the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site Management Plan, will be supported.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, development proposals that would lead to substantial harm to or loss of those attributes and components of the Site will be unacceptable, unless it can be demonstrated that any such harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefit that outweigh that harm or loss. Such harm will be wholly exceptional. Where development proposals would lead to less than substantial harm to those attributes and components, that harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals.

When assessing the impact of a proposed development on the Outstanding Universal Value, great weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the Outstanding Universal Value and to the integrity and authenticity of the World Heritage Site.

Consideration of impact will be made of proposals within, or potentially affecting, the World Heritage Site and its setting, including areas identified as being of special importance for the preservation of long distance views to and/or from the Site (as shown on the Blenheim Palace Management Plan). Particular regard will be given to the design quality of the proposal (including scale, form and massing), its relationship to context (including topography, built form, views, vistas and effect on the skyline) and the implications of the cumulative effect of changes.

By helping to sustain and enhance the significance of the World Heritage Site, the Blenheim Palace Management Plan is a material consideration in assessing development proposals. Proposals relating to the World Heritage Site should seek to support the aims and objectives of the Management Plan.

Infrastructure

- 9.5.68 Infrastructure capacity is an important issue for this area. In addition to the transport related requirements outlined above other identified issues include leisure and education. Like the rest of the District, there is a need for more affordable housing and housing for older people.
- 9.5.69 Some of these will be provided directly as part of new developments whilst others will be provided indirectly through developer contributions and other potential sources of funding. The IDP seeks to quantify the infrastructure improvements that will be needed to support the planned level and distribution of growth set out in the Local Plan.

9.5.70 This will form the basis upon which future decisions regarding the provision of new or improved infrastructure will be made along with the Council's CIL regulation 123 list once introduced. CIL revenues passed to local communities will be able to be spent on locally identified infrastructure priorities.

9.5.71 In accordance with Policy OS5, we will seek to ensure that all new development within the Eynsham - Woodstock sub-area is supported by appropriate and timely provision of necessary supporting infrastructure.

Policy EW2 – 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 1,600 new homes to include affordable housing and homes designed to meet a range of different needs including older people.

provision of additional business land focused primarily on the rural service centres with a particular focus on Eynsham to help meet future requirements and capitalise on the proximity of this sub-area to Oxford and the Oxfordshire 'knowledge spine'.

support for rural employment opportunities including sustainable tourism and rural diversification.

seeking to alleviate traffic congestion issues on the A40 including through the provision of a new park and ride site at Eynsham and associated bus priority measures along the A40 as part of the Oxford Science Transit project.

enhancing public transport and pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure together with managing car parking to reduce car use for short journeys.

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 (see Policy EW1).

working with the highway authority, the town council and other partners to reduce the impact of through traffic in local settlements including HGV movements through Woodstock.

seeking the retention and development of local services and community facilities throughout the sub-area.

ensuring Woodstock 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 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.

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

- 9.6.1 This is the largest of the sub-areas covering an area of almost 22,000 hectares. It has a predominantly rural character and is relatively sparsely populated with just 13,000 residents. The area includes a network of small and medium sized towns and villages, none larger than 3,000 residents. The vast majority of the area is within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and many of the towns and villages have extensive conservation areas and numerous listed buildings.

Figure 9.17 – Burford – Charlbury Sub-Area



- 9.6.2 There are two designated rural service centres within this sub-area; 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.
- 9.6.3 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). 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

- 9.6.4 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.
- 9.6.5 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.
- 9.6.6 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. 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.
- 9.6.7 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.

Employment

- 9.6.8 As a predominantly rural area, employment opportunities in this sub-area are relatively 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.
- 9.6.9 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.
- 9.6.10 This sub-area provides around 5,600 jobs, 13.4% of the District total. The resident workforce is highly skilled with a large proportion in professional occupations or holding managerial positions. The area is characterised by high-levels of home working with around 35% of workers working at or mainly from home. This helps to keep a reasonable job/workforce balance. Compared to the eastern parts of the District, there is less commuting to Oxford and adjoining areas.

Transport

- 9.6.11 Key road links in this area include the A40 which runs along the southern edge of Burford, the A361 linking Burford with Swindon and Chipping Norton and the A424 linking Burford with Stow on the Wold. At Burford, HGV transport is a significant concern for local people as freight traffic travels through the town along the A361.
- 9.6.12 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 is in the process of developing a rail strategy informed by a rail demand forecasting exercise in 2013. Consultation is expected in 2015. Two of the identified strategic priorities include the completion of the Cotswold line redoubling project (the remaining single-track section between Charlbury and Wolvercote Junction) and enhancing access to local rail stations by supporting appropriate expansion in car parking and the provision of secure and accessible cycle parking.
- 9.6.13 The availability and frequency of bus services is variable. Services through Charlbury are good, with hourly direct services to Woodstock, Oxford, Witney and Chipping Norton. Bus services in Burford are less well developed, although there is a service to Woodstock via Witney and Long Hanborough Station.
- 9.6.14 There are many opportunities for active travel in the sub area with an extensive network of paths, bridleways and quiet roads providing routes for walking, cycling and riding. There are however, safety issues on fast and busy roads which could be addressed through improved infrastructure.

Retail and Leisure

- 9.6.15 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 and meeting the everyday needs of local residents. The town has very low vacancy rates and whilst evidence⁶¹ suggests there is no need to plan for new retail development in Burford, it recommends that the loss of existing shops is resisted to protect its vitality and viability. The availability of car parking to support the town centre is another key issue.
- 9.6.16 Charlbury also has a variety of leisure and social activities for its residents and a range of shops and local services and facilities. The range of shopping and employment in the town has however diminished over time, despite a growth in the town's population.
- 9.6.17 The Wychwoods each have a reasonable range of services and facilities and share some services such as the purpose-built GP surgery, 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.

⁶¹ Retail Needs Assessment Update (2012)

Environment and Heritage

- 9.6.18 This area is particularly environmentally sensitive being covered almost entirely by the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Burford falls 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 project⁶² to restore the landscape character and mix of habitats associated with this former royal hunting forest.
- 9.6.19 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.
- 9.6.20 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.
- 9.6.21 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.
- 9.6.22 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

- 9.6.23 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.
- 9.6.24 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.

⁶² <http://www.wychwoodproject.org/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Wychwood/Home/>

Scope for Further Expansion

- 9.6.25 Although it is environmentally sensitive, this area has good transport links and a range of existing infrastructure which meets primarily local needs. It is appropriate therefore that some future growth takes place here. However, it must be recognised that opportunities for development are relatively limited and the planned scale of growth therefore needs to be appropriate.
- 9.6.26 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.
- 9.6.27 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 that significant development on the fringes of the town is unlikely to be acceptable. There is some scope for additional development at the Wychwoods and Stonesfield of an appropriate scale and type.

Key Issues – Summary

- 9.6.28 Drawing on the brief profile outlined above we can identify a number of key issues and challenges to be addressed in relation to the Burford - Charlbury sub-area. These include:
- This is a geographically large, predominantly rural area, characterised by a network of small and medium towns and villages.
 - There are two designated service centres including Burford and Charlbury. Burford whilst relatively small in population offers a good range of services and facilities and is a vitally important tourist destination for West Oxfordshire.
 - The area is highly environmentally sensitive with most of it falling within the AONB and including a number of other designations such as the large area of ancient woodland to the south west of Charlbury.
 - The area is also historically important with several historic parks and gardens and many settlements covered by conservation areas and characterised by a number of listed buildings.
 - There has been relatively little past housing delivery compared to other parts of the District, reflecting the environmentally sensitive nature of the area and poor connectivity of some parts.
 - There are very limited opportunities for significant housing development in this area.

- This is an important area in terms of employment with a large proportion of people employed in professional and managerial positions and accommodating almost 15% of the District's job opportunities.
- The focus tends to be small industrial estates and offices, many in converted buildings and within or on the edge of the towns and larger villages.
- The area is characterised by high levels of home working and less commuting towards Oxford compared to the eastern parts of the District.
- The area includes a number of key road links including the A40, A361 and A424. A particular issue is the movement of HGVs through the historic centre of Burford which causes a number of problems including noise and vibration.
- Rail services are good with a number of settlements located along the Cotswold line although a number of enhancements are needed including redoubling between Charlbury and Wolvercote as well as improving access to stations and the availability of facilities including adequate parking capacity.
- Bus services are variable with better provision at Charlbury compared to Burford.
- There are good opportunities for active travel with a network of rural footpaths and bridleways including the Oxfordshire Way.
- In terms of retail and leisure a number of the settlements in this area have facilities to meet the needs of local residents. Burford has a particularly strong retail offer geared towards tourists as well as local residents. Evidence suggests there is a need to resist the loss of shops in Burford and also address the issue of parking capacity in order to sustain the vitality and viability of the town.
- Pressure on primary school capacity is an important consideration for this area.

Strategy

9.6.29 Having regard to the profile and key issues outlined above, the strategy for the Burford - Charlbury sub-area is set out below.

Housing

9.6.30 In accordance with the overall strategy, additional housing development in this sub-area will be focused primarily at Burford and Charlbury as designated rural service centres although given the relatively limited capacity of these settlements, some development is likely to be necessary in the larger villages.

9.6.31 The indicative housing requirement for this sub-area is 800 homes in the period 2011 – 2031. It is anticipated that this will be met through a combination of homes already completed, existing commitments, sites identified in the Council's SHLAA and windfall development. No sites are proposed to be allocated through the Local Plan at this stage. This is summarised in the table below.

Table 9.5 – Anticipated Housing Delivery in the Burford - Charlbury Sub-Area

Burford - Woodstock sub-area indicative housing requirement	800
Homes already completed (2011 – 2014)	132
Existing planning commitments as of 1 st February 2015 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rural exception sites (5)• Other permissions (184)	189
Identified SHLAA capacity	84
Windfall allowance (25 per year 2015 – 2031)	400
Total	805

Past completions, existing commitments, SHLAA sites and windfall

9.6.32 In the first three years of the plan period (2011 – 2014) a total of 132 homes have already been completed in the Burford - Charlbury sub-area. As of 1st February 2015, a further 189 homes already benefit from planning permission or resolution to grant permission subject to Section 106.

9.6.33 In addition, the Council's SHLAA (June 2014) has identified capacity for around 84 new homes. These are assessed in detail in the SHLAA (available separately) and include the following:

- Tanners Lane, Burford
- Burford Cottage Hospital
- Land south of Sheep Street, Burford
- South of Milton Road, Shipton U Wychwood

9.6.34 It is also considered appropriate to include a 'windfall' allowance to cater for unidentified sites that are likely to come forward for housing over the period of the Local Plan. Based on past evidence, a reasonable estimate is that such schemes would provide 25 homes per year within the Burford - Charlbury sub-area over the remaining period of the Local Plan (2015 – 2031) thereby providing an additional 400 new homes.

Employment

9.6.35 This is an important area in terms of employment, catering for almost 15% of the District's job opportunities. There are however few large employment sites and the emphasis is on relatively small-scale industrial estates and offices, many in converted buildings and within or on the edge of the towns and larger villages.

9.6.36 The proposed strategy is essentially to maintain the status quo. No specific sites have been identified for additional business land provision but there is an expectation that small-scale opportunities will continue to come forward over the period of the Local Plan on an organic basis both through the conversion of existing buildings and through small-scale development within or adjacent to the rural service centres and villages.

- 9.6.37 Where new buildings are proposed in rural locations it will need to be demonstrated that the business need cannot be met through the conversion of existing buildings or through the use of existing premises or land in more sustainable locations including designated service centres.
- 9.6.38 In accordance with Policy E1, proposals to improve the effectiveness of existing business sites will be supported where commensurate with the scale of the town or village and the character of the area. Existing sites will be safeguarded and non-business uses only permitted where a number of criteria can be met.
- 9.6.39 The current high levels of home-working in this area are recognised and will be supported further by ensuring that all new development has access to superfast broadband. Well-conceived farm diversification projects will be supported in principle subject to the requirements of Policy E2.

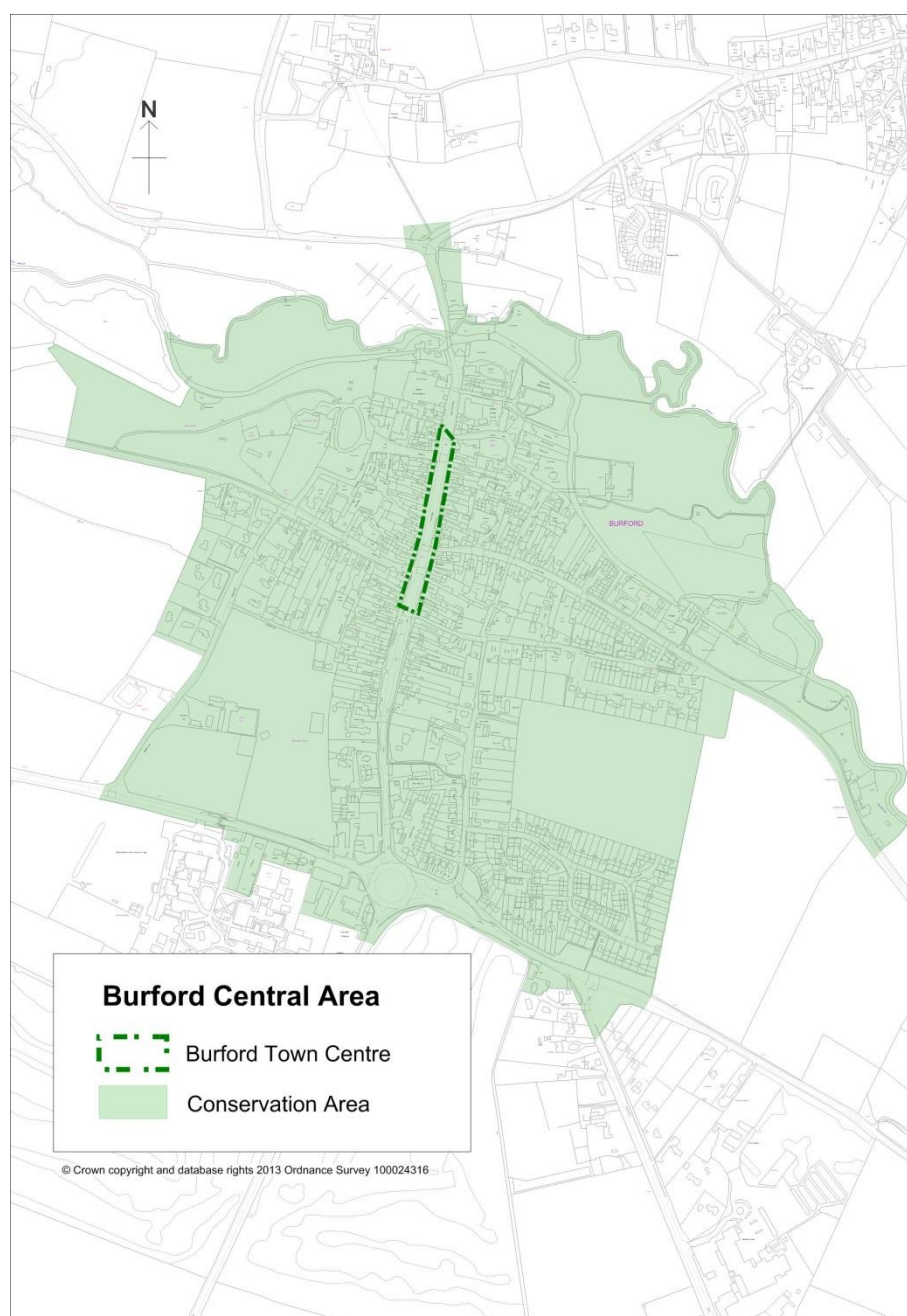
Transport

- 9.6.40 There are a number of transport issues to address in this area. In terms of the local highway network, a key issue to address is the impact of HGV movements through Burford which sits on the A361 and is thus a key through-route for freight traffic.
- 9.6.41 In this regard, the County Council intends to conduct a review of environmental weight restrictions across the County with a particular focus on those locations which are subject to high and significant levels of HGV traffic and do not have any current restrictions in place including Burford. We will therefore work with the County Council to further investigate measures that may be necessary to alleviate the impact of HGV traffic through Burford.
- 9.6.42 In terms of rail, we will work in partnership with the County Council and other partners including Network rail and train operators to develop the Oxfordshire Rail Strategy. This will help to identify necessary improvements to the stations along the Cotswold line that fall within this sub-area. A particular focus will be on ensuring adequate parking capacity is available and that connections to stations and the facilities available are improved wherever possible.
- 9.6.43 With regard to bus services, again we will work with the County Council to deliver improvements to the range and frequency of bus services available in this area and will seek developer contributions towards these improvements. We will also look at the quality of waiting facilities available including the availability of cycle parking.
- 9.6.44 In terms of active travel, we will seek to maintain and enhance the extensive network of paths, bridleways and quiet roads which currently provide routes for walking, cycling and riding in this area. Necessary measures to improve safety will be sought where appropriate including through developer funding.
- 9.6.45 The availability of public parking will be further considered through the Council's emerging parking strategy. At Burford where there is a known capacity issue, opportunities to improve the efficient use of available car parking and increase capacity will be taken where appropriate.

Retail and Leisure

- 9.6.46 In terms of retail, the key focus will be Burford. Here, the loss of shops within the town will be resisted in order to maintain its vitality and viability. Opportunities to enhance retail provision within the town will be supported in principle subject to Policy E6.
- 9.6.47 Elsewhere in the sub-area, local retail uses and other community facilities will be safeguarded in accordance with Policy E5.

Figure 9.18 – Burford Town Centre



Environment and Heritage

- 9.6.48 This is an environmentally sensitive area, the vast majority of which falls within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Other sensitivities include the Wychwood Project Area, Conservation Target Areas, and several areas of ancient woodland.
- 9.6.49 Proposals within or affecting the AONB will be determined in accordance with Policy EH1 and the NPPF. Any proposed development within the AONB will be expected to conserve landscape and scenic beauty and major developments will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest.
- 9.6.50 The Council will work with partners in relation to Conservation Target Areas and where appropriate, development will be expected to make a positive contribution either directly or through a financial contribution.
- 9.6.51 This is an important area in terms of heritage and in accordance with national policy and Policy EH7 all new development will be expected to conserve or enhance the special character and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire's historic environment and preserve or enhance the District's heritage assets and their significance and settings.

Infrastructure

- 9.6.52 Infrastructure capacity is an important issue for this area. In addition to the transport related requirements outlined above the other key issue for this area appears to be primary school capacity. Like the rest of the District, there is also need for more affordable housing and housing for older people.
- 9.6.53 Some infrastructure improvements will be provided directly as part of new developments whilst others will be provided indirectly through developer contributions and other potential sources of funding. The IDP seeks to quantify the infrastructure improvements that will be needed to support the planned level and distribution of growth set out in the Local Plan.
- 9.6.54 This will form the basis upon which future decisions regarding the provision of new or improved infrastructure will be made along with the Council's CIL regulation 123 list once introduced. CIL revenues passed to local communities will be able to be spent on locally identified infrastructure priorities.
- 9.6.55 In accordance with Policy OS5, we will seek to ensure that all new development within the Burford - Charlbury sub-area is supported by appropriate and timely provision of necessary supporting infrastructure.

Policy BC1 – Burford – Charlbury Sub-Area Strategy

The focus of new development will be Burford and Charlbury.

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 800 new homes to include affordable housing and homes designed to meet a range of different needs including older people.

protection of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

protection and enhancement of the historic environment and heritage assets

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 small-scale employment opportunities including sustainable tourism and rural diversification

Ensuring development has access to superfast broadband to facilitate home-working

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

ensuring that new development makes appropriate and timely provision for necessary supporting infrastructure, including education, leisure, green infrastructure and other community facilities

The Council will work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to consider appropriate measures to mitigate the impact of HGV traffic on Burford.

10. DELIVERY AND MONITORING

10.1 In this section we consider how the various elements of the 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. Policy H3 – 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 a number of our transport policies will require the involvement of Oxfordshire County Council, the Highways Agency, transport providers including bus and rail and landowners/developers.

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 Local Plan 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.

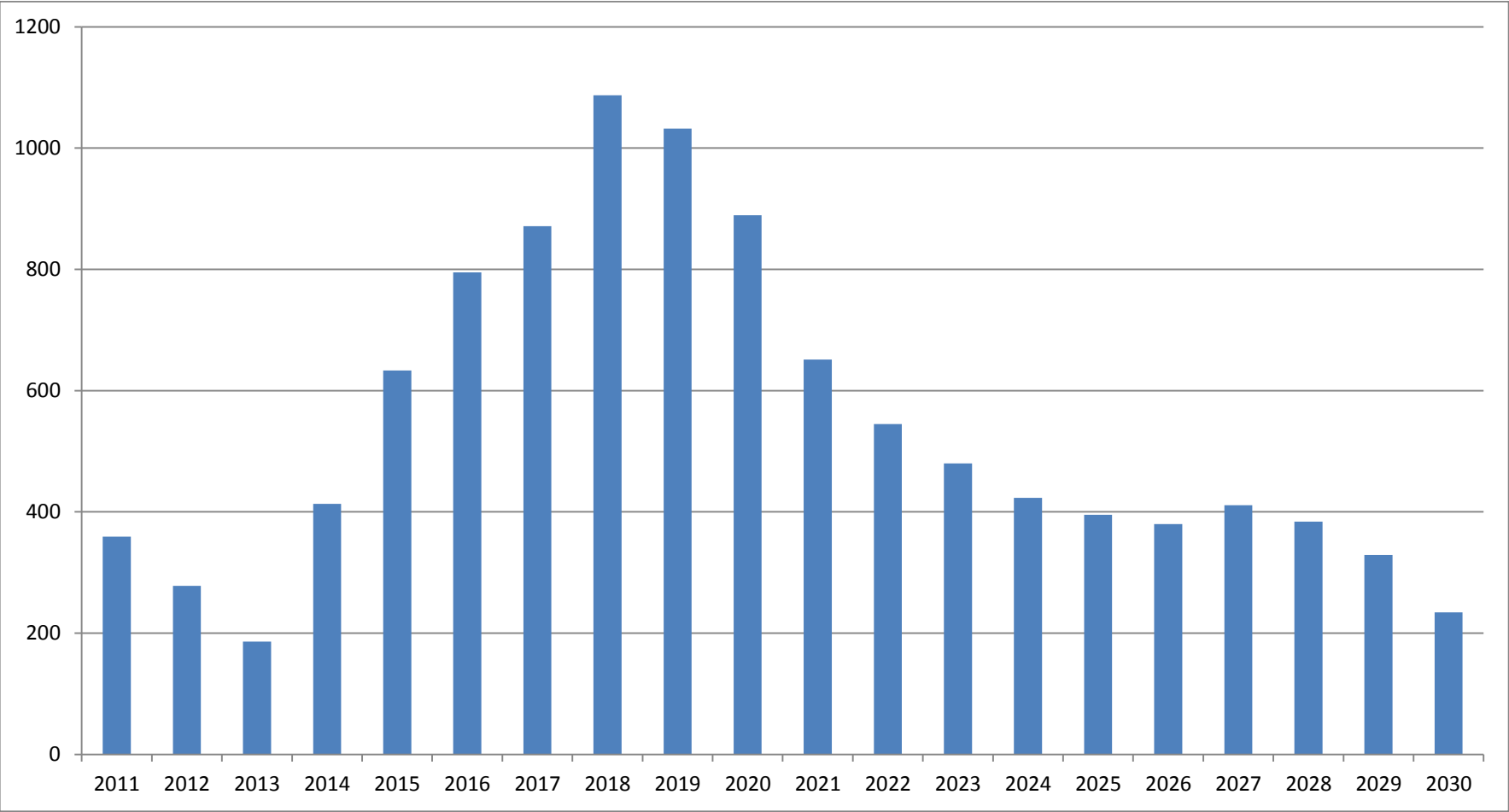
Appendix 1 – Schedule of Adopted Local Plan (2006) Policies to be replaced

Adopted Local Plan Policies	Replacement Policies
BE1 - Environmental and Community Infrastructure	Policy OS5 - Supporting Infrastructure
BE2 - General Development Standards	Policy OS2 – Locating Development in the Right Places Policy OS4 - High Quality Design Policy OS3 – Prudent Use of Natural Resources
BE3 - General Development Standards	Policy T1 – Sustainable Transport Policy T2 - Highway Improvement Schemes Policy T3 – Public Transport, Walking and Cycling Policy T4 – Parking Provision
BE4 - Open space within and adjoining settlements	Policy EH3 – Public Realm and Green Infrastructure
BE5 - Conservation Areas	Policy EH7 – Historic Environment
BE8 - Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building	Policy EH7 – Historic Environment
BE10 - Conversion of Unlisted Vernacular Buildings	Policy E3 - Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings
BE11 - Historic Parks and Gardens	Policy EH7 – Historic Environment
BE12 - Archaeological Monuments	Policy EH7 – Historic Environment
BE18 - Pollution	Policy EH6 - Environmental Protection
BE19 - Noise	Policy EH6 - Environmental Protection
BE20 - Protection for hazardous substances, installations and airfields	Policy EH6 - Environmental Protection
BE21 - Light Pollution	Policy EH6 - Environmental Protection
NE1 - Safeguarding the Countryside	Policy OS2 – Locating Development in the Right Places Policy EH1 - Landscape Character Policy EH2 – Biodiversity
NE3 - Local Landscape Character	Policy EH1 - Landscape Character
NE4 - Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Policy EH1 - Landscape Character
NE6 - Retention of Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows	Policy EH1 - Landscape Character
NE7 - The Water Environment	Policy EH6 - Environmental Protection
NE10 - Water Resources	Policy OS3 – Prudent Use of Natural Resources Policy EH6 - Environmental Protection
NE11 - Water Quality	Policy EH6 - Environmental Protection
NE12 Renewable Energy	Policy EH4 - Decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy development
NE13 - Biodiversity Conservation	Policy EH2 – Biodiversity
NE14 - Sites of Nature Conservation or Geological Importance	Policy EH2 – Biodiversity
NE15 - Protected Species	Policy EH2 – Biodiversity
T1 - Traffic Generation	Policy OS2 – Locating Development in the Right Places Policy T1 – Sustainable Transport

Adopted Local Plan Policies	Replacement Policies
T2 - Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities	Policy T1 – Sustainable Transport Policy T3 – Public Transport, Walking and Cycling
T3 - Public Transport Infrastructure	Policy OS5 - Supporting Infrastructure Policy T3 – Public Transport, Walking and Cycling
T4 - Major Highway Schemes	Policy T2 - Highway Improvement Schemes
T6 - Traffic Management	Policy T1 – Sustainable Transport Policy T3 – Public Transport, Walking and Cycling
H2 - General Residential Development Standards	Policy OS2 – Locating Development in the Right Places Policy OS4 - High Quality Design Policy H6 - Existing Housing
H3 - Range and Type of Residential Accommodation	Policy H4 – Type and Mix of New Homes
H4 - Construction of New Dwellings in the Open Countryside and Small Villages	Policy H2 – Delivery of New Homes
H5 - Villages	Policy H2 – Delivery of New Homes
H6 - Medium-sized Villages	Policy H2 – Delivery of New Homes
H7 - Service Centres	Policy H2 – Delivery of New Homes
H8 - Sub-division of Existing Dwellings	Policy H6 - Existing Housing
H10 - Conversion of Existing Buildings to Residential Use in the Countryside and Small Villages	Policy E3 - Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings
H11 - Affordable Housing on Allocated and Previously Unidentified Sites	Policy H3 – Affordable Housing
H12 - Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites	Policy H3 – Affordable Housing
H13 - Gypsies	Policy H7 – Travelling Communities
H15 - Travelling Showpeople	Policy H7 – Travelling Communities
E1 - Employment Allocations	Policy E1 – Land for Employment
E2 - New Employment Sites in Towns and Larger Villages	Policy OS2 – Locating Development in the Right Places Policy E1 – Land for Employment
E3 - Individual Premises	Policy OS2 – Locating Development in the Right Places Policy E1 – Land for Employment
E4 - Re-use of Vernacular Buildings	Policy E3 - Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings
E5 - Re-use of Non-vernacular Buildings	Policy E3 - Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings
E6 - Change of Use of Existing Employment Sites	Policy E1 – Land for Employment
E7 - Existing Businesses	Policy E1 – Land for Employment
SH1 - New Retail Development	Policy E6 - Town Centres
SH3 - Changes of Use in Town Centres	Policy E6 - Town Centres
SH4 - Shopping Facilities for the Local Community	Policy E6 - Town Centres

Adopted Local Plan Policies	Replacement Policies
SH5 - Retention of Local Shops and/or Post Offices	Policy E5 - Local Services and Community Facilities
SH7 - Farm Shops	Policy E2 - Supporting the Rural Economy
SH8 - Garden Centres	Policy E6 - Town Centres
TLC1 - New Tourism, Leisure and Community Facilities	Policy E4 - Sustainable Tourism
TCL2 - Use of Existing Buildings	Policy E3 - Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings
TCL3 - New Build Tourist Accommodation	Policy E4 - Sustainable Tourism
TLC4 - Touring Holiday Caravan and Camping Sites	Policy E4 - Sustainable Tourism Policy EH1 - Landscape Character
TLC5 - Existing Outdoor Recreational Space	Policy EH3 – Public Realm and Green Infrastructure
TLC10 - River Thames	Policy E4 - Sustainable Tourism Policy EW2 – Eynsham – Woodstock Sub-Area Strategy
TLC11 - Lower Windrush Valley	Policy E4 - Sustainable Tourism Policy WIT4 – Witney Sub-Area Strategy
TLC12 - Protection of Existing Community Services and Facilities	Policy E5 - Local Services and Community Facilities
WIT1- Buttercross and Church Green	Policy WIT4 – Witney Sub-Area Strategy
WIT3 - Windrush in Witney	Policy WIT4 – Witney Sub-Area Strategy
Proposal 7 - Cogges, Witney	Policy WIT4 – Witney Sub-Area Strategy Policy WIT1 – East Witney Strategic Development Area
Proposal 8 - North Curbridge Development Area, Witney	Policy WIT4 – Witney Sub-Area Strategy
Proposal 9 - Employment Land, Downs Road, Witney	Policy E1 – Land for Employment Policy WIT4 – Witney Sub-Area Strategy
Proposal 11 - A40 Junction at Downs Road, Witney	Policy T2 - Highway Improvement Schemes Policy WIT4 – Witney Sub-Area Strategy
Proposal 12 - Traffic Management in the Central Core and Fringe Central Area of Witney	Policy WIT4 – Witney Sub-Area Strategy
Proposal 18 - Carterton Town Centre	Policy CA2 – Carterton Town Centre Strategy

Appendix 2 – Housing Trajectory



Appendix 3 – Local Plan Delivery and Monitoring Framework

Policy OSI – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Plan - Development management - NPPF - Neighbourhood Plans - Permitted development 	<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 - Number of successful appeals for major development - 5-year housing land supply 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p> <p>Policy review may be necessary in light of any upheld appeal decisions.</p>	<p>Maintenance of 5-year housing land supply to ensure local plan policies are given full weight</p>
Policy OS2 – Locating Development in the Right Places				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Plan - Development management - Strategic allocations at Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton - Neighbourhood Plans - SHLAA - RES 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 total of new development floorspace permitted / completed within each sub area - Proportion of District development floorspace permitted / completed within each category of settlement / each sub-area 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p>	<p>Proportion of annual sub area housing target met.</p> <p>Measurement against Council’s housing trajectory.</p>

Policy OS3 – Prudent Use of Natural Resources				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Building regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Developers & landowners - Local communities - Building Control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage car use - Residual household waste per household - Percentage of household waste sent for re-use, recycling and composting - Proportion of development taking place on previously developed land - Average density of development - Percentage of developments allowed in Flood Zones 2 and 3 - Air quality - Compliance with sustainable construction requirements (to be addressed through building regulations) 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p> <p>The requirements may be adjusted at the national level which could necessitate a potential review.</p>	<p>Recycle or compost at least 65% of household waste by March 2020</p> <p>Recycle or compost at least 70% of household waste by March 2025</p>
Policy OS4 - High Quality Design				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<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 design awards won - Number of appeals upheld on design grounds. 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p> <p>Local conservation and design guidance to be kept up to date.</p> <p>The West Oxfordshire Design Guide will be updated in 2015.</p>	<p>None at present.</p>

Policy OS5 - Supporting Infrastructure				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) - CIL Regulation 123 List - Community Infrastructure Levy - Section 106 legal agreements - New Homes Bonus - Strategic Economic Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Infrastructure providers - Oxfordshire Growth Board - 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 - Contributions derived through S106 agreements - Annual community infrastructure floorspace 	<p>CIL to be introduced in early 2016</p> <p>Policy to be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p>	None at present.
Policy HI – Amount and Distribution of Housing				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<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 Permissions / completions (district) (Measured against 525 homes per year target) - Proportion of target (District) - Residential completions by sub-area - Proportion of target by sub-area - 5 year housing land supply 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p> <p>An early review of the policy may be needed to take account of any 'unmet' housing need from Oxford City that is apportioned to West Oxfordshire through joint working being co-ordinated by the Oxfordshire Growth Board.</p>	<p>Housing delivery rate to be measured against District wide target of 525 dwellings per annum</p> <p>Indicative housing requirement for each sub-area to be achieved</p>

Policy H2 – Delivery of New Homes				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Plan policies including strategic allocations - 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 Permissions/completions by sub-area/settlement - Percentage of development taking place on previously developed land - Delivery of new homes on allocated sites - Number/percentage of residential schemes on unidentified windfall sites - Number of RES schemes - 5 year housing land supply - Percentage of development taking place in Flood Zones 2 & 3 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p> <p>An early review of the policy may be needed to take account of any 'unmet' housing need from Oxford City that is apportioned to West Oxfordshire through joint working being co-ordinated by the Oxfordshire Growth Board.</p>	<p>Housing delivery rate to be measured against District wide target of 525 dwellings per annum and proportionately broken down by sub area.</p>
Policy H3 – Affordable Housing				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<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 permissions/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 including the extent of the Council's waiting list - Affordable housing commuted sums secured for schemes of 6-10 units within AONB 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p>	<p>Affordable housing target to vary by zone ranging from 50% in the high value zone, to 40% in the medium value zone and 35% in the low value zone.</p> <p>A corporate target has been set of delivery of 400 affordable homes in the period 2015 – 2018 and at least 800 in the period 2015 – 2020.</p>

Policy H4 – Type and Mix of New Homes				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic allocations at Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton - Neighbourhood Plans - Unidentified windfall sites 	<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 accessible and adaptable housing standards - Proportion of new homes built as wheelchair user dwellings 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p> <p>New housing needs evidence may lead to a review of the policy approach being taken.</p>	<p>To secure at least 25% of market and affordable housing on schemes of 11 or more homes as accessible and adaptable housing.</p> <p>To secure at least 5% of homes on schemes of 11 or more dwellings as wheelchair user dwellings.</p>
Policy H5 – Custom and Self Build Housing				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Self build register - 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"> - Quantum of land allocated for self-build projects per annum - Number of people on WODC self-build register requiring a plot. -Number of self-build permissions / completions per annum 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p> <p>Monitoring information including the self-build register may lead to a review of the policy approach</p>	<p>To secure at least 5% of residential plots on larger housing schemes of 100 or more dwellings for the purposes of self-build.</p>

Policy H6 – Existing Housing				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<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 	To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.	None at present.
Policy H7 – Travelling Communities				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Plan allocations (to be addressed through early plan review) - Development management - Partnership working to identify sites 	<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 - 5-year housing land supply 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p> <p>The criteria-based policy will be applied until the Council is in a position to identify potential sites.</p>	<p>20 additional pitches for gypsies and travellers to be delivered by 2029.</p> <p>27 additional plots for travelling showpeople to be delivered by 2029.</p>

Policy E1 – Land for Employment				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic allocations - Neighbourhood Plans - Strategic Employment Land Availability Assessment 	<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 employment land available - New business formation / survival rates - 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 - Take up of allocated employment land 	To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual review. The employment land target may be revised in light of new evidence.	Provision of 60 hectares of additional employment land in the period to 2031.
Policy E2 – Supporting the Rural Economy				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Partnership working - Neighbourhood Plans 	<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 superfast broadband in rural areas 	To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.	100% coverage of superfast broadband

Policy E3 – Re-use of Non-Residential Buildings				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management including application of West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD - Neighbourhood Plans 	<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 on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.	None at present.
Policy E4 – Sustainable Tourism				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Partnership working - Lower Windrush Valley Project - WODC Tourism Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Cotswold Conservation Board - River Thames Alliance - Lower Windrush Valley Project - 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 - Tourism and visitor spend in West Oxfordshire 	To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.	None at present.

Policy E5 – Local Services and Community Facilities				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<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 - Neighbourhood Plans 	<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 - Number of premises allocated as assets of community value 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p> <p>Marketing of premises is likely to be an important factor in determining change of use applications. Marketing guidance for District to be kept up to date and reviewed as necessary</p>	None at present.
Policy E6 – Town Centres				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<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 on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.	
Policy T1 – Sustainable Transport				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development Management - Strategic Allocations - Partnership working - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Oxfordshire LEP - Oxfordshire County Council - Oxfordshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CIL / S106 funding allocated for sustainable transport projects - Number of travel plans produced 	To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.	100% coverage of superfast broadband

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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"> - Percentage car use in District - Percentage of travel by walking or cycling - Air quality including AQMAs at Chipping Norton and Witney - Levels of home working 		
Policy T2 – Highway Improvement Schemes				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic allocations - LTP3 / LTP4 - Oxfordshire County Council Bus Strategy - Partnership working - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) - CIL Regulation 123 List 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Oxfordshire LEP - 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"> - Delivery of strategic highway schemes identified - CIL / S106 funding allocated for highway improvement projects - 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 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the sequence of transport improvements in Witney is likely to be Down's Road junction, followed by Shores Green Slip Roads and in the longer-term, the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road.</p>	None at present.

Policy T3 – Public Transport, Walking and Cycling				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic allocations - LTP3 / LTP4 - Oxfordshire County Council Rail Strategy - Oxfordshire County Council Bus Strategy - Partnership working - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Oxfordshire LEP - 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"> - CIL / SI06 funding allocated for sustainable transport projects - Number of travel plans per annum - Proportion of trips made by car - Proportion of trips made by non-car modes e.g. walking, cycling, public transport 	To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.	None at present.
Policy T4 – Parking Provision				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development Management - Oxfordshire County Council Parking Standards - LTP3 / LTP4 - Neighbourhood Plans - WODC Car Parking Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC - Oxfordshire County Council - Developers and Landowners - Town and Parish Councils - Local Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amount and capacity of available public parking Number of new, public off street parking spaces permitted per annum - Developer contributions secured towards additional parking provision 	To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.	None at present.

Policy EH1 – Landscape Character				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<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 - Lower Windrush Valley Project - Wychwood Project 	<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 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p>	<p>None at present</p>
Policy EH2 – Biodiversity				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<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) - Wild Oxfordshire - Oxfordshire Nature Partnership - 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, area of protected sites, records of priority species and habitats 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p> <p>TVERC supply monitoring data to West Oxfordshire District Council in relation to priority species and habitats and the total area and condition status of protected sites.</p>	<p>There is an overarching international commitment to halting and reversing biodiversity decline by 2020.</p>

Policy EH3 – Public Realm and Green Infrastructure				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) - Partnership working - Green Infrastructure Strategy - West Oxfordshire Open Space Study and Playing Pitch Strategy - Neighbourhood Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Oxfordshire County Council - 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 - Total area of new open space delivered through new development by typology 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring 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.</p>	<p>Quantity standards for assessing current and future provision of open space as well as the requirements from new development are included in the West Oxfordshire Open Space Study 2013.</p> <p>These will be used as the benchmark for measuring the delivery of open space in the District.</p>
Policy EH4 – Decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy development				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<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 standalone renewable energy permitted in district (capacity, type and location) 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p>	<p>None at present.</p>

Policy EH5 – Flood Risk				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management including application of sequential and exception tests - NPPF - Use of flood risk assessments - Use of sustainable drainage systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Environment Agency - Oxfordshire County Council - 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 on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.	None at present.
Policy EH6 – Environmental Protection				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) - Air Quality Action Plans - Neighbourhood Plans 	<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) - Records of EHO noise complaints 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p> <p>Information provided by Environmental Health to provide useful indication of how effective policies are</p>	None at present
Policy EH7 – Historic Environment				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development Management - Conservation Area Appraisals - World Heritage Site Management Plan - NPPF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - English Heritage - Developers and landowners - Oxfordshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of applications refused on basis of impact on the historic environment - Number of applications permitted against advice of English Heritage 	To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.	None at present.

	County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial contributions secured through development to secure heritage assets. - Number of Conservation Areas with an up to date Character Appraisal - Percentage of heritage assets at risk 		
Policy WITI – East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic Allocation - Partnership working - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) - Planning obligations/CIL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - East Witney consortium - Oxfordshire County Council - Thames Water - Environment Agency - Town and Parish Councils - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of new homes completed - Delivery of Shore’s Green west facing slip roads - Amount of new greenspace provided - S106/CIL contributions secured through site 	<p>It is anticipated that the smaller part of the site could come forward by 2017. The timing of the remainder of the site is dependent on completion of the Shore’s Green Slip Roads but is likely to be complete by 2021.</p>	<p>Housing completions per annum measured against housing trajectory</p> <p>5% of developable plots to be made available for self-build projects</p> <p>Open space provision to comply with local standards</p> <p>Strategic highways improvements to be delivered in advance of Cogges Triangle development.</p> <p>Net gain in biodiversity</p> <p>Reduction in surface water run-off below greenfield rates</p>

Policy WIT2 – North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development Management - Strategic Allocations - Partnership working - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) - Planning obligations/CIL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - North Witney consortium - Oxfordshire County Council - Environment Agency - Thames Water - Witney Flood Action Group - Town and Parish Councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of new homes completed - Amount of new greenspace provided - S106/CIL contributions secured / allocated for infrastructure projects - Delivery of the West End Link Road and Northern Distributor Road 	<p>It is anticipated that the development of the larger part of the North Witney SDA will be implemented from 2021 onwards through a phased approach. The smaller part of the site could come forward before then subject to traffic impact (potentially in 2018/19).</p>	<p>Housing completions per annum measured against housing trajectory</p> <p>5% of developable plots to be made available for self-build projects</p> <p>Open space provision to comply with local standards</p> <p>Delivery of strategic highways improvements including the West End Link in a timely manner (In advance of full site completion)</p> <p>Net gain in biodiversity</p> <p>Reduction in surface water run-off below greenfield rates</p>
Policy WIT3 – Witney Town Centre Strategy				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Partnership working - Strategy and promotion - WODC parking strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Witney Town Council - Business and retail community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vacancy rates - Percentage of retail and non-retail uses in primary frontages - Proportion of uses in secondary frontages 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review. Retail evidence suggests there will be capacity for additional retail floorspace in Witney in the</p>	<p>To ensure vacancy rates do not exceed 5% of units within the town centre.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oxfordshire County Council - Landowners and developers - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amount of new retail floorspace permitted - Amount of retail floorspace lost to other uses - Parking availability/capacity - Visitor numbers 	medium to longer term.	
Policy WIT4 – Witney Sub-Area Strategy				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic allocations - Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Regulation 123 List - Planning obligations/CIL - Partnership working - Neighbourhood Plans - LTP3 / LTP4 - WODC parking strategy 	<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 - Utility providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of residential permissions/completions within the Witney sub-area including delivery of strategic development areas (SDAs) - Number of residential permissions/completions in Witney - Amount of employment land permitted - Provision of new infrastructure including strategic transport schemes - Number of extra care units completed 	To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.	<p>Indicative housing target of 3,700 new homes to be delivered in the sub-area to 2031</p> <p>20ha of additional employment land to be delivered in the sub area by 2031</p> <p>Net gain in biodiversity</p> <p>Strategic highway improvements delivered within plan period as integral part of proposed strategic development areas</p>

Policy CA1 – REEMA Central Strategic Development Area (SDA)				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic Allocations - Partnership working - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) - Planning obligations/CIL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) - Annington Homes - Oxfordshire County Council - Carterton Town Council - Local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of new homes completed - S106 / CIL contributions secured / allocated for infrastructure projects 	<p>It is anticipated that the following completion of REEMA North, the REEMA Central site will be released to the market and development could take place in 2017/18.</p>	<p>Housing completions per annum measured against housing trajectory</p> <p>5% of developable plots to be made available for self-build projects</p> <p>Open space provision to comply with local standards</p> <p>Net gain in biodiversity</p>
Policy CA2 – Carterton Town Centre Strategy				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Partnership working - Strategy and promotion - Neighbourhood Plans - Masterplan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Carterton 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 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p>	<p>To ensure vacancy rates do not exceed 5% of units within the town centre.</p> <p>To increase the quantum of available retail floorspace with a particular focus on comparison goods (non-food) shopping.</p>

Policy CA3 – Carterton Sub-Area Strategy				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic allocations - Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Regulation 123 List - Planning obligations/CIL - Partnership working - Neighbourhood Plans - LTP3 / LTP4 	<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 area - Number of residential permissions/completions in rest of sub-area - Amount of employment land permitted - Provision of new infrastructure including strategic transport schemes 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p>	<p>Indicative housing target of 2,600 new homes to be delivered in sub-area to 2031</p> <p>15ha of additional employment land to be delivered in the sub area by 2031</p> <p>Net gain in biodiversity</p> <p>Infrastructure improvements delivered in a timely manner including provision of A-road access via the B4477 and west facing slip roads at the junction of the B4477 and A40.</p>
Policy CNI – East Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area (SDA)				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development management - Strategic allocation - Partnership working - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) - Planning obligations/CIL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WODC (lead) - Oxfordshire County Council - Landowners and developers - Environment Agency - Thames Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of new homes completed per annum - Total employment floorspace completed - Amount of new greenspace provided - S106/CIL contributions secured / allocated for infrastructure projects - Availability of primary school capacity 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p>	<p>Housing completions per annum measured against housing trajectory</p> <p>5% of developable plots to be made available for self-build projects</p> <p>Provision of 1.5 ha of employment land</p>

				<p>Provision of new primary school</p> <p>Open space provision to comply with local standards</p> <p>Necessary supporting infrastructure to be delivered in a timely manner</p> <p>Reduction in surface water run-off below greenfield rates</p> <p>Net gain in biodiversity</p>
Policy CN2 – Chipping Norton Sub-Area Strategy				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan - Strategic allocation - SHLAA - Rural exception sites - Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Development management - LTP3 / LTP4 - WODC Parking Strategy 	<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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of new homes permitted / completed - Number of new affordable homes permitted/ completed - Amount of new employment floorspace permitted / completed - Amount of new retail floorspace permitted / completed - Amount of retail floorspace lost to other uses - Number of local services and community facilities lost to other uses - S106/CIL contributions secured / allocated for 	<p>To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p> <p>The progress of the Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan will be important to the delivery of the sub-area strategy. It is anticipated that the neighbourhood plan will be adopted in 2015.</p>	<p>Housing completions per annum measured against housing trajectory</p> <p>Indicative housing target of 1,800 new homes to be delivered in sub-area to 2031</p> <p>Up to 7.3ha of employment land to be delivered up to 2031</p>

	Board	infrastructure projects - Air quality - HGV movements through Town Centre		
Policy EW1 – Blenheim World Heritage Site				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
- Development Management - WHS Management Plan - NPPF	- WODC - English Heritage - Blenheim Palace Estate	CIL / SI06 contributions secured / allocated for conserving and enhancing attributes of the WHS	To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.	None at present.
Policy EW2 – Eynsham – Woodstock Sub-Area				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
- Neighbourhood Plans - SHLAA - Rural exception sites - Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Planning obligations/CIL - Development management - LTP3 / LTP4 - Oxford Science Transit Project - WODC Parking Strategy	- WODC (lead) - Town and Parish Councils - Developers and landowners - Business and retail community - Local Communities - Oxfordshire County Council - Infrastructure providers - Cotswolds Conservation Board - River Thames Alliance	- 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 - Vehicle numbers on A40 - Town centre vacancy rates	To be applied on an on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review. The timing of improvements to the A40 will depend on the outcome of work currently on-going and being led by Oxfordshire County Council.	Housing completions per annum measured against housing trajectory Indicative housing requirement of 1,600 new homes to be delivered in the sub-area to 2031

Policy BCI – Burford – Charlbury Sub-Area				
Delivery mechanism/s	Delivery Partners	Indicators	Timescale & Comment	Target/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neighbourhood Plans - SHLAA - Rural exception sites - Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Planning obligations/CIL - Development management - LTP3 / LTP4 	<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 on-going basis and subject to annual monitoring review.</p>	<p>Housing completions per annum measured against housing trajectory</p> <p>Indicative housing requirement of 800 new homes to be delivered in sub-area to 2031</p>