WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

West Oxfordshire Council Plan 2019-23

Evidence Paper (August 2019)

Contents

Information sources and acknowledgement

The document below provides an overview of evidence about West Oxfordshire. The information summarised in the paper has been drawn from a number of sources. Principal sources include analyses of national statistics undertaken in recent years through the District Data Service (a support service that is jointly supported through the partner Oxfordshire Districts) and analysis that supports Oxfordshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) in 2019 (led by Oxfordshire County Council).

West Oxfordshire in 2019 - District Characteristics

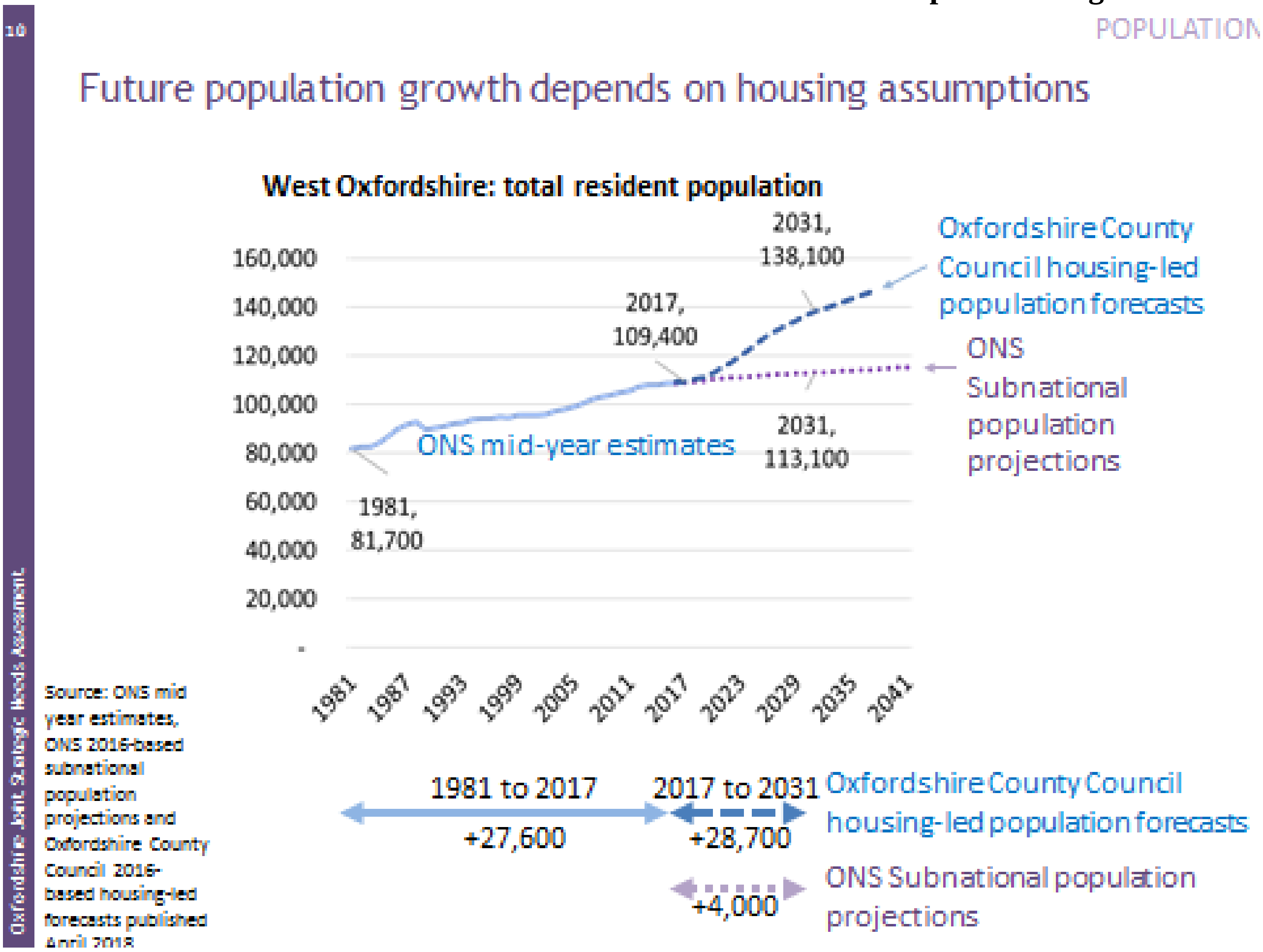
West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural area with a population of 109,300 (ONS Mid 2017 population estimate). The District enjoys a strong sense of place due to the Cotswold character of its buildings and the features of the natural environment – rolling countryside and river valleys. Around one third of the District falls within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The main towns are Witney (population 28,535), Carterton (16,500) and Chipping Norton (6,590) (ONS Mid-Year Pop'n Estimates 2016). These main towns offer a good range of services and facilities. In addition to the principal towns there are six further settlements (Bampton, Burford, Charlbury, Eynsham, Long Hanborough and Woodstock) that also support various services and facilities and are identified as rural service centres in West Oxfordshire's Local Plan (adopted in September 2018). The Local Plan makes provision for a new rural service centre in the form of the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village to the north of the A40 near Eynsham. Moving beyond the District's main settlements, West Oxfordshire has a scattering of medium sized and smaller villages and hamlets.

Population

The District has a growing and ageing population. The total resident population has increased 34% from 81,700 (1981) to 109,300 (ONS Mid 2017 Population Estimate). Recent population growth has mainly been in urban areas – Witney and Carterton – resulting from the construction of major development sites.

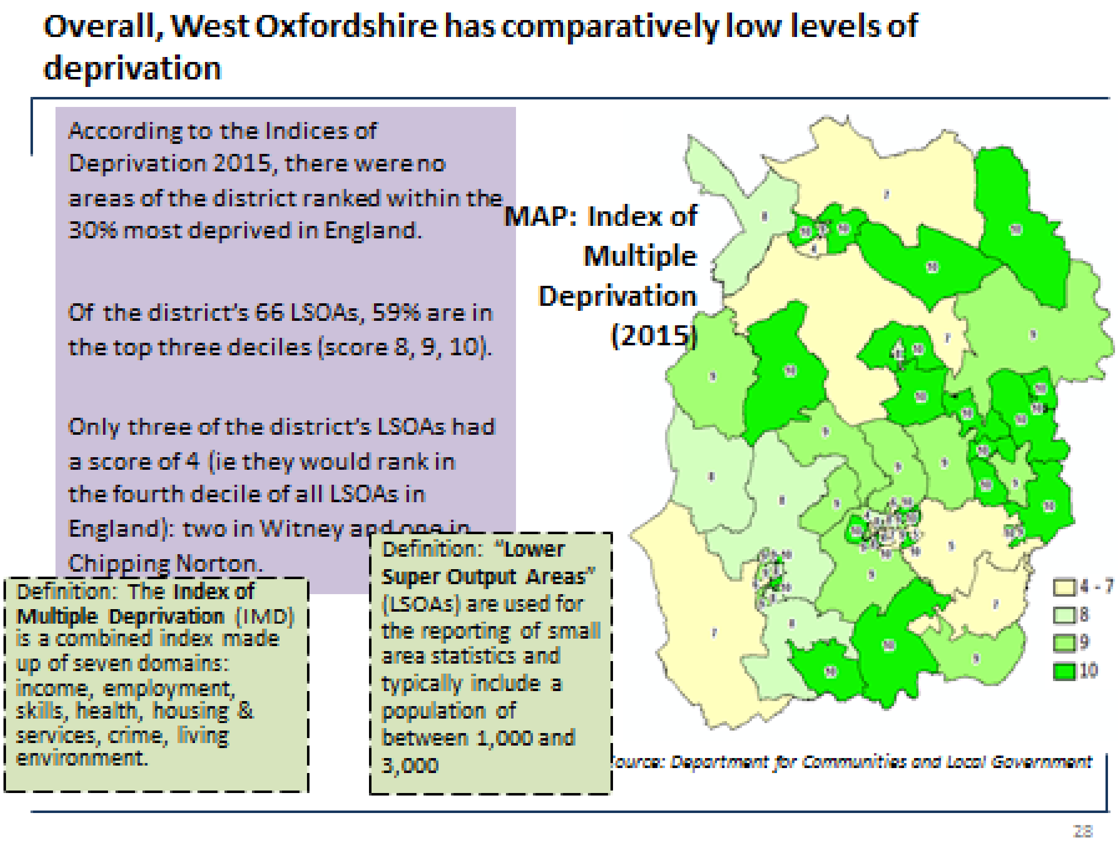
The growth in population will continue – planned for at a rate that is significantly higher than in preceding decades (a picture presented in Oxfordshire County housing-led population forecasts which show a population of 138,100 by 2031). The actual extent of the projected change that is forecast is dependent on which forecast method is used (ONS Subnational population projections outline a more conservative population growth to 113,100 by 2031 that is based on the historic trend of change).



A point that is common in forecast data is the growing elderly population in West Oxfordshire. The number of people in the oldest population group (people aged 85+) is forecast to increase from 3,400 (2017) to 5,500 (2031) (ONS mid-year estimates 2016). To put this in context, the count of people aged 85+ in 1981 was 800.

Quality of Life

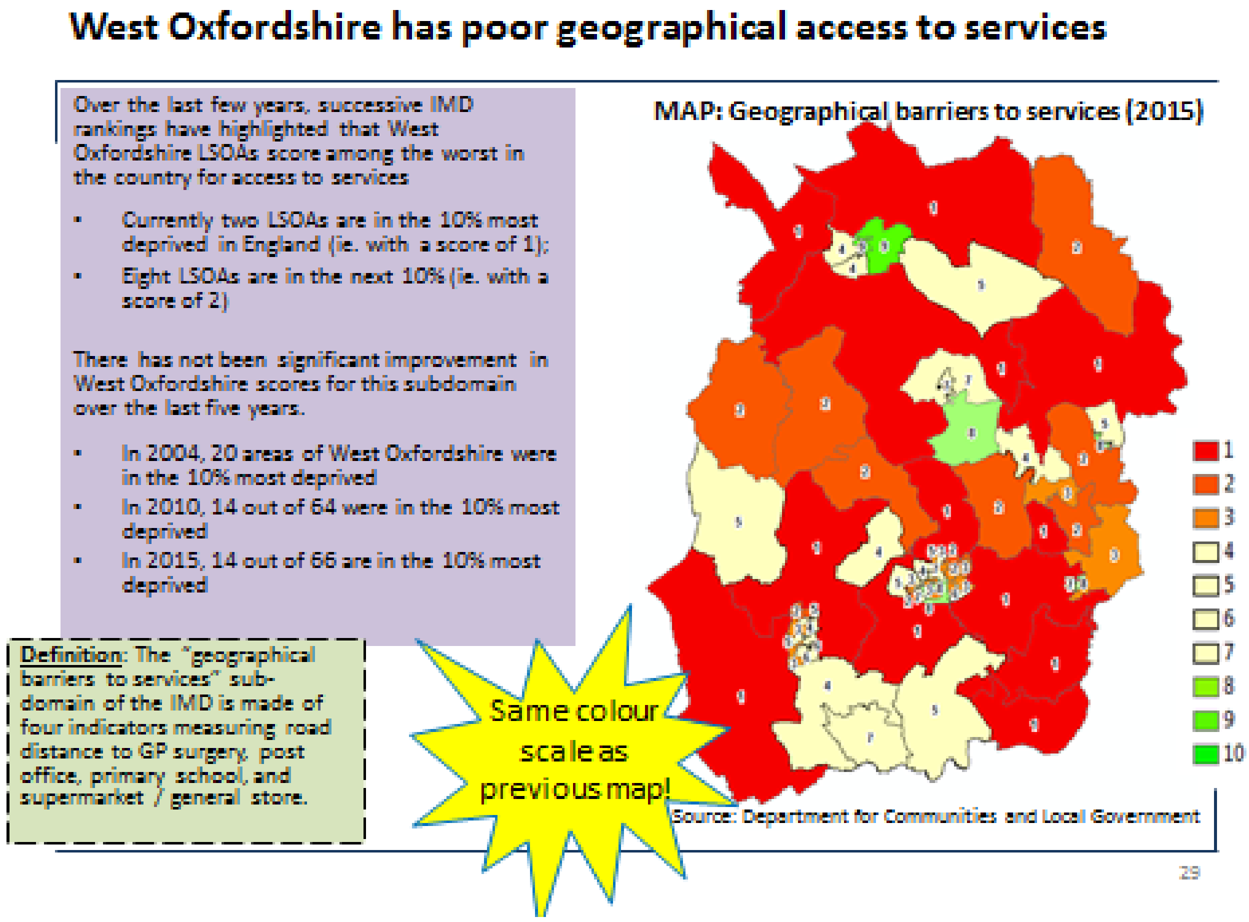
West Oxfordshire people are more likely to experience a good quality of life than residents in much of the rest of the country. The District has comparatively low levels of deprivation (as defined in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) which looks at a combined measure of income, employment, skills, health, housing and services, crime and living environment). According to the Indices of Deprivation 2015, there were no local areas in West Oxfordshire that ranked within the 30% most deprived in England. Indeed, of the District's 66 local areas (Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) used for reporting small area statistics) 59% are in the top three deciles (least deprived) in the England rankings. (see map)



A number of quality of life surveys place West Oxfordshire above the national average in terms of life satisfaction. For example, both the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported national survey data and the Halifax's Quality of LIfe Survey (2019) which consistently ranks West Oxfordshire in the top 50 Local Authority Districts in terms of the UK's best places to live.

A further recent "Thriving Places Index" has looked first at the overall characteristics of the upper tier local authority areas (Oxfordshire County level) and has placed Oxfordshire as above average on all three of its core index measures (sustainability, local conditions and equality). Although scoring well in all three main components of the index, there were considerations that scored at medium or below medium levels compared to the national data. The lower scoring elements were: transport; local business; community cohesion; CO2 emissions; energy consumption per capita (all rated at medium); and income inequality (rated below medium). In a more recent analysis at District level, the "Thriving Places Index" ranked West Oxfordshire strongly overall on local conditions, but only medium across scoring areas related to sustainability and equality. Poorly scoring individual elements at District level included: transport; CO2 emissions; energy consumption per capita; and the overall position on income inequality.

Although the general picture on the comparative level of deprivation and quality of life is good there are of course pockets of deprivation and the District ranks poorly in terms of geographical access to services. In 2015, 14 out of the 66 local areas of the District are placed in the 10% most deprived areas in the national rankings (IMD "geographical barriers to services" sub-domain) (see map).



This position has persisted over successive IMD analyses of this topic. The issue is recognised in Local Plan policy which seeks to protect against the loss of community facilities.

The access to facilities and services has worsened in recent years due to the significant reduction in the network of public transport that followed the removal of subsidies to bus routes. The removal of bus subsidies came into effect from 2016 and concern over the loss of services has been reported in Parish Survey responses that inform our Local Plan monitoring.

Crime and community safety

West Oxfordshire has the lowest crime rate in the County and overall crime is typically below average compared to statistically similar areas. The District is ranked as the 14th (out of 15) lowest crime area in a statistical group of areas with a similar character (where 1 = the highest crime rate area; Source: HMICFRS Jan 18 data release).

The historic data on anti-social behaviour also shows that the prevalence of this is at a relatively lower level compared to other Oxfordshire Districts. There were 83 anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) in West Oxfordshire in 2016. This gives the lowest rate of ASBOs in the county and is below the national average (relative to population count).

Although the crime rate is generally low, the level of recorded crime in West Oxfordshire has seen an increase (+12.4%) between 2017 and 2018 as outlined in the most recent Strategic Intelligence Assessment (SIA) (2019). The District is still ranked 14 out of 15 within the most similar group of 15 areas) (Source: Safer Oxfordshire Partnership: Strategic Intelligence Assessment 2019 (Draft, March 2019). Between 2016-17 and 2017-18, there was an increase in both recorded crime rates and in the severity of crime score in each of Oxfordshire's districts, similar to the national trend.

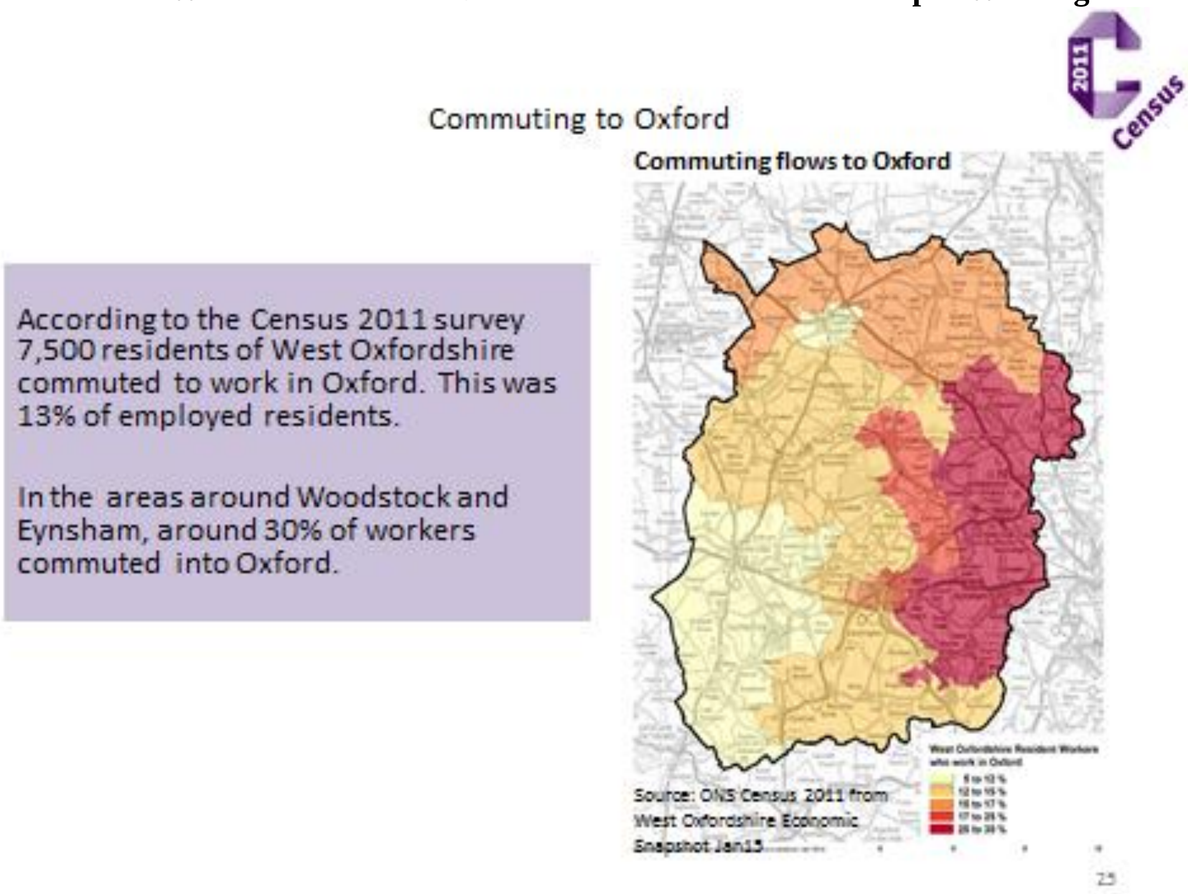
According to JSNA 2018 data, there was a 10% increase (2nd highest in the county) in the number of recorded victims of domestic abuse in West Oxfordshire between 2016 and 2017. There were slightly more male victims of domestic abuse in West Oxfordshire than in other districts.

There are areas of joint commitment between the Police and partnership bodies (including the Council) where collaborative working is seen as the best way for community safety partners to plan and target their work. The most recent SIA will be reviewed across partner agencies and further complementary analysis drawn together – this work will continue to assist community safety partners to plan and target their work.

The Local Economy

As outlined in West Oxfordshire's Local Plan, the District has strong functional economic links with other areas. The travel to work area data indicates that the closest links are with Oxford City, which performs a City-Region role, Cherwell District and the Vale of White Horse District. West Oxfordshire's economic partnership work as part of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership is rooted in the functional economic geography of the Oxfordshire local economy.

As might be expected, the proportion of people working in Oxford is highest in the east of the District at Woodstock and Eynsham where around 30% of workers work in Oxford. (see map).



The local economy profile in West Oxfordshire's Local Plan also shows that the majority of employment that is based in West Oxfordshire is concentrated in the south east of the District (35% of the District's employment is located in Witney with a further 25% in Eynsham and Woodstock). Carterton has a relatively low share of the District's employment opportunities (21%) compared to the size of its workforce. (Source of data: West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031).

The District continues to exhibit a strong and resilient local economy as evidenced in high rates of economic activity and a growing labour market. The District has an above average level of economic activity of 89.1% (South East: 80.8%; Great Britain: 78.5%). It has a low claimant count for people on out-of-work benefits of 1.1% (South East 1.7%; Great Britain: 2.7%). Employee jobs have increased from 42,000 in 2015 to 44,000 in 2017 and over the last decade the increase in jobs is mainly attributable to an increase in full time employment. There is an above average percentage of employment as managers and professionals 53.2% (South East: 50.9%; Great Britain: 46.4%). (Source: NOMIS Labour Market Profile – West Oxfordshire April 2019; Oxfordshire JSNA 2019; ONS Business Register and Employment Survey).

The comparative position in terms of jobs density (the ratio of total jobs to population aged 16-64) is favourable - based on the total number of jobs of 62,000 (this includes employees, self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces) the jobs density ratio for West Oxfordshire: 0.93

(South East: 0.87; Great Britain: 0.86). (Source: NOMIS Labour Market Profile – West Oxfordshire April 2019).

Oxfordshire's baseline economic review for the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS 2018) shows that workplace wages in West Oxfordshire are lower than resident wages (Source ONS data; Analysis Oxfordshire LIS Baseline) as is also the case in Cherwell and South Oxfordshire but not Oxford City or the Vale of White Horse.

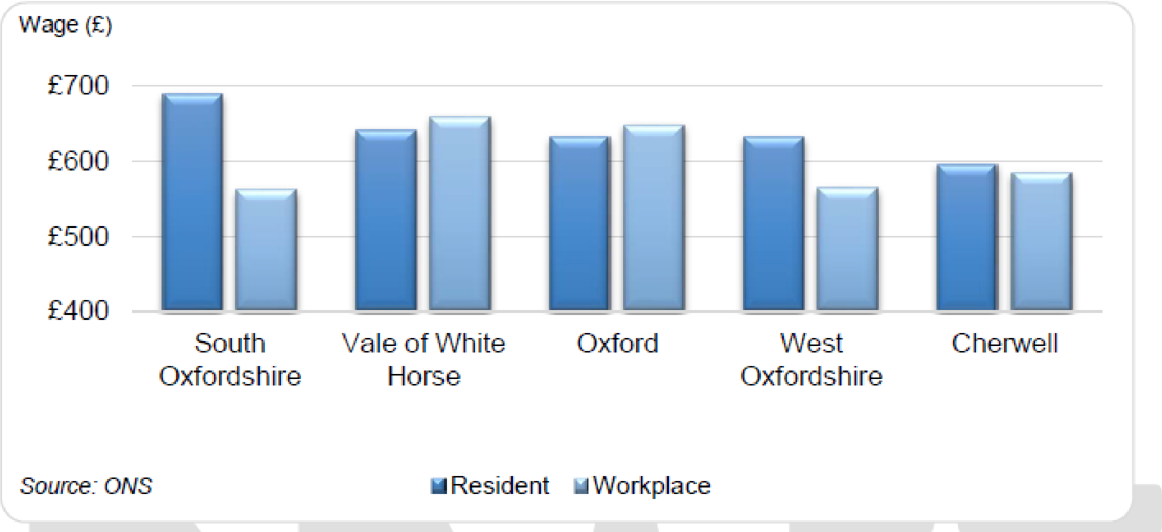
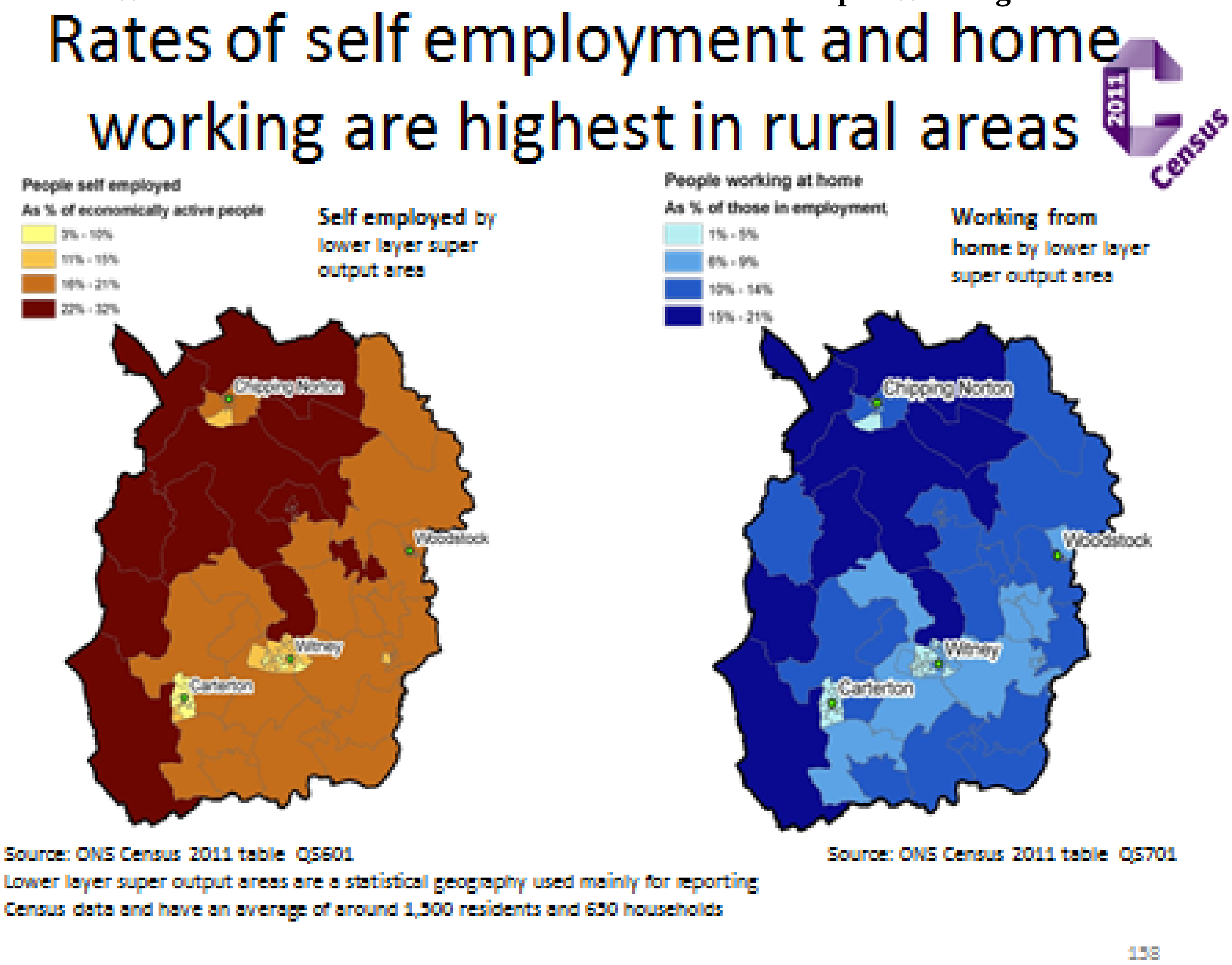


Figure 3-8 Oxfordshire local authorities' resident and workplace wage, 2017

West Oxfordshire has a diverse balance of employment across different industry sectors. As part of this, the District has maintained a relatively strong level of employment in manufacturing, which represents 12% of employee numbers (England: 8%). The employment in this sector is supported by a number of firms that include some involved in advanced manufacturing, reflecting a strong tradition in the engineering sector.

The District exhibits a high rate of home working with just under 8,000 (18% of West Oxfordshire's employed residents working mainly at or from home (at the time of the last Census – 2011). Rates of self-employment and home working are highest in the District's rural areas to the north and west (see maps).



There is an increasing number of local business enterprises based in West Oxfordshire (5,185 in 2010 moving to 5,655 in 2018 – with 90% of these being "micro" (0-9 employees; a further 9% of enterprises classified as small (10-49 employees); and few large businesses (over 250 employees). Although the number of enterprises in West Oxfordshire has increased (9% between 2010 and 2016), **the level of increase has not kept pace with the national increase for England (23% over the same period).** (Data Source: NOMIS April 2019; JSNA 2019; and West Oxfordshire District Economic Snapshot 2018, District Data Service).

Tourism

Tourism and the visitor economy remains an important factor in West Oxfordshire's local economy. In 2014, the spend from tourist activity was £280m, accounting for an estimated 3,559 (full time equivalent) jobs (Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire 2014, published August 2015 – cited in the Local Plan).

The most recent economic review of the impact of tourism in West Oxfordshire showed that the total visitor spend was £247.3m and total business turnover supported was £282.5m (2017 (Source: The Economic Impact of West Oxfordshire's Visitor Economy 2017, published: Nov 2018). The impact study is not directly comparable to the earlier tourism economic assessment as a different methodology has been used.

Recent National and Local Economic Policy Context

A lot of strategy work has been done in recent years, including – the development of a Strategic Economic Plan (2016) for the county and the joint pursuit (with other Oxfordshire authorities) of a Housing and Growth Deal with Government. In 2018 the Oxfordshire authorities signed the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. In return for guaranteed funding for affordable housing, infrastructure and economic growth, Oxfordshire's local authorities have undertaken to submit Local Plans for each of the districts that provide for the delivery of 100,000 new homes to 2031 (through the combined effect of those plans).

A key strand of the Growth Deal is the preparation of a new, joint statutory spatial plan - 'the Oxfordshire Plan' covering the period to 2050. The Oxfordshire Plan is currently under development and has recently been the subject of an initial public consultation on the key issues that need to be addressed through a new strategic plan for Oxfordshire. The purpose of the Oxfordshire Plan is to set out the aspirations for the County and to harness the growth opportunities as a positive factor to improve the quality of life across the County. West Oxfordshire District Council will have opportunities to work collaboratively to inform the vision and strategic development guided through the Oxfordshire Plan.

As part of the launch of the UK Industrial Strategy and the agreement under Oxfordshire's Growth Deal, Government invited Oxfordshire to be one of the first regions to develop a Local Industrial Strategy. The Oxfordshire Industrial Strategy was prepared as a Working Draft document at the end of 2018 and it sets out an ambitious twenty year plan to build on strengths in the local economy and world leading assets to deliver transformative growth and prosperity locally and to provide additional benefits to other UK regions. The approach fostered aims to be innovation led and driven by higher productivity. The Strategy is intended to be inclusive, place-sensitive and sustainable – enhancing our communities, the natural environment and the quality of life in the County. It will be aligned closely with the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

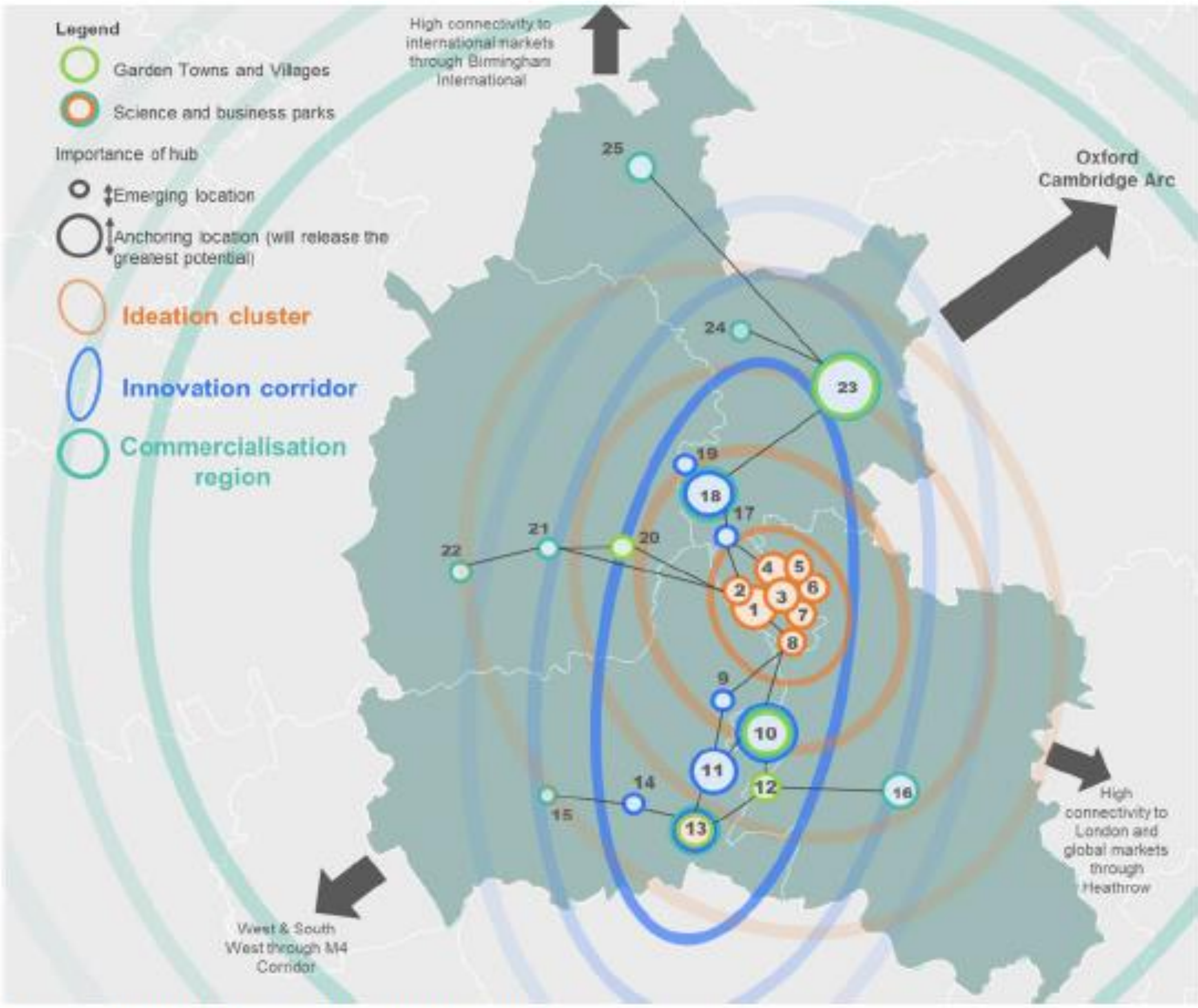
The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (adopted September 2018) has been informed of the strategic work forming at county level and it provides a sound spatial policy context for the term of the Council Plan (2019-2023). Our Local Plan makes provision for at least 15,950 homes over the period 2011 – 2031. This comprises 13,200 homes in the period 2011 – 2031 to meet West Oxfordshire's identified housing needs and a further 2,750 homes in the period 2021 – 2031 to meet a proportion of Oxford City's identified housing needs.

A key function of West Oxfordshire's Local Plan is to direct growth to the most appropriate and sustainable locations – to ensure that the right balance is struck between growth and protection of the local environment. The complementary role of the Council Plan is to now frame corporate objectives and tasks that can address our priorities and deliver relevant action.

The pursuit of strategic development opportunities is now about putting West Oxfordshire into the mix and securing our economic future. This type of action unfolds under the direction of our Local Plan which has of course been framed alongside other key strategies and evidence – the Joint Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire Industrial Strategy and the Oxfordshire Rail Strategy. In tandem, these schemes will help address some of the major challenges such as improving the A40 corridor and dualling the Cotswold line. It is a co-ordinated and strategic approach that will secure the required Government investment in infrastructure.

There will be opportunities to strengthen our economic future through playing a proactive role in our strategic work with local partners across Oxfordshire. The anticipated ripple effect of Oxfordshire's future economic growth is shown in the extract below from the Draft of Oxfordshire's Industrial Strategy which shows key locations:

Key locations highlighted in Oxfordshire's Draft Industrial Strategy



Key locations within the innovation ecosystem:

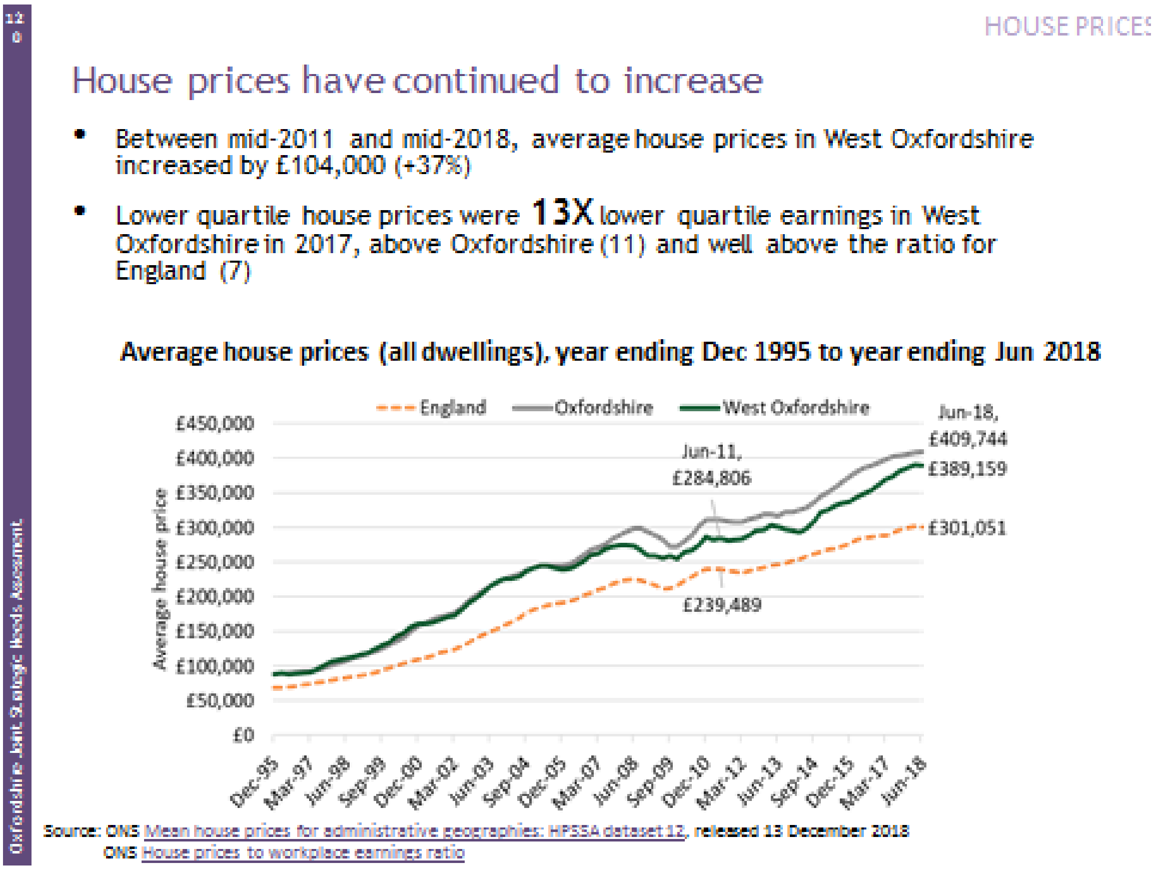
1. Oxpens, West End & Station Quarter
2. Osney Meads Innovation Quarter
3. Oxford University
4. Oxford Centre for Innovation
5. Oxford Brookes University
6. Headington Hospital Quarter
7. Oxford Business Park
8. Oxford Science Park
9. Quadrant, Abingdon Science Park
10. Culham Science Centre
11. Milton Park
12. Didcot Garden Town
13. Harwell Science and Innovation Campus
14. Grove Technology Park
15. Defence Academy, Shrivenham
16. Howbery Business Park
17. Oxford North
18. Begbroke Science Park and Innovation Centre
19. Oxford Technology Park
20. West Oxfordshire Garden Village
21. Witney Business & Innovation Centre
22. Carterton & RAF Brize Norton
23. Bicester Garden Town
24. Heyford Park
25. Banbury

West Oxfordshire is well placed as part of a strong and high value added/ knowledge intensive Oxfordshire local economic area. The District has the opportunity to secure further, successful economic development through its proximity to Oxford and current plans for a new science park as part of the proposed Garden Village.

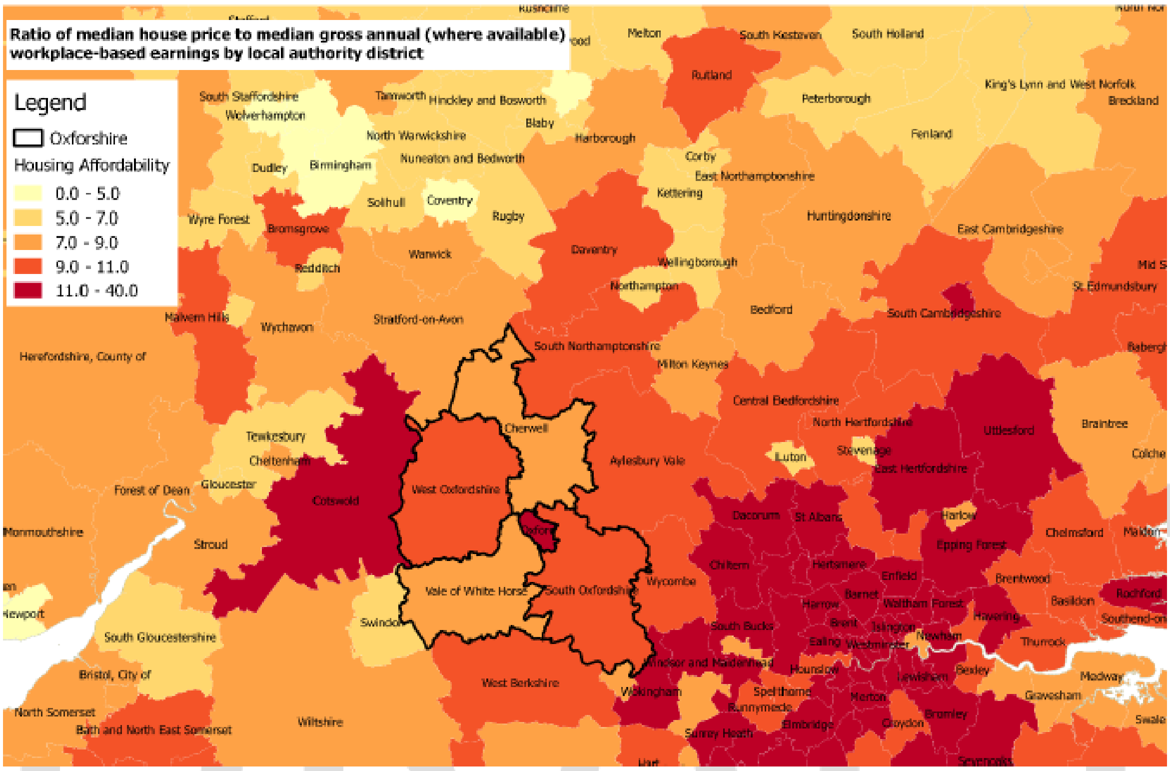
Housing

According to the 2011 Census, there were 43,000 households in West Oxfordshire. In terms of tenure – 70% of the homes were owned (in full or with a mortgage – compared with 63% across England). Between 2001 and 2011 the total number of households in West Oxfordshire increased by 4,800 (+13%) – the highest percentage growth was in private rented households. (District Data Service – West Oxfordshire Briefing Note: Housing 2018; Source: ONS Census 2001 and 2011). A more recent analysis shows that in 2017 there were 47,560 occupied households in West Oxfordshire (District Data Service – West Oxfordshire Briefing Note: Housing 2018; Source: MHCLG Live Table 100, downloaded 20/08/18).

As summarised in our Local Plan, housing affordability is a significant issue in the District. A recent analysis has shown that between mid 2011 and mid 2018 average house prices in West Oxfordshire increased by £104,000 (+37%). In 2017, lower quartile house prices stood at 13x lower quartile earnings (above Oxfordshire (11) and well above the ratio for England (7) (Source: Oxfordshire JSNA 2019 based on ONS mean house prices data released 13 Dec 2018). (See graph).



The baseline economic analysis for Oxfordshire's Local Industrial Strategy (LIS 2018) shows that across Oxfordshire there is a substantial need for new housing and consequently buying and renting housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable.



Source: ONS Housing affordability in England and Wales: 2017
Figure 5-6 Ratio of median house price to median gross annual workplace-based earnings by local authority district.

Source: Oxfordshire LIS 2018 Economic Review: Baseline Dec 2018

A summary of key housing and homelessness statistics in 2018 shows the following position:

SUMMARY & KEY FACTS

In West Oxfordshire...

- HOMELESSNESS
  - 7 rough sleepers
  - 63 applications for housing under the HomelessnessAct, of which 34 were accepted
- HOUSE PRICES
  - The median price of houses sold was £337,500
  - The median price of houses sold is 55% higher than a decade ago
  - (Affordability:) The median house is 10.6 times income [*England: 7.9*]
  - (Affordability:) Lower quartile houses are 12.6 times income [*England: 7.3*]
- RENT
  - Social sector rent is £110.48 pw [England: £96.61]
  - Private sector rent is £883 pcm [England: £675]
- OTHER
  - 1,218 vacant dwellings
  - 518 additional dwellings in 2016/17, mostly through new builds
  - 5,100 extra dwellings since 2008
  - 70% own their home; 12% are social renters; 15% rent privately

West Oxfordshire Briefing Note: Housing 2018 2

There has been an increase in people who are accepted as statutorily homeless. West Oxfordshire was the only district where there was an increase in acceptances of status over the past year. (JSNA Summary for West Oxfordshire 2018)

Transport (Local Plan extract)

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 elsewhere. 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.

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.

Public transport provision in West Oxfordshire is variable in terms of coverage and frequency. 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.

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. The Oxford Parkway Station located nearby in Cherwell District opened in October 2015 thereby offering additional journey choice to West Oxfordshire residents.

In terms of bus provision, Witney and Carterton, the two largest settlements, are connected to Oxford by high frequency services. The Woodstock area is also well served by public transport. Other bus services operate throughout the rural area with varying frequencies. In July 2016 Oxfordshire County Council announced that subsidies would be withdrawn for a large number of bus services operating in West Oxfordshire leaving some settlements with very few or no bus services at all, although some services have continued on a commercial basis.

Most cycle and pedestrian routes are focused on the main towns although there are dedicated cycle routes between Witney, Eynsham and Oxford along the A40 and from Woodstock to Oxford along the A44.

Local Economic Policy Context – Growth and Housing

As part of the evidence base to support West Oxfordshire's Local Plan, the Council commissioned an economic snapshot that highlighted the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) facing the District (reported: January 2015). A summary of the SWOT analysis is set out below:

Figure 5.3: SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Skilled Work Force Quality of Life Environment Proximity to Oxford Legacy of successful businesses Industrial structure – including range of sectors Blenheim Palace	Congestion – particularly along A40 corridor Infrastructure – poor rail links Broadband – though a programme is in place to address this Low productivity Lack of critical mass Land supply – lack of sites and little recent development Aging stock Land ownership Business Facilities
Opportunities	**Threats**
Oxford City Region – especially growth opportunities around Eynsham Nurture Local Businesses Brize Norton – Lyneham relocations Rationalise commercial activity Potential healthcare cluster – based around Abbot and Owen Mumford Cotswold Live Work	Oxford/Science Vale Failure to adapt and get on new curve Climate change? Loss of key employers Defence closures Deterioration of congestion Differential in value between employment land and residential Housing shortages Skills shortages

(Source: CAG Consultants, January 2015)

The local economy SWOT analysis has informed our Local Plan policies and it has given a context to our subsequent economic partnership work with other Oxfordshire authorities and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Key recent steps have been the development of the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (2016) and the joint pursuit (with our Oxfordshire partner local authorities) of a Housing and Growth Deal with Government.

In 2018 the Oxfordshire authorities signed the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal with the Government (Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (Nov 2017) MHCLG). In return for guaranteed funding for affordable housing, infrastructure and economic growth, the Oxfordshire authorities have committed to submit a Local Plan for each District that plans for the delivery of 100,000 new homes to 2031 (through the combined effect of those plans) and to the development of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (background document: Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan Scoping Document (Oct 2018)).

This is a much longer period than is covered in our current Local Plan (which covers to 2031) and it is important in the strategic context it provides. A significant extent of joint work across the Oxfordshire authorities has already taken place and this has informed West Oxfordshire's current Local Plan (to 2031). The period to 2031 is therefore specified in a good level of detail in terms of planned future development. The latter period of the Oxfordshire Plan to 2050 will be based on a new evidence base produced specifically for the joint project work – future Local Plans (including West Oxfordshire's future Local Plan) will sit within the framework defined by the Oxfordshire Plan.

The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is currently under development and there has been recent public consultation (Feb – March 2019) to inform the approach. The eventual purpose of the Oxfordshire Plan will be to set the framework for future decision making on big issues like development infrastructure and place-making. The intention of the Plan is that it is aspirational and that it uses the opportunity of growth as a positive to improve the quality of life for everyone in the county.

West Oxfordshire District Council and its local communities will have opportunities to work collaboratively to inform the common purpose and vision for the county as expressed in the Oxfordshire Plan. Our recently adopted Local Plan sets out our vision, core objectives and overall strategy to 2031. The current Council Plan complements this by providing a corporate strategy context that frames relevant actions to address priorities.

Education

The analysis of data for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2019 shows school pupils and young people in West Oxfordshire are performing relatively well academically. 77% of pupils aged 5 achieved a good level of development in Early Learning Goals (73.5% Oxfordshire; 75% South East). 48.9% achieved strong passes (9-5) in GCSE English and Maths (46.6% Oxfordshire; 43.5% England) in 2018. The GCSE attainment 8 score (a broad based measure of attainment) for West Oxfordshire pupils of 48.8 is relatively strong (Oxfordshire: 46.8; South East 47.8; England (state): 46.6). (Source: JSNA 2019 analysis).

In line with the general position across Oxfordshire, the proportion of young people in the District aged 16-19 who are not in education, employment or training (so called NEETs) has declined over recent years (in August 2018, this stood at under 2%; compared to just under 5% in August 2011) (Source: Oxfordshire JSNA 2019).

Over time, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of West Oxfordshire's residents that are qualified at the highest levels (NVQ4 or NVQ5 – indicating a degree/ higher diploma or above). In 2004, 26% of West Oxfordshire were at this level (the same as the national average of 26%). By 2015, the proportion had approximately doubled to 50% (at NVQ4+) (the national average had increased to 37% over this period). (Source: District Data Service Analysis)

Health and well-being

West Oxfordshire's health profile (2018) shows that the health of people in the District is generally better than the England average. Life expectancy for men stands at 82.1 (2.6 years longer than the England average of 79.5) and for women at 84.1 (1 year longer than that for England at 83.1). The health summary for the District shows that across most measures of health and disease, West Oxfordshire compares favourably.

Health summary for West Oxfordshire

The chart below shows how the health of people in this area compares with the rest of England. This area's value for each indicator is shown as a circle. The England average is shown by the red line, which is always at the centre of the chart. The range of results for all local areas in England is shown as a grey bar. A red circle means that this area is significantly worse than England for that indicator. However, a green circle may still indicate an important public health problem.

- Significantly worse than England average
- Not significantly different from England average
- Significantly better than England average
- Not compared

	Indicator names	Period	Local count	Local value	Eng value	Eng worst	Eng best
Life expectancy and causes of death	1 Life expectancy at birth (Male)	2014 - 16	n/a	82.1	79.5	74.2	83.7
	2 Life expectancy at birth (Female)	2014 - 16	n/a	84.1	83.1	79.4	86.8
	3 Under 75 mortality rate: all causes	2014 - 16	747	247.7	333.8	545.7	215.2
	4 Under 75 mortality rate: cardiovascular	2014 - 16	142	47.7	73.5	141.3	42.3
	5 Under 75 mortality rate: cancer	2014 - 16	333	109.6	136.8	195.3	99.1
	6 Suicide rate	2014 - 16	31	11.0	9.9	18.3	4.6
Injuries and ill health	7 Killed and seriously injured on roads	2014 - 16	184	56.5	39.7	110.4	13.5
	8 Hospital stays for self-harm	2016/17	204	200.0	185.3	578.9	50.6
	9 Hip fractures in older people (aged 65+)	2016/17	135	569.5	575.0	854.2	364.7
	10 Cancer diagnosed at early stage	2016	316	59.3	52.6	39.3	61.9
	11 Diabetes diagnoses (aged 17+)	2017	n/a	67.2	77.1	54.3	96.3
	12 Dementia diagnoses (aged 65+)	2017	1,082	69.1	67.9	45.1	90.8
Behavioural risk factors	13 Alcohol-specific hospital stays (under 18s)	2014/15 - 16/17	34	50.1	34.2	100.0	6.5
	14 Alcohol-related harm hospital stays	2016/17	538	495.0	636.4	1,151.1	388.2
	15 Smoking prevalence in adults (aged 18+)	2017	11,786	13.7	14.9	24.8	4.6
	16 Physically active adults (aged 19+)	2016/17	n/a	71.9	66.0	53.3	78.8
	17 Excess weight in adults (aged 18+)	2016/17	n/a	54.7	61.3	74.9	40.5
Child health	18 Under 18 conceptions	2016	20	10.8	18.8	36.7	3.3
	19 Smoking status at time of delivery	2016/17	81	7.7	10.7	28.1	2.3
	20 Breastfeeding initiation	2016/17	917	82.7	74.5	37.9	96.7
	21 Infant mortality rate	2014 - 16	10	2.8	3.9	7.9	0.0
	22 Obese children (aged 10-11)	2016/17	155	14.7	20.0	29.2	8.8
Inequa-lities	23 Deprivation score (IMD 2015)	2015	n/a	8.1	21.8	42.0	5.0
	24 Smoking prevalence: routine and manual occupations	2017	n/a	22.8	25.7	48.7	5.1
Wider determinants of health	25 Children in low income families (under 16s)	2015	1,460	7.6	16.8	30.5	5.7
	26 GCSEs achieved	2015/16	633	60.3	57.8	44.8	78.7
	27 Employment rate (aged 16-64)	2016/17	54,200	83.4	74.4	59.8	88.5
	28 Statutory homelessness	2016/17	20	0.4	0.8		
	29 Violent crime (violence offences)	2016/17	771	7.1	20.0	42.2	5.7
Health protection	30 Excess winter deaths	Aug 2013 - Jul 2016	161	16.7	17.9	30.3	6.3
	31 New sexually transmitted infections	2017	319	475.5	793.8	3,215.3	266.6
	32 New cases of tuberculosis	2014 - 16	14	4.3	10.9	69.0	0.0

For full details on each indicator, see the definitions tab of the Health Profiles online tool: www.healthprofiles.info

Indicator value types
1, 2 Life expectancy - Years 3, 4, 5 Directly age-standardised rate per 100,000 population aged under 75 6 Directly age-standardised rate per 100,000 population aged 10 and over 7 Crude rate per 100,000 population 8 Directly age-standardised rate per 100,000 population 9 Directly age-standardised rate per 100,000 population aged 65 and over 10 Proportion - % of cancers diagnosed at stage 1 or 2 11 Proportion - % recorded diagnosis of diabetes as a proportion of the estimated number with diabetes 12 Proportion - % recorded diagnosis of dementia as a proportion of the estimated number with dementia 13 Crude rate per 100,000 population aged under 18 14 Directly age-standardised rate per 100,000 population 15, 16, 17 Proportion - % 18 Crude rate per 1,000 females aged 15 to 17 19, 20 Proportion - % 21 Crude rate per 1,000 live births 22 Proportion - % 23 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015 score 24, 25 Proportion - % 26 Proportion - % 5 A*-C including English & Maths 27 Proportion - % 28 Crude rate per 1,000 households 29 Crude rate per 1,000 population 30 Ratio of excess winter deaths to average of non-winter deaths (%) 31 Crude rate per 100,000 population aged 15 to 64 (excluding Chlamydia) 32 Crude rate per 100,000 population

€"Regional" refers to the former government regions.

If 25% or more of areas have no data then the England range is not displayed.

Please send any enquiries to healthprofiles@phe.gov.uk

The Older People's Health and Wellbeing Profile for West Oxfordshire (as reported in the JSNA 2019) shows that older people in the District have similar or better than the regional average positions against the main health and wellbeing indicators. The diagnosed dementia rate in West Oxfordshire is above average and continuing to rise.

Young people's mental health continues to be an area of concern. In Oxfordshire the 15-19 age group continued to make up the largest proportion and number of patients referred to Oxford Health mental health services in 2016-17 and has seen the biggest increase since 2011-12. Between 2011-12 and 2016-17, the number of patients referred aged 15-19 increased by 80% compared with a 22% increase overall (all ages). There was also a significant increase of patients referred in the younger age group aged 10-14 (+67%). At the same time waiting times for CAMHS Services (Child and Adolescent Mental Health services) have increased significantly. In West Oxfordshire the percentage of young people seen within 12 weeks has decreased from 78% in May 2017 to only 54% in December 2017. This is the second lowest rate in Oxfordshire where on average 66% of patients are seen within 12 weeks.

Lifestyles and wider determinants of health

Across Oxfordshire as a whole, participation in sport is consistently above the prevailing rate nationally. However, there has been an apparent decline in participation in sport in recent years. The percentage of the adult population playing sport at least three times a week (this was reported as 27.7% in 2008 and at 24.5% in 2016 (however, the difference in the survey based data may not be statistically significant).

Although the general health position is favourable, there are some issues where the position could be better. This is true in the sphere of lifestyles and behaviours that contribute as wider determinants of health. There is a variation in the level of physical activity across the District. The monitoring data on this that is reported through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the work undertaken through Active Oxfordshire provides data analysis that can help inform targeted work to improve physical activity.

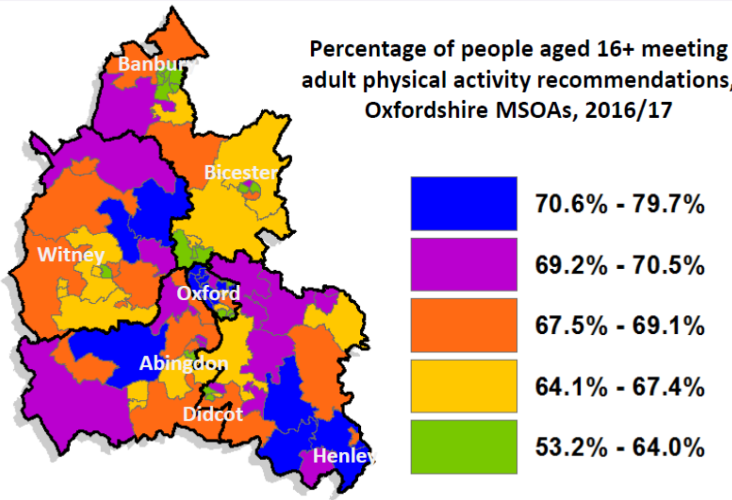
The most recent JSNA (2019) analysis shows that 71.9% of adults in West Oxfordshire achieved the recommended level of physical activity (2016/17) (this is the third highest of the Oxfordshire districts – behind Oxford (74.0%) and Vale of White Horse (73.1%) and is above the overall Oxfordshire level (70.1%); South East region (68.9%) and England level (66.0%). At the time of the JSNA 2019 analysis, trends were not yet available for this data.

There is variation in physical activity levels within districts. The estimated data indicates that the proportion of people aged 16+ meeting adult physical activity guidelines tends to be higher in more affluent areas of the county (see chart)

There is variation in physical activity levels within districts

*These estimates are calculated using the same data as local authority figures (previous page), but use adults **aged 16+** as their population. They report the proportion of people meeting CMO physical activity guidelines for adults (150 minutes per week). Current CMO guidelines for 16-18 year olds recommend at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of physical activity per day.*

Percentage of people aged 16+ meeting adult physical activity recommendations, Oxfordshire MSOAs, 2016/17



- These estimates indicate that the proportion of people aged 16+ meeting adult physical activity guidelines tends to be higher in more affluent areas of the county
- Percentages are lowest in the south of Oxford (Blackbird Leys, Northfield Brook, Littlemore) and Banbury (Ruscote and Neithrop)

Source: Small area estimates, Sport England
Source: CMO Physical Activity Guidelines, Department of Health and Social Care
Mapping by Oxford City Council, © Crown Copyright and database right 2018. Ordnance Survey 100019348

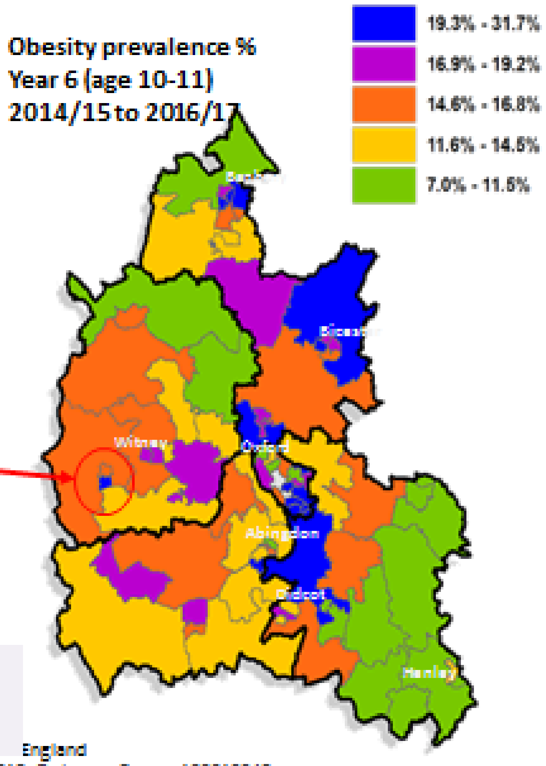
Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Excess weight in adults is recognised as a major determinant of premature mortality and avoidable ill health. The JSNA 2019 outlines that an estimated 54.7% of adults were classified as overweight or obese in 2016/17 (Oxfordshire level: 56.0%; South East Region: 59.7%; England: 61.3%.

For young people, the latest JSNA (2019) analysis shows that the obesity rate for year 6 children in West Oxfordshire has remained the same with variable rates across the district (see chart) and therefore remains an area of concern.

Obesity rate for year 6 children in West Oxfordshire has remained the same; rates vary across the district

- Data at national level shows that obesity prevalence is considerably higher in children from more deprived areas
- In 2017/18 there were **165** children aged 10 or 11 in West Oxfordshire measured as obese
- This was a rate of 14%, the same as in 2007/08, 10 years previously
- The highest rate (for 2014/15 to 2016/17) was in South Carterton (22%) and the lowest were the Enstone area (10%) and Woodstock (10.5%)



For the most up to date information about obesity in children in Oxfordshire districts, visit the [Public Health Surveillance Dashboard](). For ward level data, visit the Oxfordshire [Health Inequalities Basket of Indicators]().

England

Mapping by Oxford City Council, © Crown Copyright and database right 2018. Ordnance Survey 100019348

Environment - National and Local Policy Context

The national strategic context for our work in addressing key environmental and climate change concerns is framed in the Government's 25 year Environment Plan. This establishes a range of important goals and an environmental policy focus. A brief outline taken from the Government's Environment Plan shows the important goals and policy focus that have been established:

Our 25-year goals

We will achieve:

- Clean air
- Clean and plentiful water
- Thriving plants and wildlife
- Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought
- Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently
- Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment

We will manage pressures on the environment by:

- Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Minimising waste
- Managing exposure to chemicals
- Enhancing biosecurity

Our policies will focus on:

- Using and managing land sustainably
- Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing
- Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste
- Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans
- Protecting and improving the global environment

Source: A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (HM Government 2018)

The Council recognises West Oxfordshire's high quality environment and has sought to protect and enhance this through Local Plan policies and allocations and through associated development management and through a range of relevant strategic environmental work and partnership activity. In future, key parts of this work will be our strategy on carbon reduction and climate change and our consultative work to deliver a waste and resources strategy.

A part of our future strategic environmental work has been considered recently through review work reported to our Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (December 2018) – a Low Carbon and Environmental Plan – Biodiversity. This report has advanced our future approach and paved the way for biodiversity issues to be more effectively encompassed in our work. The report and the proposed review and update of our Low Carbon and Environmental Plan will help us address our commitments under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) and recent changes/ publications – including the Government's 25 Year Plan and the adoption of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (containing environmental and biodiversity policies).

There are other significant areas of environmental strategy work that we will need to advance over the coming Council Plan period. This work will include low carbon and climate change strategic initiatives and work to complement DEFRAs Waste and Resources strategy. The Council is developing an Action plan to reduce Single Use Plastics and will also develop a more strategic plan to consider the strands across multiple services which can contribute to a reduction in carbon. The low carbon and climate change strategic initiatives will be informed in part by the emerging Oxfordshire Energy Strategy. Led by Ox LEP, the strategy is aligned to the Government's Industrial Strategy and Clean Growth Strategy with the aim for Oxfordshire to be at the forefront of energy innovation to foster clean growth

Over time, the Council has undertaken various partnership work that has been focused on environmental project work - there will be scope to maintain and develop this activity with a range of partner interests. This work includes our engagement as a partner in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); the Wychwood Project; the Windrush in Witney project work; and the Lower Windrush Valley Project.

There has been a significant focus on practical environmental services continue to deliver strong results. The Council is ranked as one of the best authorities in the country for recycling and there has been a significant ongoing effort in promoting recycling and reducing the amount of waste, whilst keeping the District clean.

Natural environment (Local Plan extract)

The District has a rich natural environment with around 34% of the area 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.

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.

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 District 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 as guided by the Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

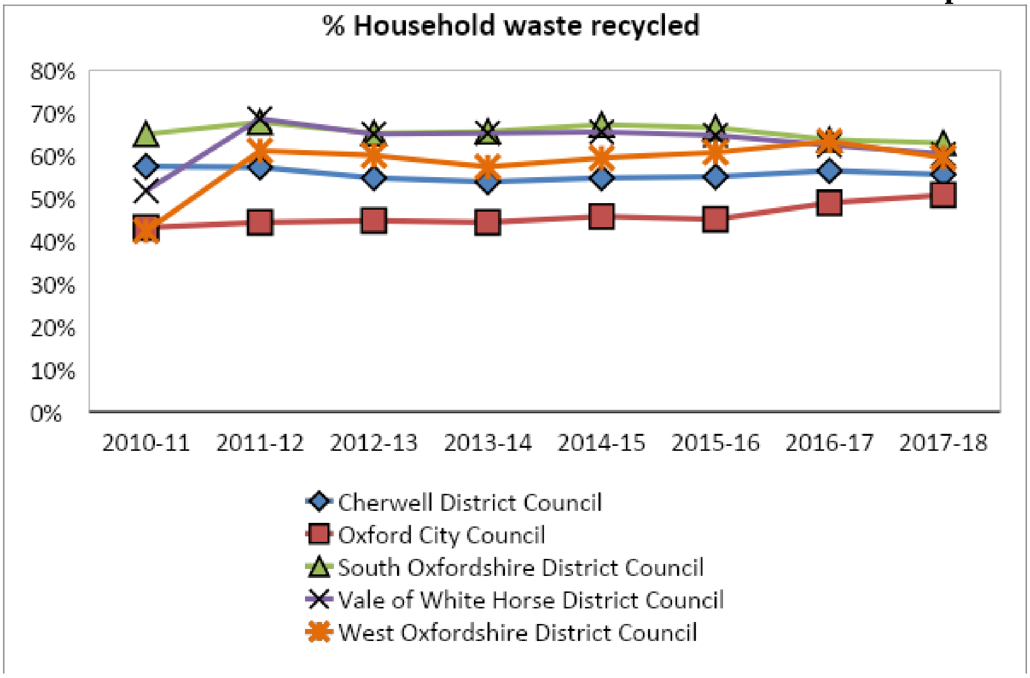
The after-use of mineral sites presents the opportunity for leisure and tourism uses as well as creating opportunities for nature reserves but it is vital that mineral extraction is properly managed in order to protect environmental quality and public amenity and to help ameliorate flood risk.

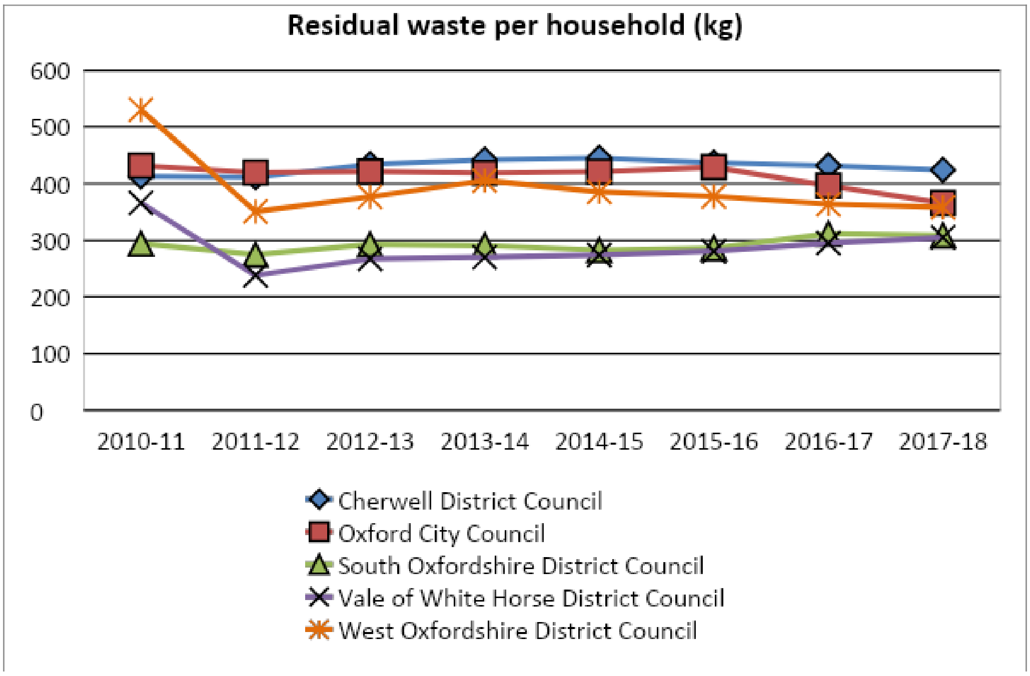
Environment – air quality

West Oxfordshire has two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). The latest report on air quality in the District (June 2018) indicates that the levels of nitrogen dioxide at Chipping Norton and Witney AQMAs remain higher than the national objective level. Concentrations outside of the AQMAs are below the objectives at relevant locations (Source: Local Plan Monitoring Report 2017-18 – Reported to Cabinet, March 2019).

Waste and recycling

West Oxfordshire District achieves a high composting and recycling rate placing it at 12th in England from April 2017 to March 2018 despite the challenges of delivering the service in a rural district.


% Household waste recycled
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
2010-11
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
Cherwell District Council
Oxford City Council
South Oxfordshire District Council
Vale of White Horse District Council
West Oxfordshire District Council


Residual waste per household (kg)
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
2010-11
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
Cherwell District Council
Oxford City Council
South Oxfordshire District Council
Vale of White Horse District Council
West Oxfordshire District Council

Management of all Local Authority collected waste financial year figures in England 2013/14 to 2017/18 (thousand tonnes)

Waste disposal method	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2017/18 % change over 2016/17
Landfill	7,933	6,361	5,133	4,136	3,213	-22.3%
Recycled / composted *of which:-*	10,931	11,067	11,065	11,252	10,860	-3.5%
Household waste	9,980	10,117	10,075	10,329	9,980	-3.4%
Non household waste	950	950	990	923	880	-4.7%
Total Incineration *of which:-*	6,245	7,798	9,259	10,169	10,834	6.5%
Incineration with EfW	6,204	7,773	9,067	9,946	10,620	6.8%
Incineration without EfW [1]	41	25	192	224	214	-4.1%
Other	537	589	668	761	719	-5.5%
Total local authority waste managed	**25,645**	**25,816**	**26,124**	**26,319**	**25,626**	**-2.6%**
Recycled / composted waste as a percent of total	**42.6%**	**42.9%**	**42.4%**	**42.8%**	**42.4%**	**-0.4 percentage points**

Defra's Our Waste, Our Resources: Strategy for England published in December 2018 sets out how the national strategy to preserve the country's stock of material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy. At the same time there will be an emphasis on minimising the damage caused to our natural environment by reducing and managing waste safely and carefully, and by tackling waste crime. Building on the commitments in the Strategy, the government is consulting on significant reform of waste and recycling services. There have been four key areas being consulted on: Reform of the extended producer responsibility scheme; the potential to deliver greater consistency of waste services; Deposit Return Schemes and Plastic packaging tax.

Each of these consultations could lead to significant financial and service model changes which will directly impact upon the waste services local councils deliver. In particular, the simplification of the existing recycling system in which there will be a consistent set of recyclable materials collected from all households and businesses. These will include separate weekly food waste collections for every household in England and could include free garden waste collections for households with gardens.

To support the implementation of Defra's Strategy and to supersede the outdated Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy the Council have adopted Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Strategy 2018-23. The strategy has been developed on behalf of all Oxfordshire local authorities through the Oxfordshire Environment Partnership (OEP).

The next 25 years will see rapid change for Oxfordshire in population and housing growth. The types of waste and the way in which we collect and manage waste are expected to change over time as technology innovation transforms society and organisations. Attitudes towards global and local waste issues will evolve and manufacturers will adapt by seeking to make their products more sustainable. The strategy is bold and ambitious. We want to continue to be amongst the very best in the country, helping economic and population growth while using our resources sustainably.

The three aims of the strategy are

- Keep household waste groth to zero (per person, per year)
- Increase the amount of household waste we recycle to 70% by 2030

- Send less than 3% of our household waste to landfill by 2020

The Council resolves to work towards elimination of all avoidable plastic waste and calls upon the Cabinet Member for Environment to bring forward proposals by Spring 2019 to:

- *Phase out the use of avoidable Single Use Plastics (SUPs) in all District Council premises*
- *Work with UBICO, PUBLICA and contracted partners to end purchase and procurement of avoidable SUPs through the Council's supply chain*

Carbon emissions and fuel poverty

The UK is committed to reducing carbon emissions by 57% by 2032 and a reduction of 80% by 2050. The Oxfordshire Energy Strategy (currently under development) sets a strategic objective to lead nationally and internationally to reduce countywide carbon emissions by 50% compared to 2008 levels and set a pathway to achieve zero carbon growth by 2050. It also aims to secure a smart, modern, clean energy infrastructure which supports the planned housing, industrial and commercial growth and changing energy requirements. Energy used for transport remains the highest energy consumer across the county. In West Oxfordshire district, transport contributes 225.5 ktCO2 of carbon emissions due to the rurality of the district, 208.5 ktCO2 from Industry and Commerce and 195.3 ktCO2 from Domestic demand. West Oxfordshire district has 5.6 tonnes of carbon emission per person. The national average is 5.9 tonnes and the county average is 6.6 tonnes per person. The transition to low carbon will be achieved by supporting innovative and clean generation projects in both rural and urban areas and reducing the energy demand and improve the energy efficiency for domestic, commercial and industrial buildings and transport.

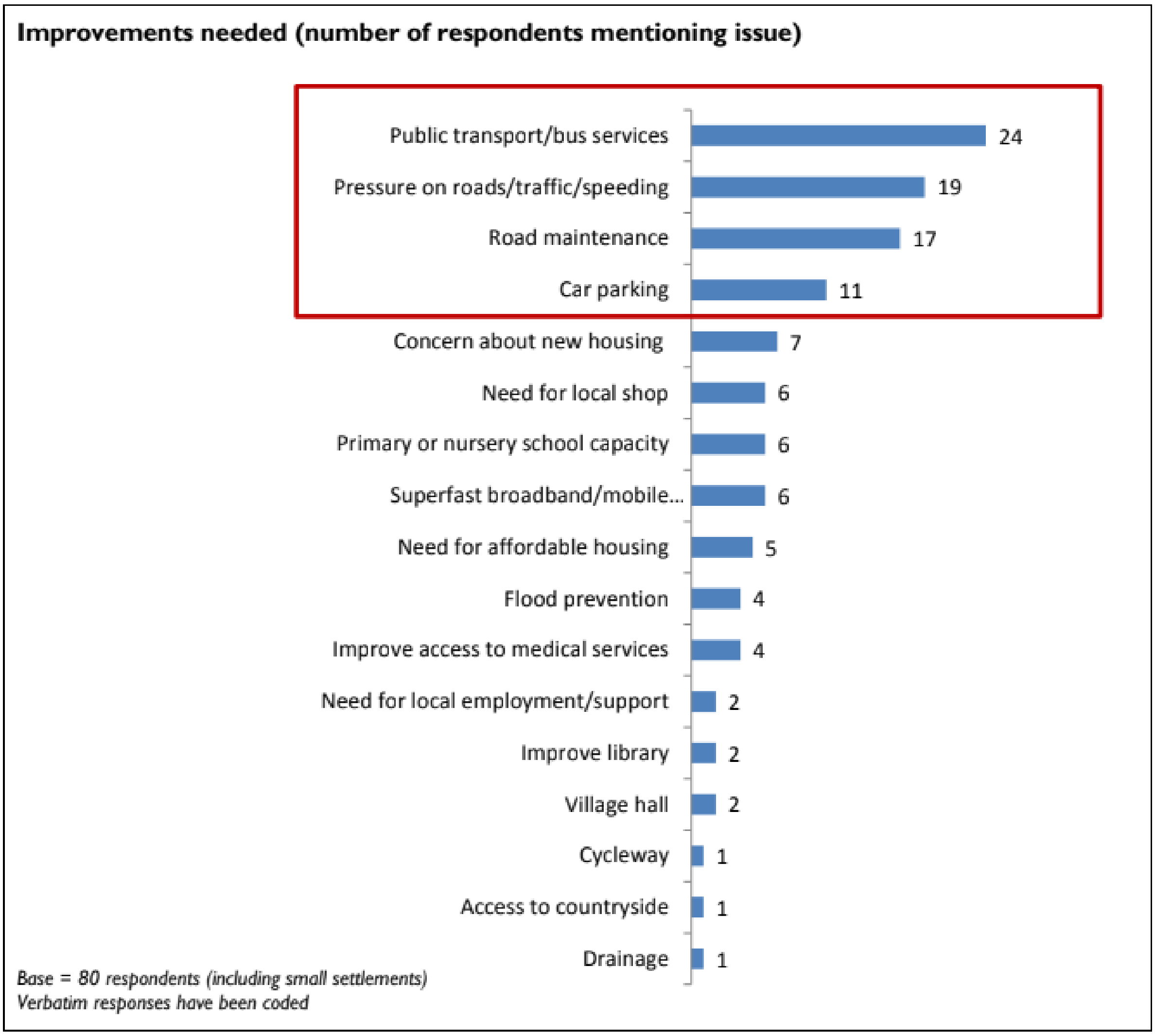
In England, 11.1% of all English households are in fuel poverty. In West Oxfordshire, 7.6% of households are considered to be fuel poor compared to 8.7% of households in Oxfordshire. Fuel poverty is measured in England using the low income-high cost definition, which states that a household is in fuel poverty if: their income is below the poverty line (taking into account energy costs) and; their energy costs are higher than is typical for their household type. Fuel poor households are likely to be living in properties with the lowest energy ratings (Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) E, F or G), many fuel poor households are living in the private rented sector and are considered to be vulnerable households containing children, the elderly or someone with a long term illness or disability. The rural nature of West Oxfordshire means it has the highest number of postcodes that are off the gas grid in Oxfordshire. The homes are heated using expensive fuels such as oil or electrical heating. Also 30% of West Oxfordshire's dwellings have poor energy performance (an EPC of E or below). These factors combined contribute to some of the rural fuel poverty in West Oxfordshire.

Data sources:
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. 2018. Local Authority CO2 emissions estimates 2005-2016 (kt CO2) – Full datasets. [Online] [Accessed April 2019] Available https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-2016
OxLEP. 2019. Oxfordshire Energy Strategy. [Online] [Accessed April 2019] Available https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/energystrategy
National Energy Action. 2019. Fuel Poverty Statistics [Online] [Accessed April 2109] Available https://www.nea.org.uk/about-nea/fuel-poverty-statistics/

Social and community issues

The background evidence assembled in support of West Oxfordshire's Local Plan has set out a range of positive and negative issues, opportunities and challenges facing communities in the District (an extract from our Local Plan is included below).

A recent survey of parishes (2016) has highlighted community concerns at the loss of bus services following the removal of bus subsidies that coincided with the timing of the survey. At the time of the survey, 24 parish responses commented on significant reductions in bus services and 19 others mentioned a general lack of bus services. The residents that respondents believe are most affected by the withdrawal of bus service subsidies included shoppers,; people getting to college or work; non-driving residents; and older people. The range of concerns listed as issues where improvement is needed are shown in the chart below.



Source: Local Plan Parish Survey (July 2016)

The Council held a liaison meeting with Town and Parish Councils/ Meetings in March 2019 to help inform the development of the new Council Plan. One of the points emerging from the session was a strong interest in further communication and engagement on key issues and an interest in an increased interaction. The session also corroborated the local challenges and opportunities facing communities across the different communities in West Oxfordshire – see below for an aggregated summary of the more frequently cited issues (a full capture of points raised has also been retained and was distributed to Parishes following the session).

Parish Event (March 2019) – summary of issues raised

	Challenges	**Opportunities**
Social and Community	Support for community groups House prices Correct types of houses Funding for improving infrastructure Infrastructure not matching population growth (school places etc) Ageing population Development process and community engagement Community facilities Retention of RAF personnel retirement (aero industry)	Working with town and parish councils Community initiatives – shops, pubs, shared transport Investment in Carterton Communities underpinned by diverse businesses - resilience
Economy	Villages – support for people working from home Locating employment sites in the right areas Encouragement of small businesses Employment out of the area Availability of local employment Creation of enough local jobs to match population growth Lack of public transport Lack of funds Affordable housing Deprivation in an area of affluence Increasing population Proximity to other centres	Tourism Carterton/ Brize Norton Encourage more businesses to towns Community ownership of shops/ pubs University proximity – science corridor Business support
Environment	Protecting the countryside and providing open spaces Air pollution A40/ road network Public transport links Flooding Pressure on the natural environment Green space loss Housing/ infrastructure – managing growth Drugs – County lines activity Rurality – service issues (social care/ ambulance service)	Improving sustainability with all new build Tourism – including Thames based Community involvement/ initiatives Parks and green spaces/ walks Recycling Management of green space
Connectivity and access	Poor transport due to reduced funding Bus routes closing	Free parking Joined up public transport for bus

	No buses from villages to Carterton Need to reinstate railway connections through Witney Distance to essential services The A40 State of road repair Broadband access/ slow and interrupted connections Villages on periphery of District gain less focus. Closure of village resources – banks, post offices, shops, pubs Digital services – increasing use of online services Infrastructure for new housing	and train services Uber type approach to community transport Electric car charging points Being more creative

Voluntary and community sector

In 2018, Oxfordshire County Council requested that the Local Government Association (LGA) undertake a Peer Challenge of the Council's relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The peer challenge was to be used as a marker on the state of the relationships and how they can be improved as the public sector moves forward in the county. The peer challenge provided an overview of the state of the VCS sector in the county and the extent and adequacy of the enabling support that is provided to the sector.

The LGA Peer challenge recognised that Oxfordshire benefits from thriving local communities - it commented: "Oxfordshire society is active, with an estimated 4,500 voluntary and community organisations in the county. There are 2,301 registered organisations which represents 2% of the national figure of active registered voluntary organisations. This is a significantly higher proportion than the national average. There is a vibrant parish and town sector giving voice to local communities as well as, in many cases, providing important local services".

At a County level, the level of provision of core infrastructure provision that supports VCS activities is relatively thin compared to what could reasonably be viewed as what is needed in Oxfordshire (this point is covered in the findings arising in Oxfordshire County Council's Voluntary and Community Sector: LGA Peer Challenge Report , March 2018). The LGA Report comments on a "jigsaw of VCS engagement and support that is generic, fractured and confusing".

West Oxfordshire District itself has a strong voluntary and community sector – the District Council works in partnership with a host of VCS bodies across a wide range of policy priorities. The Council has protected its grant funding budgets available to support local VCS bodies through the recent years of financial challenge.

Local Plan – key issues and challenges summary

The Local Plan sets out a summary of key issues and challenges based on the profile of the District and relevant background information. The resulting SWOC analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges is included here as it informs the Council Plan).

West Oxfordshire – Strengths/ Weaknesses/ Opportunities/ Challenges

Strengths	Weaknesses
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 and inter-urban bus routes • 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	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 in more rural areas • Districts three main towns are not directly served by rail • Lack of direct access from the primary road network to Carterton • Imbalance between jobs and homes in Carterton with a consequent high level of commuting • Limited opportunities for safe travel by foot or cycle outside main towns such as where routes are adjacent to roads • 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 multinational companies • Some older employment areas in need of investment/redevelopment

Opportunities	Challenges
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 and improved supporting infrastructure, including green infrastructure • To attract additional inward investment and achieve a more self-contained local economy • Further investment at RAF Brize Norton • Regenerating areas of MOD housing in Carterton • Capitalising on and contributing to the Oxfordshire high tech and knowledge economy including the provision of a new 'science park' north of the A40 near Eynsham • 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 • Improvements in public transport, walking and cycling facilities to help reduce the use of the private car • Provision of primary road connection between Carterton/RAF Brize Norton and the A40 • Provision of major road infrastructure improvements to facilitate future growth • 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 • Increased access to, understanding and enhancement of the historic environment	Housing affordability • The delivery of historically high, for West Oxfordshire, housing targets given the local track record of the development industry • 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 main urban centres including London • Pressures from economic growth centres close to West Oxfordshire including the Oxfordshire 'knowledge spine' • Helping meet Oxford City's unmet housing needs 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 • A number of designated heritage assets considered to be at risk