

30 January 2024

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

You are summoned to a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will be held in Committee Rooms 1 & 2, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 7 February 2024 at 5.30 pm.**



Giles Hughes
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillors: Andrew Beaney (Chair), Rizvana Poole (Vice-Chair), Thomas Ashby, Hugo Ashton, David Cooper, Julian Cooper, Rachel Crouch, Jane Doughty, Phil Godfrey, Andy Goodwin, Natalie King, Nick Leverton, Andrew Lyon, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Mathew Parkinson, Carl Rylett, Sandra Simpson, Ruth Smith, Harry St John, Alistair Wray, Liam Walker, Mark Walker and Alex Wilson

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Executive, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted. By participating in this meeting, you are consenting to be filmed.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Democratic Services officers know prior to the start of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
To receive any apologies for absence and to note any temporary appointments.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations from Members of the Committee on any items to be considered at the meeting.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meetings (Pages 5 - 12)**
To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 18 December 2023 & 10 January 2024.
4. **Participation of the Public**
To receive any submissions from members of the public, in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure, anyone who lives in the district or who pays council tax or business rates to the Council is eligible to read a statement or express an opinion at this meeting. You can register to speak by sending your written submission of no more than 750 words to democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk, by no later than 10.00am on the working day before the meeting.
5. **Community Safety Partnership (Pages 13 - 48)**
Purpose
For the Committee to scrutinise the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2024. In doing so the Committee will fulfil its responsibilities under The Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.
Recommendation
That the Committee scrutinises the plan and agrees any recommendations it wishes to submit to the Council's Executive.
Invited
Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare
Emmylou Brossard, Safer Communities Officer
- 5.1 **Safer Streets**
Purpose
To provide the Committee with an update on the Safer Streets project.
Information is contained within the Community Safety Partnership Plan.
Recommendation
That the Committee scrutinises the Safer Streets project update and agrees any recommendations it wishes to make to the Executive.
Invited
Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare
Emmylou Brossard, Safer Communities Officer
6. **Nature Recovery Plan and Nature Recovery Officer (Pages 49 - 112)**
Purpose
The Committee agreed to include this Executive report on the agenda for pre-decision

scrutiny (the item was previously titled “Biodiversity Action Plan”).

Recommendation

That the Committee scrutinises the report and agrees any recommendations it wishes to make to the Executive on 14 February 2024.

Invited

Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Change
Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager
Rachel Crookes, Biodiversity & Countryside Land Management Officer

7. **Annual Monitoring Report (2021 – 2023) (Pages 113 - 192)**

Purpose

The Annual Monitoring Report (2021-2023) was presented to the Executive on 17 January 2023 and noted by the Executive. The Committee agreed that this item should be included on the agenda.

Recommendation

That the Committee scrutinises the report and agrees any recommendations it wishes to make to the Executive.

Invited

Councillor Charlie Maynard, Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development
Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager

8. **Report back on recommendations (Pages 193 - 194)**

To note the Executive’s response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations.

9. **Committee Work Programme (Pages 195 - 198)**

Purpose:

For the Committee to review and comment on its work plan.

Recommendation:

That the Committee resolves to:

1. Appoint Councillors Julian Cooper, Phil Godfrey and Sandra Simpson to the Leisure Strategy Task and Finish Group (joining Councillors Andrew Beaney, Rizvana Poole and Alex Wilson).
2. Agree the terms of reference for the Leisure Strategy Task and Finish Group (to be circulated separately).

10. **Executive Forward Plan (Pages 199 - 206)**

Purpose:

To give the Committee the opportunity to review the Executive Forward Plan.

Recommendation:

That the Committee agrees whether any items on the Executive Forward Plan should be subject to pre-decision scrutiny and, if so, the priority order of those items.

(END)

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Held in the Committee Rooms 1 & 2, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire
OX28 1NB at 5.30 pm on **Monday, 18 December 2023**

PRESENT

Councillors: Andrew Beaney (Chair), Thomas Ashby, Hugo Ashton, David Cooper, Julian Cooper, Rachel Crouch, Jane Doughty, Phil Godfrey, Natalie King, Andrew Lyon, David Melvin, Sandra Simpson, Ruth Smith, Harry St John, Alistair Wray, Liam Walker, Mark Walker, Colin Dingwall and Jeff Haine

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive) and Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance), Madhu Richards (Director of Finance), Andrew Brown (Democratic Services Business Manager) and Michelle Ouzman (Democratic Services Officer).

Executive Members in attendance: Andy Graham, Leader of the Council.

22 Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments

Apologies were noted from Councillors Nick Leverton, Michele Mead, Mathew Parkinson, Rizvana Poole and Alex Wilson.

Councillor Jeff Haine substituted for Councillor Alex Wilson.

Councillor Colin Dingwall substituted for Councillor Michele Mead.

Councillors Andy Goodwin and Carl Rylett were both absent.

23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

24 Minutes of previous meeting

The draft minutes of the meeting held on the 6 December 2023 will be considered at the meeting on 10 January 2024.

25 Participation of the Public

There was no public participation.

26 Publica Review

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Andy Graham introduced the Publica Review report and explained that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would have further opportunities to review progress at various stages in the new year. The next progress report was due early in the new year.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Andrew Beaney, explained to members that the Human Engine report would be summarised by Jonathon Noble, Managing Director of Human Engine first, followed by questions. Then the second part of the item would be to scrutinise the Executive recommendations and next steps in the process of transferring the majority of services delivered by Publica to the Council.

The Managing Director of Human Engine informed the Committee that the Publica Review report reflected the Council's Senior Team's view that the majority of services should return

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to the Council. The Publica Senior Leadership Team viewed that services should remain with Publica.

The Committee asked a number of questions and noted that:

- Some Services like, ICT, HR, and Payroll would remain with Publica but this could be reviewed again at a later date.
- ICT at present had a high level of specialist expertise which was costly. There would be significant financial and other risks associated with returning this service to the Council at the same time as other services were being transitioned back to the Council.
- The Council had thought that Publica was fairly responsive and local services were good. However, the other councils in the partnership had other views.
- The Future Publica model included investment in technology but the Council could invest in technology themselves and many other councils were delivering savings in a similar way.
- Publica had originally been established to provide an acceptable level of service at the lowest cost. Now the councils wanted a “turn key” style of operation.
- A new Programme Director would be appointed to run the transition programme, supported by a Transition Team. This post would be funded and shared by all councils. The day rate for this interim post and which Council they would be employed by had not been decided upon, although this information should soon be available.
- Communication to Councillors, the Councils’ management teams and all staff must be a key responsibility of the Transition Manager and each Council.
- Communication to staff must be sensitively managed.
- There was a lack in detail within the report, especially on costings. The financial implications would become clearer as transition and due diligence continues.
- The Human Engine (HE) report helped the Council decide on the direction of travel for the future but only gave a high-level indication of the financial implications such as pension costs.

In the discussion about next steps the Committee noted that:

- The councils would have free assistance and advice from the Local Government Association.
- A new Council structure would be designed which would help with understanding staffing costs. Pension costs were the biggest variable. Each Council would adopt a new management structure, they did not need to be the same.
- Staff retained by Publica and staff moving to the Council would have different terms and conditions of employment, such as pension entitlements and healthcare benefits.
- Currently the councils collectively saved c. £1 million annually on pensions through the Publica model.
- The Council would explore working with other councils in partnership.
- It was reported that some staff were positive about moving back to the councils while others were unsettled. The mitigation of staff concerns must remain a priority during the transition.
- More detail and legal advice would be required before decisions could be made effectively.
- Recruitment was underway for a new Chair of the Publica Board.

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- HR advice, TUPE rules, and finance details were all key areas for the Transition Team to focus on.
- The Council had found itself in this position as a result of the wishes of other partner councils.
- It was expected to take something like 18 months to complete the transition, but the timescales had not yet been finalised.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would have a role in scrutinising the Transition Plan and at other key decision points.

Giles Hughes, the Chief Executive, stated that he was grateful to Publica and all the staff for the services provided. Publica directors had informed the Chief Executive that Publica was committed to working with the Council, and together to make a success of the services provided. The Chief Executive also wanted to thank Jan Britton the outgoing Publica Managing Director and to wish him well with his new appointment and future endeavours elsewhere.

The Chief Executive committed to getting back to the Committee with more information about the Transition Director post including costs and how they would be shared.

The Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council were committed to ensuring that Councillors would be kept informed of all progress during transition, and would report back to the Committee on how this information would be communicated.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

1. Agree to scrutinise the transition plan before it goes to the Executive.
2. Invite the Publica Executive, the Chair of the Publica Audit and Risk Committee, and the Programme Director to a future meeting for scrutiny of the Transition Plan.

The Chair thanked the Committee and those present and called the meeting to a close.

The Meeting closed at 7.47 pm

CHAIR

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Held in the Committee Rooms 1 & 2, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire
OX28 1NB at 5.30 pm on **Wednesday, 10 January 2024**

PRESENT

Councillors: Andrew Beaney (Chair), Thomas Ashby, Hugo Ashton, David Cooper, Julian Cooper, Rachel Crouch, Jane Doughty, Phil Godfrey, Nick Leverton, Andrew Lyon, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Carl Rylett, Sandra Simpson, Ruth Smith, Harry St John, Alistair Wray, Liam Walker, Alex Wilson and Dan Levy

Officers: Madhu Richards (Director of Finance), Andrew Brown (Democratic Services Business Manager), Georgina Dyer (Chief Accountant), Anne Learmonth (Strategic Support Officer, Democratic Services) and Max Thompson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

Other Councillors in attendance: Alaric Smith (Executive Member for Finance) and Andy Graham (Leader)

27 Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments

Apologies for absence were noted from Councillors Natalie King, Mathew Parkinson, Rizvanna Poole and Mark Walker. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Andy Goodwin.

Councillor Dan Levy substituted for Natalie King.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Economic Development.

28 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

29 Participation of the Public

There was no public participation.

30 Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2023 were approved by the Committee and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

31 Chair's Announcements

There were no announcements from the Chair.

32 Draft Budget 2024/25

The Executive Member for Finance introduced the report which set out the Council's budget at the time of publication. There was an updated version for the meeting of the Executive the following week. The Executive Member thanked the finance team for their work on the budget.

The Director of Finance said that the proposals represented a balanced budget. The budget papers for the Executive were adjusted for recent decisions taken in respect of the review of legal services and the local government finance settlement which the Council had received on

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18 December. The effect was to move the budget into a surplus position of £14,700. The version of the budget that would be presented to the Council budget setting meeting would also take into account the latest Business Rates information and any further Executive decisions that affect the budget.

The Director of Finance highlighted some key information in the report including:

- The forecast overspend in the current financial year of £433,041 over and above the approved deficit budget of £350,129.
- The draw-down of reserves over the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set out in Annex A and the need to think ahead and manage finances carefully.
- The budget pressures caused by general and wage inflation.
- The uncertainty surrounding the financial impacts of the transfer of the majority of services from Publica to the Council.
- The challenging economic environment and the fact that a number of other local authorities had issued Section 114 notices.

In discussion the Committee noted that:

- Inflation in wages and energy had created an in year overspend and the revenue position was more than double the anticipated deficit.
- The reversal of one off items from 2023/24 (para. 5.2 in the report) did not represent items that had been promised to the public and not delivered, rather it was the reversal of income contingencies which had been put aside last year against planned income.
- The main differences from last year were around the levels of income rather than expenditure, e.g. increases to planning application fees and charges for green waste licenses.
- The Council was unable to calculate the retained Business Rates figure until the end of January and this would be reflected in the final report to the Council budget setting meeting.
- A decision had been taken in 2021 to reduce the opening season for Woodstock Swimming Pool due to the high cost to the Council of keeping the pool open for longer.
- Charging green waste customers on a pro rata basis was likely to be operationally difficult to implement and would likely reduce income. The Council could look at improving the information on the website and consider the cut-off date for buying a license.
- The Council Tax base was unlikely to grow strongly in the short term and it was difficult to identify alternative funding streams so it was considered prudent to propose raising Council Tax by the maximum of £5 per band D property. This had been factored in to the MTFS.
- The Council did not yet have a plan for dealing with the budget gap in future years but there was a lot less growth in the budget this year compared to last year.
- If legislation allowed the Council would look at charges on second homes.
- The budget consultation had largely taken place online and there had been an increase in the number of responses received this year to 377. The survey had asked people to rank their priorities. The Council wanted to continuously improve how it does consultation.

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- The Council had not received a formal request from Witney Town Council to release £75,000 in S106 monies for Raleigh Crescent Play Area but there was optimism it would be dealt with in the current financial year.
- Proposals would be coming forward to the Executive on the replacement of the waste vehicle fleet and the intention was to replace the fleet over the coming 3-4 years and to switch to alternative fuels.

The Chief Accountant committed to discussing the possibility of providing green waste licenses on a pro rate basis with the waste team, and to get back to the Committee with information about the cost of holding a Council Tax Referendum.

The Committee resolved to submit the following recommendation to the Executive:

- I. That the Cabinet Member for Finance writes to the Minister for Local Government requesting that local government finance settlements be announced earlier in future.

33 Report back on recommendation to the Executive

The Executive response to the recommendation on the Review of Weekly Markets was noted.

34 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The Democratic Services Business Manager updated the Committee on some changes to the work plan following the publication of an updated Executive Forward Plan:

- The Carbon Action Plan item had slipped to the March Executive meeting and would now be taken at the 29 February committee meeting.
- The Business Case for Acquiring Emergency Accommodation had slipped to the June Executive meeting.

In response to questions the Business Manager confirmed that an item on waste would likely come to the Committee after the local elections. The Business Manager also confirmed that the Executive reports on biodiversity and climate change were still on track for the February Executive meeting.

35 Executive Work Programme

There were no comments on the Executive work plan.

The Meeting closed at 6.58 pm

CHAIR

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE
Community Safety Partnership

**Community Safety Partnership
Rolling Plan
January 2024 to March 2027**

West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership (WOCSP) Action Plan 2024

West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership (WOCSP) is a statutory requirement of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as amended. It brings together organisations to make West Oxfordshire a safer place by reducing fear of crime, minimising the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime and addressing community safety concerns to improve the lives of our residents.

Statutory Duties and Responsibilities

Community Safety Partnerships are required by law to:

1. Undertake a Strategic Intelligence Assessment - an annual strategic assessment is undertaken behalf of all Community Safety Partnerships in Oxfordshire.
2. Conduct Domestic Homicide Reviews - this is a multi-agency review of the circumstances in which the death of a person appears to have resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom they were related or with whom they were or had been in an intimate personal relationship.
3. Undertake Community Trigger Reviews - This allows residents to ask the Community Safety Partnership to review their responses to complaints of anti-social behaviour.
4. Reduce reoffending - to protect communities from crime and to deliver a more effective and economically just system.

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Thames Valley

West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership works closely with, and receives funding from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). Matthew Barber is the Police and Crime Commissioner for Oxfordshire and his current priorities are:

1. Strong Local Policing
2. Fighting Serious Organised Crime
3. Fighting Cybercrime and fraud
4. Improving the Criminal Justice System
5. Tackling Illegal Encampments

Membership

Statutory members of WOCSP are:

- West Oxfordshire District Council including Safer Communities, Environmental Health and Licensing
- Thames Valley Police (TVP)
- Probation
- Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Oxford University Hospitals Emergency Department

- Oxfordshire County Council including Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service, Adult Social Care, Public Health and Children's Social Care

Invited Members

- Voluntary and Community sector organisations
- Housing organisations
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Oxfordshire Violence Reduction Coordinator
- Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Coordinator

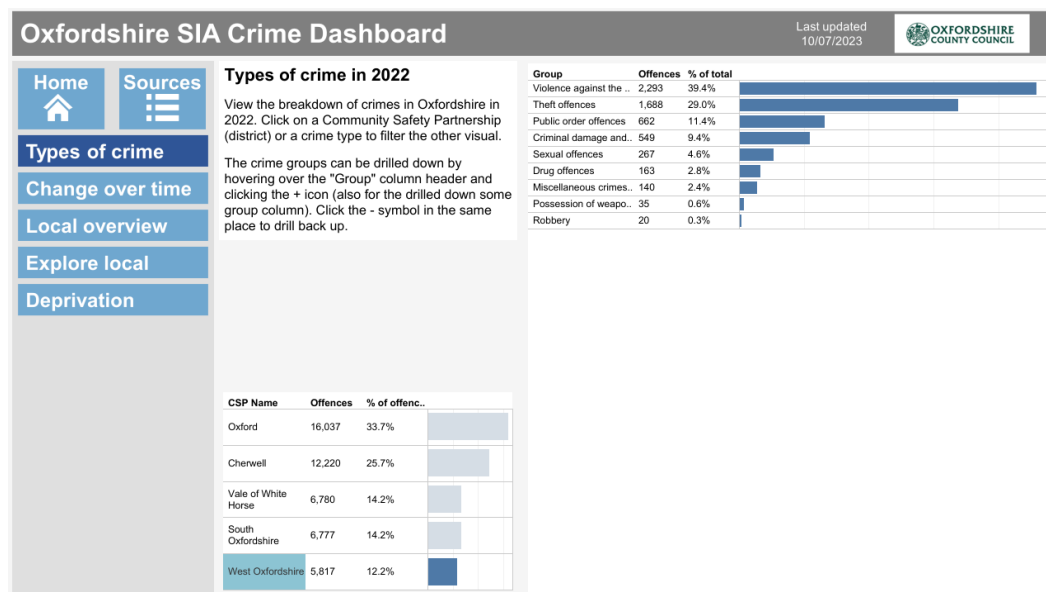
Crime in West Oxfordshire

West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership relies on the Oxfordshire Strategic Intelligence Assessment (SIA), to understand trends of activity that may impact on the lives of West Oxfordshire residents and visitors. Details of the current SIA can be found at [Safer Oxfordshire Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment 2023](#).

In addition to this WOCSP shares intelligence and information amongst its partners that may not always be possible to share with the wider public due to the sensitivity of this data, but it is used when considering actions in the West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership Plan.

For the purposes of this plan, where comparisons are made between crime figures, these will be between the current 2023 Strategic Intelligence Assessment (showing data from January to December 2022) and the 2022 Strategic Intelligence Assessment (showing data from January to December 2021)

- West Oxfordshire had the lowest numbers of recorded crime in Oxfordshire when comparing to other district areas, with 5,817 crime recorded between January 2022 and December 2022



Key Changes between the 2023 Strategic Intelligence Assessment and 2022 Strategic Assessment:

- Violence against the person offences account for the highest number of incidents across the district, that amount to nearly 40% of crime
- There has been an increase in alcohol related crimes from 265 in 2022 from compared with 242 in 2021.
- 85 Rural Crimes
- An increase in child victims under the age of 17 from 428 to 520
- West Oxfordshire saw a 7% increase in domestic abuse victims, with the highest percentage increase in Oxfordshire. With 1130 victims, up from 1080 in 2021 (not all victims of Domestic Abuse have contact with the police so the figure is expected to be much higher in reality). An increase in victims could be indicative of better reporting mechanisms, victims showing increased trust in police and other support professionals, as well as and more awareness of the support and services available to them.

Priorities for West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership

The West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership Plan sets out new priority areas which are informed by the Strategic Intelligence Assessment, including the new section on Serious Violence, which will be appended to the Oxfordshire Violence and Vulnerability Plan.

- Serious Violence
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls
- Rural Acquisitive Crime
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Fraud
- Modern Slavery
- Counter Terrorism

Youth

As part of the Partnerships 2021-2024 Community Safety Partnership Plan, West Oxfordshire District Council undertook a Youth Needs Assessment which highlighted the issues facing young people across the district.

West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership have agreed that this new plan will have a priority focus on young people aged 11-25. Areas of concern for young people include:

- Drugs
- Violence
- Gangs
- Violence Against Women and Girls

- Discrimination and Hate Crimes
- Mental Health

Priority 1: Serious Violence and the Serious Violence Duty

This is set out in law under the [Police, Crime and Sentencing Act](#) (Chapter 1, Part 2) and requires authorities within a local government area to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, including domestic abuse.

Definition:

“Serious Violence includes specific types of recorded crime, such as homicide, grievous bodily harm, incidents that involve a knife and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as county lines drug dealing”

This is an agreed Thames Valley wide definition and Community Safety Partnerships have a responsibility to report back to the Home Office on the following crime types:

Group 1:

- All homicide
- All grievous bodily harm
- All knife crime
- ... inclusive of all ages, location types (public/private) and domestic flags

Whilst not being reported back to the Home Office, West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership will also consider the following when considering the risks around serious crime in our communities:

Group 2:

- All actual bodily harm
- All drug supply/trafficking
- All sexual assault
- All rape

Current Position:

- West Oxfordshire has seen an increase of 13% in violence against the person and a 25% increase in violence with injury offences compared with 2021. This is above the Thames Valley rate of +5% for violence against the person and +8% for violence with injury.
- Group 1 offences have decreased by 20% when comparing 2022 to pre-covid year 2019
- In 2022 Violence with Injury was the most common recorded crime group 1 offence with 77% falling into this category
- Oxfordshire has the lowest rate of group 1 serious violence in the Thames Valley Region.

- West Oxfordshire has the lowest number of group 1 serious violence recorded crime with 202 recorded offences, working out at a rate of 1.8 per 1000 population, the lowest alongside South Oxfordshire.

A Focus on Youth:

Oxfordshire Strategic Intelligence Assessment 2023

- In Oxfordshire 32% of suspects involved in serious violence offences involving a knife were aged between 15 and 21 and males were more likely to be a suspect in serious violence incidents involving a knife than females.
- Just over a quarter of possession of knife offences across Oxfordshire involved young people

West Oxfordshire Youth Needs Assessment

- 454 young people said they had felt the need to carry a weapon, representing 12% of the young people who responded to the survey
- In an open question asking young people aged 11-15, 34 said that gangs were a challenge young people face
- 42 young people identified knives or knife crime as a challenge
- Language they used included: shootings, robbing, getting into gangs, might get stabbed, roadmen, afraid to walk alone at night, county lines.

| Serious Violence Local Plan | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|----------------------|
| What | How | Who | Why | Youth Focused |
| Shared Analyst for Community Safety Partnerships across Oxfordshire | The Community Safety Partnership will collaborate with other Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnerships to sustain an analyst posts to help us gain an understanding of Serious Violence locally and countywide | <p>The Analyst will be employed by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.</p> <p>This will improve the understanding of Serious Violence for the Community Safety Partnership</p> | This will provide West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership and the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership with detailed and thorough information and data to enable them to make decisions on where they focus their resources when it comes | No |

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| | | | to tackling Serious Violence | |
| | The Analyst will be responsible for creating and updating the Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment as part of the wider Strategic Intelligence Assessment which is published online. | The Analyst will be responsible for ensuring the SVSNA is updated annually WOCSP will use this information to update their Community Safety Plan and to report back to the Home Office | Under the new Duty, the Community Safety Partnership has a legal obligation to create an annual Serious Violence Needs Assessment | No |
| | A Serious Violence Dashboard is being created for professionals and partners | WODC Safer Communities Officer | The Dashboard, separate from the SIA and SVSNA, provides up to date rolling month to month data which can inform CSPs on crimes that have recently happened. Having more up to date information on trends and challenges will help with better decision making | No |
| Participate in reviewing workstreams leading out of a Serious Case Review involving Child Criminal Exploitation | WOCSP will have representation at future reviews of the work already undertaken, ensuring that changes | West Oxfordshire District Council Thames Valley Police Probation Integrated Care Board | It is important that when we have learned lessons from incidents related to serious violence that we do not just | Yes |

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|---------------------|---|--|--|-----|
| | enacted are effective and helpful to victims and professionals. | | act on them, we ensure that those changes make a difference, so that any future victims are recognised and supported as soon as possible. | |
| Custody Navigators | Custody Navigators engage and listen to those detained in custody and seek to understand how they became involved in criminality. They will provide help and support them on a journey away from the one they are on now. | WOCSP will consider the impact of the current project, funded by the VRU and whether they will support future funding of the project Support Perpetrators of Crime to reflect on how they arrived at Custody and understand how they can move forward without being involved in crime | It is hoped that Custody Navigators will have a significant impact on reoffending rates for those they reach. | No |
| Hospital Navigators | Hospital Navigators will build trust with patients who present at hospital because of existing issues including substance misuse, mental health, poor diet or personal care and violence itself. | All Statutory Members of WOCSP will consider the impact of the current project, funded by the VRU and whether they will support future funding once that ceases. They need to be satisfied that arrangements are in place to support the local community services that are | When in hospital there is a 'reachable moment' where patients can be reflective and open to intervention. A navigator will work with the patient to refer them to one or more voluntary and Community Sector organisation and help | Yes |

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|-----|
| | | vital to delivering this support. | navigate them back into the community in an attempt to prevent further incidents that could lead them back to hospital | |
| Place Based Community Safety Framework | <p>Place Based Community Safety Framework will be utilised by the Partnership if it has been agreed at the Police Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group as an appropriate course of action following a very serious event involving Serious Violence</p> <p>Using data to understand risk, threat and harm Effective community engagement Focus on longer term outcomes and legacy to prevent future risks Delivering short term evidence based solutions Focusing on safeguarding young people</p> | <p>The Place Based Community Safety Framework is a very time and resource intensive intervention and Thames Valley Police will be responsible for deciding when this intervention should be utilised.</p> <p>This intervention will focus on supporting victims and communities as well as deterring and challenging perpetrators of crime</p> | Communities and individuals within those communities have a vast amount of knowledge, skills and experience and working together in a place based approach we hope to support to reduce serious violence and sustain those changes with long lasting results. | Yes |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|--|-----|
| | and vulnerable adults whilst challenging those that do the most harm | | | |
| School intervention for Child Exploitation Prevention | Youth Workers with lived experience to deliver in school assemblies at identified areas of concern, focusing on drugs, gangs, debt bondage and how to ask for help | WODC Safer Communities Officer | Young people will have a better idea of the tactics used to recruit, understand how they could be used as commodities and the real risk surrounding drugs and gangs. They will also know how to ask for help and what to expect from that support. | Yes |

Priority 2: Drugs and Alcohol

Current Position:

- Five percent of all crimes in Oxfordshire in 2022 were alcohol related
- West Oxfordshire 265 crimes were alcohol related, an increase of 22% on the three year period from 2018/19-2020/21
- Oxfordshire has one of the lowest rates of deaths from drug misuse in the region, but between 2018 and 2020 there were still 63 deaths from drug misuse.
- Males are more likely to die from drug misuse in Oxfordshire than females.

A Focus on Youth:

Oxfordshire Strategic Intelligence Assessment 2023:

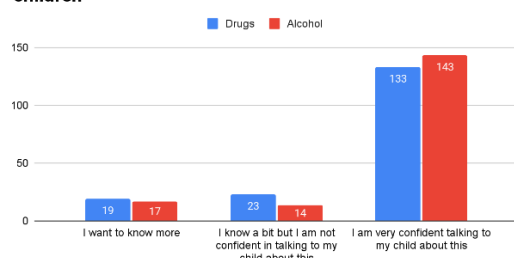
- There were 145 admissions of under 18s admitted to hospital due to alcohol specific conditions in the three year period 2018/19 to 2020/21 which is in line with national and regional figures.
- Under 18 admissions were higher in females than males, with the proportion being significantly worse than national and regional figures.
- West Oxfordshire has seen a 50% decrease in under 18s being arrested for drug related crimes in comparison to pre-covid years, West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership recognise that Thames Valley Police and

Children's Social Care do everything they can to work with children at risk of exploitation, with criminalisation being the last resort.

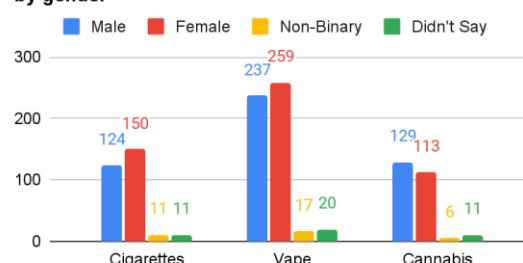
West Oxfordshire Youth Needs Assessment:

- In an open question, 146 young people identified drugs as a challenge young people face
- 259 said they had smoked cannabis in the last year
- 945 young people said they had drunk alcohol whilst hanging out with friends in the last year
- Some of the language used includes: addiction, drug smoking, being approached by drugs and illegal things, county lines
- Out of the 177 parents we asked, the majority felt very confident about talking to their child about drugs and alcohol, but there were more parents less sure about talking about drugs than alcohol.

Parents views on discussing drugs and alcohol with their children



Have you smoked any of the following in the past year? by gender



| Drugs and Alcohol | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| What | How | Who | Why | Youth Focused |
| Oxfordshire Combating Drugs Strategy | This strategic work will assist residents in accessing the help they need as well as to reduce the crime which drug use if often linked with. | WODC BOB ICB Probation OCC Public Health Thames Valley Police | The Partnership aims to help break the cycle of drug misuse, keeping neighbourhoods safer across the county and individuals are supported through their journey with addiction. | Yes |
| Cuckooing Protocol | By utilising the Cuckooing Protocol and working in partnership we | Thames Valley Police and Housing Partners | Many victims of cuckooing have had existing vulnerabilities that make | No, although it is recognised that many young people |

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| | <p>will look to reduce the immediate risks of harm, looking to support the victims of cuckooing to regain their lives. Police can seek Closure Orders prohibiting access to the property for up to 3 months and victims will be supported to seek injunctions. If there is an immediate risk of harm, victims will be supported to move to safe accommodation.</p> | <p>Victims will be supported to live safer happier lives</p> <p>Perpetrators will be targeted by Thames Valley Police and measures put in place to deter future crimes taking place</p> | <p>seeking help and support very difficult, it also makes them very easy targets by gangs and organised crime. They may often be distrustful of authorities increasing barriers to support.</p> | <p>who are exploited and going missing are being accommodate at cuckooed properties. By safeguarding cuckooing victims, it will reduce the property being held by perpetrators of county drugs lines and other serious organised crimes.</p> |
| Look Closer Campaign | <p>By Supporting the #LookCloser campaign, being headed up by the Children's Society, British Transport Police and National County Lines Coordination Centre, we can support residents and professionals within the district to look closer, to be able to recognise the signs of exploitation and do something to stop it.</p> | All WOCSP Members | <p>Children and young people are being targeted and groomed (online and in our communities) by serious organised crime and gangs, resulting in them being sexually abused, forced into labour, coerced into transporting drugs or stealing from shops. Tactics can often include having someone from the same gang steal possessions, drugs or money</p> | Yes |

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| | | | from the victim, making them indebted to the gang creating a long term obligation, this is known as debt bondage. | |
| Pace Webinars | This webinar provides a toolkit for parents and professionals to enhance their understanding of how children are exploited. It focuses on how it impact on families and how to provide effective support, including strategies to adopt and practical advice. | All WOCSP Members | Parents should be valued as key players and partners in safeguarding their children from the risks of exploitation. The Youth Needs Assessment highlighted that parents are often the first person a young person will talk to if they are worried about something, so if we can help parents to better understand the risks, and how to respond to them, those children will be better supported and hopefully withdrawn from those circumstances sooner | Yes |
| Consider CSP Membership in relation to Drug Services working in | Recommendation for Service Managers of the following organisations: Turning Point | WODC Safer Communities Officer | Both services, working in West Oxfordshire, support children, young people and adults in reducing and | Yes |

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|--------------------------|---|--|--|-----|
| West Oxfordshire | Cranstoun's Here4YOUth Service | | addressing their drug and alcohol use. They will be able to support the CSP understanding the risks and issues surrounding drug misuse and the services supporting them. | |
| Pubwatch | Research has shown that Pubwatch has a positive influence in crime reduction and increasing safety in the night time economy. | Thames Valley Police | Pubwatch members will have access to support and resources to be able to address community safety issues in their venues | No |
| Oxfordshire Nightsafe | Provide prevention methods for spiking, needling and underage drinking | Oxfordshire Nightsafe Manager Thames Valley Police WODC Licensing WODC Safer Communities | Nigh-time economy venues will have access to resources and training to support them in identifying and dealing with these issues. | Yes |
| Taxi Drivers | Supporting taxi drivers to be able to report intelligence quickly to the police about pick- ups and drop offs that raise suspicion and concern around drugs and exploitation | Thames Valley Police WODC Licensing WODC Safer Communities | Police will receive broader intelligence about drugs in their communities to support them with targeted drug operations. | Yes |

Priority 3: Domestic Abuse and Violence against Women and Girls

West Oxfordshire is the most rural of districts within the County, and with that comes additional risk to victims of domestic abuse. West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership is influenced by the findings of the Rural Crime Networks 2019 report, Captive and Controlled; Domestic Abuse in Rural Areas. Some of their key findings include:

- Abuse lasts, on average, 25% longer in the most rural areas
- The more rural the setting the higher the risk of harm
- Rurality and Isolation are deliberately used as weapons by abusers
- Close knit rural communities facilitate abuse
- Support services are scarce, less available, less visible and less effective
- Retreating rural resources make help and escape harder
- The short-term, often hand to mouth funding model has created competing and fragmented service provision

Current Position:

- Almost a third of domestic abuse victims in Oxfordshire were repeat victims and 14% were a victim on three or more occasions
- Younger, working age people are more likely to be victims of domestic abuse
- Data from April 2022 to March 2023 shows a total of 601 domestic crimes involving children representing a 17% increase
- 68% of Domestic Abuse Victims were female and 29% male
- Males made up 69% of perpetrators and females 29%
- There were 84 victims of rape in West Oxfordshire, and the district has seen the highest percentage increase (33%) across the county
- Domestic abuse, rape, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation are just a few of the hidden harms which are often not reflected by crime figures
- 46 domestic cyber-related offences

Oxfordshire's Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2025

West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership is committed to the [Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy](#) in the following areas:

- 1. Prevention:** preventing domestic abuse from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviour which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it.
- 2. Provision:** Providing high quality, joined up support for victims-survivors where domestic abuse does occur

3. **Pursuing:** Taking action to reduce the harm to victims-survivors of abuse by ensuring that perpetrators are held to account and provided with opportunities for change in a way that maximises safety.
4. **Partnership:** working in partnership to obtain the best outcomes for victims-survivors, children and their families

Focus on Youth

According to SafeLives (2017) [Safe Young Lives](#) report, 20% of children in the UK are exposed to domestic abuse. The same report also highlights that:

- 25% of girls and 18% of boys (aged 13-17) report having experienced some form of physical violence from an intimate partner
- 31% of girls and 16% of boys (aged 13-17) report some form of sexual abuse within their relationship.

Oxfordshire Strategic Intelligence Assessment 2023:

- 88% of rape victims were female and 63% were under the age of 25
- 19% of victims of Child Sexual Exploitation were repeat victims in 2022
- 11 victims of Child Sexual Exploitation
- There has been a significant increase in 0-15 year olds being victims of domestic abuse
- There has been a 17% increase in police recorded domestic crimes involving children in West Oxfordshire
- 63% of rape victims across Oxfordshire were aged under 25

West Oxfordshire Youth Needs Assessment:

- 182 young women raised concerns about gender based violence, sexism and harassment
- 158 young women identified feeling at risk from boys and men because of their gender
- Language they used included: catcalled, rape, sexual assault, harassment, followed, approached, kidnapped, sexism, spiking and unhealthy relationships
- Some young people said it would help if boys and men were taught about sexism and to be educated around women's safety.

| Domestic Abuse and VAWG | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|---------------|
| What | How | Who | Why | Youth Focused |
| Domestic Homicide Reviews | Community Safety Partnerships have a statutory obligation to review the | The review will be led by an independent chair and the panel will be determined to | Domestic Homicide Reviews enable lessons to be learned from | No |

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| | <p>circumstances around death where there is evidence of domestic abuse.</p> <p>The review will not say how the person died or who is to blame and it takes place alongside other inquiries, like inquests or post-mortems.</p> | <p>some degree by the nature of death and services involved and could include some West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership members</p> | <p>homicides where a person has been killed as a result of domestic violence and abuse.</p> | |
| Young People and their views around VAWG | <p>Consider the recommendations and gaps identified by the review being undertaken by Public Health on Violence Against Women and Girls in Oxfordshire and use this information to identify gaps and services to support.</p> | <p>Violence Against Women and Girls Coordinator, Public Health</p> <p>All members of WOCSP</p> | <p>Young women across the district will know that the CSP have listened to their concerns raised in the youth needs assessment around gender related violence and harassment and are actively doing something about it.</p> | Yes |
| Domestic Abuse Awareness | <p>As part of the Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy, WOCSP is committed to support the centrally coordinated communications and community engagement activities to ensure a consistent message and enable abusive</p> | <p>All WOCSP Members</p> | <p>Raising awareness of domestic abuse, highlighting that it is happening, who it is happening to and the impact of domestic abuse will help survivors of domestic abuse to openly discuss and encourage</p> | Yes |

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| | behaviours, their impacts and routes to support to be identified at an earlier stage, including those within marginalised and rural communities | | receiving support, as well as support victims who are suffering in silence to recognise and acknowledge the abuse they are experiencing. | |
| Domestic Abuse Training | Promotion of Domestic Abuse Training available through the OSAB and OSCB websites will be promoted within all partner organisations | All WOCSP Members | If more professionals and residents are aware of the signs of Domestic Abuse and know how to help someone seek support and advice, victims will have less barriers in accessing the services they need. | Yes |
| Engagement with Rural Communities | Partners will look at opportunities across the year to engage with local communities about Domestic Abuse and how to seek help. | OCC Adults Social Care Thames Valley Police WODC Safer Communities Officer | Rural victims are likely to experience domestic abuse 25% longer than victims living in urban areas and the more rural the setting the higher the risk of harm. Rurality and isolation are often used as weapons by perpetrators. By raising awareness in communities around | No |

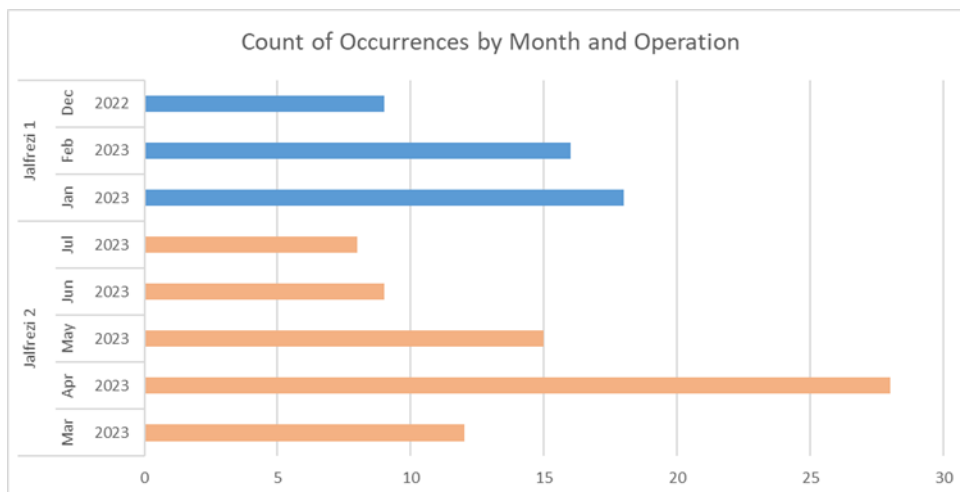
| | | | | |
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| | | | domestic abuse | |
| Trauma Informed Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse | Probation will be looking to work with partner agencies to develop trauma informed practices and pilot programmes to support female cohorts of offenders being released from prison. There is currently a gap now they no longer have access to the six step programme. | Probation | Prison environments have been shown to exacerbate the effects of trauma. A trauma based approach to preventing reoffending recognises that a person's criminal behaviour is a cumulation of their experiences and by confronting their past trauma they are more likely to desist from offending in the future. | No |
| DRIVE | This is a collaborative approach to tackling domestic abuse through partnership working directly with those presenting abusive, controlling and violent behaviour | OCC Adults Social Care OCC Children's Social Care WODC'S Safer Communities Officer Thames Valley Police | Drive focuses on reducing risk and increasing victim safety by combining disruption, support and behaviour change alongside the crucial protective work by victim services. The Drive intervention specifically focusses on cases where | No |

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| | | | there is a High risk of harm. | |
| Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) | MATAC is a process of identifying and tackling repeat perpetrators of domestic abuse. Once DRIVE is in place MATAC may support in identifying perpetrators to that programme. | Thames Valley Police | If repeat perpetrators of domestic abuse (who are selected using criteria Recency, Frequency, Gravity and Victims Process) refuse to engage with support offered through the process, they will be prosecuted. | No |

Priority 4: Rural Acquisitive Crime

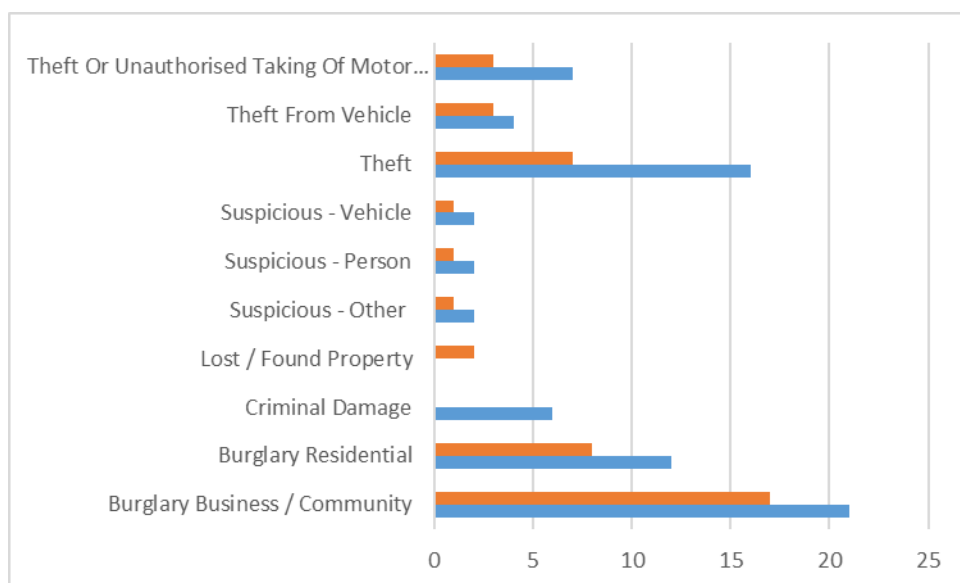
A Thames Valley Police analytical review shows that between 1 December 2022 and 27 June 2023 there had been 103 incidents of rural acquisitive crime across the local policing area, representing an increase of 105%.

Operation Jalfrezi was Thames Valley Police's response to this crime, of which there were 2 operations. The images below are colour coded, with blue representing the first operation between December 2022 and January 2023; and orange representing March to July 2023



The top three offence types have been:

1. Burglary (Business Community)
2. Theft
3. Burglary (Residential)



Offences are spread out across the local policing area, however hotspot and repeat locations are predominantly along the length of the A361 corridor, with a denser pattern of offending in villages along this road.

West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership, in collaboration with South and Vale Community Safety Partnership, have been successful in bidding for Safer Streets funding to tackle acquisitive crime in rural communities. This project will start in January 2024 and end on 31 March 2025 and will tackle crimes including:

- Domestic burglary
- Robbery
- Theft from the person/vehicle
- Vehicle Theft

Secondary crime types that will be impacted include anti-social behaviour.

Targeted areas in West Oxfordshire will include Brize Norton, Carterton and the surrounding areas, as led by police intelligence throughout the project.

| Rural Acquisitive Crime | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|---|---------------|
| What | How | Who | Why | Youth Focused |
| Rural Crime programme funded through Safer Streets 5 | Project Support Officer | WODC Safer Communities | To ensure that the project runs to timescales and within budget | No |
| | Rural Crime Advisor | Thames Valley Police | To support and coordinate | No |

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| | | | community engagement including attendance at events. | |
| | Smart Villages/Smart Water | Rural Crime Advisor | Smart water is easy to apply, nearly invisible, long lasting and nearly impossible to remove. It glows under a UV light and makes identifying perpetrators of burglary highly identifiable. | No |
| | Target hardening/ DNA Tagging | Rural Crime Advisor | DNA tagging sprays and liquids make items easily traceable back to their owners if they are stolen. It marks the skin of anyone having contact with a uniquely coded but invisible DNA that will provide forensic evidence linking the perpetrator to a crime. | No |
| | Awareness Raising and Events | Rural Crime Advisor | To improve public awareness of how to better secure their property, making communities less desirable as targets for criminals to offend | No |

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| | Participatory Budget | Rural Crime Advisor | A democratic process in which community members decide how to spend part of the budget. | Universal |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|---|-----------|

Priority 5: Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour describes incidents of crime, nuisance and disorder. It could be:

- Behaviour that is causing or likely to cause harassment alarm or distress
- Conduct capable of causing housing related ASB
- Behaviour that is causing nuisance or annoyance
- Behaviour that is having a detrimental impact on those in the community

The three main bodies that investigate ASB are Thames Valley Police, West Oxfordshire DC and Registered Social Landlords. It will depend on the nature of the problem and could therefore involve more than one agency working together. Some problems will also require the expertise and involvement of the Health and Social Care services as well.

When the problem is unresolved and ongoing, the victim can call for a Case Review (Community Trigger). The ASB Case Review gives victims of persistent anti-social behaviour the right to request a multi-agency review of their situation, when a specific threshold is met.

- Three or more reported incidents of ASB, including hate incidents, to relevant agencies (i.e. the police/council/housing/health)
- The incidents occurred on separate occasions, within a six month period
- The ASB is an ongoing issue.

A small number of enquiries and case reviews take place each year. Recent case reviews have been concerned with the behaviour of RSL tenants but also, alleged harassment caused between householders involving CCTV and criminal damage. The complaints are usually concerned with situations that remain unresolved for the victim(s).

Current Position:

- There are on average 4 reports of ASB per day in West Oxfordshire
- Community Related ASB offences account for 71% of reports
- Environment ASB accounts for 9% of reports
- Personal ASB accounts for 21% of reports

- 54% of ASB reports have occurred in Witney
- Between 1 January 2023 and 6 December 2023, 659 incidents of ASB were reported to Thames Valley Police
- The most affected days for ASB related incidents are Fridays and Saturdays, with 32% of offences occurring on these days.
- The most frequent times for ASB to occur are between 5pm and 1am, with a peak between 7pm and 8pm.
- 12 individuals have been identified as repeat suspects and are responsible for 40 incidents
- 66% of suspects are male and 34% are female

Focus on Youth:

- 27% of identified suspects of ASB are young people, but this only accounts for those who have been identified by police.
- The summer months of May, June and July have been the most affected for ASB. This may be due to school holidays and longer hours of daylight

| Anti-Social Behaviour | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|---------------|
| What | How | Who | Why | Youth Focused |
| Community Triggers | <p>Residents can use the Community Trigger if there are:</p> <p>Three reports from one person within a six month period made to either the local council, police, or a registered social housing provider where the individual considers that no effective action has been taken</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Five reports from different people within a six-month</p> | <p>The Chair of the panel will be a Service Business Manager of Resident Services and the Deputy will be the LPA Commander (of officer appointed on their behalf). In addition to the Police and Council, the panel will be made of appropriate agencies relevant to the individual or community trigger and could include Registered Social Landlords, representatives</p> | <p>To ensure that there is a review where cases have been reported and inadequate action has been taken. It will enable WOCSP to learn lessons where persistently reported problems have not been addressed.</p> | No |

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| | <p>period where an individual or collective feels that no effective action has been taken.</p> <p>The Community Trigger is not for making a complaint or reporting new anti-social behaviour cases, these should be taken up with the organisation that is dealing with the case.</p> | <p>of the Clinical Commissioning Group. Youth Offending Service, and Local Safeguarding Authority etc.</p> <p>Where it is felt that WOCSP cannot be impartial, support will be sought from another Oxfordshire based Community Safety Partnership, and in return WOCSP will do the same for them.</p> | | |
| Youth ASB | <p>Problem solving when and where Youth ASB presents as an issue. Looking at solutions in collaboration with community stakeholders and residents as well as Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations.</p> | <p>Thames Valley Police Youth Justice and Exploitation Team West Oxfordshire District Council's Safer Communities Officer</p> | <p>By collaborating with community stakeholders WOCSP can look to ensure legacy and lasting changes in that place, utilising the people, their strengths and resources in addressing local problems.</p> | Yes |

Priority 6: Fraud

The latest figures from the National Crime Survey (those interviewed in the year ending December 2022) showed that fraud returned to pre-covid levels with no significant change.

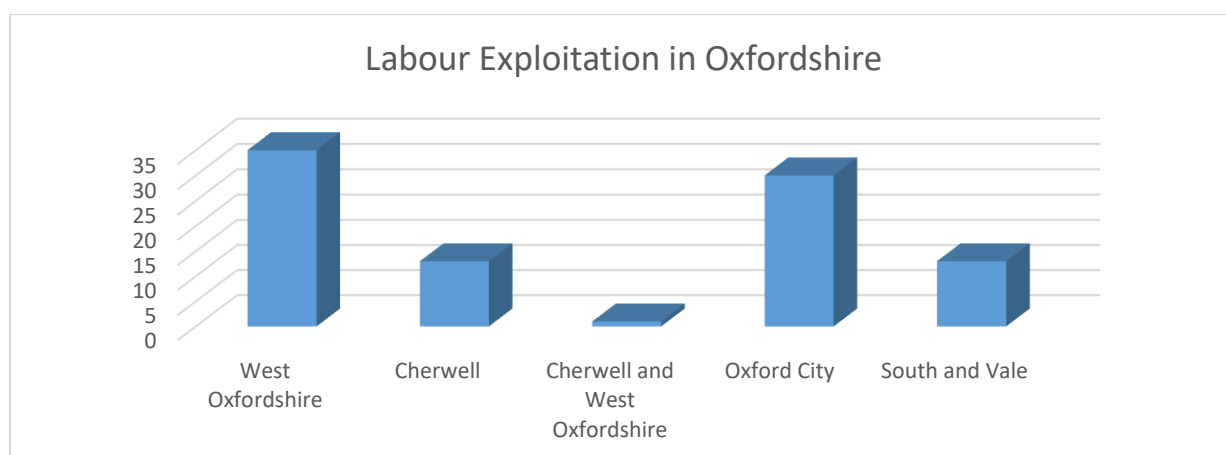
Nationally, despite no significant change in fraud overall, there was a 654% increase in advance fee fraud from 60,000 to 454,000 offences. This is when fraudsters target victims to make advance or upfront payments for goods, services and/or financial gains that do not materialise.

| Fraud | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---------------|
| What | How | Who | Why | Youth Focused |
| Thames Valley Multi-Agency Action Fraud Meetings | <p>Ensuring better sharing of information and multi-agency working through MAAF at a Thames Valley Strategic level.</p> <p>Strands of work include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting Perpetrators • Safeguarding Victims • Sharing Data • Raising Awareness | Thames Valley Police West Oxfordshire District Council's Safer Communities Officer OCC Adults Social Care | With three different organisations taking responsibility for different operational areas of fraud, complications arise with the sharing of information due to the numerous recording systems. This process will ensure that agencies are linked up, sharing information and good practice. | No |
| Increasing Awareness | Utilising resources from Thames Valley Multi-Agency Action Fraud Meetings, WOCSP will support with ensuring professionals and residents have access to publications and tools. | All WOCSP Members | Residents will have a better understanding of which agencies to go to for help for the different types of fraud. | No |

Priority 7: Modern Slavery

There has been a significant increase in victims the labour exploitation subtype of modern slavery in West Oxfordshire, with figures surpassing the other districts. Data from Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Coordinator shows that:

- Between January 2022 and June 2023 there were 18 cases of modern slavery
- And between July 2023 and November 2023 there have been 31 cases of modern slavery, a significant increase of 72% in a much shorter timeframe.
- Labour exploitation is the most prominent subtype of modern slavery that victims report experiencing
- The care sector is specifically where all victims of labour exploitation in West Oxfordshire have been identified.
- There are more female victims of labour exploitation
- 77% of victims are from Zambia, with other victims from Bulgaria, Ghana, and Pakistan
- Age range of victims is between 24 and 54.
- West Oxfordshire's has more recorded victims of labour exploitation than any other district area in Oxfordshire:



Focus on Youth:

Children and young people identified as victims or at risk of becoming victims of modern slavery will not be considered in this section. See **Priority 1: Serious Violence and the Serious Violence Duty** and **Priority 2: Drugs and Alcohol** for further information on how West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership will work together to support victims of child exploitation.

| Modern Slavery | | | | |
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| What | How | Who | Why | Youth Focused |
| Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Coordinator | <p>The Anti-Slavery Coordinator is a fixed term role currently funded by the OPCC's Community Safety Fund in agreement with all Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnerships.</p> <p>The Anti-Slavery Coordinator has oversight of all Modern Slavery cases that enter the NRM and coordinates regular meetings with a range of agencies to ensure support is put in place and evidence gathered to support the NRM Process.</p> <p>Additional work has gone into working with organisations to better their understanding the legal</p> | <p>All Statutory Members of WOCSP will consider the impact the Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Coordinator has had on supporting victims of modern slavery and supporting agencies in their understanding of modern slavery in order to consider future funding towards this role.</p> | <p>Victims will be supported to access support through the National Referral Mechanisms.</p> <p>Professionals and organisations will have access to training to support them in identifying and supporting victims of modern slavery.</p> <p>Community Safety Partnerships will be better informed and have materials to support with community engagement and raising awareness of modern slavery.</p> | No |

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| | changes around Modern Slavery and Immigration. | | | |
| Community Awareness | <p>Planned work includes: Foodbank and Voluntary and Community Sector Training (including foodbanks)</p> <p>Week of Action at Turning Point</p> | Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Coordinator | Community Stakeholders and those working directly with vulnerable people in our communities will have a better understanding of the signs of modern slavery and be able to signpost to support or raise concerns directly with the Anti-Slavery Coordinator | No |
| Reaching Victims | <p>A leaflet and poster, written in different languages, to be aimed at asylum seekers and people who have travelled to work in Oxfordshire from abroad.</p> <p>Continued work with the Quality Improvement Team at Oxfordshire County Council to open</p> | Thames Valley Police Adults Social Care Anti-Slavery Coordinator | Many victims of modern slavery that have come forward in the last year have come from the care sector had little understanding of UK Law, which enabled their employers to exploit them. By raising awareness with possible victims about what modern slavery is, will enable them | No |

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| | opportunities to identify victims of modern slavery in the care sector. | | to seek support earlier and for action to be taken against care agencies working illegally. | |
| Supporting Victims | A report into the impact of victims of modern slavery in Oxfordshire not having recourse to public funding | Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Coordinator WOCSP to consider key learning, outcomes and recommendations of the Anti-Slavery's Coordinators report into the impact of victims of modern slavery having no recourse to public funding. | In West Oxfordshire 100% of victims of modern slavery who came forward as a result of modern slavery in the care industry did not have access to public funding. The care sector is understaffed and under pressure, what can we do to support these victims to feel safe and supported and want to seek further employment opportunities locally. | |
| Training and Learning Lessons | Training and awareness sessions to be delivered in team meetings to key organisations across West Oxfordshire. 2 face to face learning | Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Coordinator Safer Communities Officer, WODC All WOCSP Members | Ensuring that professionals have a clear understanding of the pathways to support for victims of modern slavery and have the confidence to make referrals | No |

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| | <p>events to be held in West Oxfordshire for professionals and the voluntary and community sector.</p> <p>Bespoke e-learning package to be developed for Oxfordshire</p> <p>Consider how professionals can learn from victims experiences and understand the impact of their decision making through workshops in collaboration with OSAB and SOPCG</p> | | through the National Referral Mechanism means that victims will receive support quickly | |
| Modern Slavery Guidance and Pathways Document | A Modern Slavery Guidance and Pathways Document is being created with a view to organisations across the district adopting this and appending to their existing Safeguarding Policies and procedures. | <p>Anti-Slavery Coordinator</p> <p>All WOCSP Members</p> | By appending this document to their existing safeguarding policies, organisations will ensure that their staff have easy access to refresh their knowledge, when needed, on the steps they need to take to safeguard victims of | No |

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| | | | modern slavery. | |
| Link to Asylum Hotel Staff | <p>Training for hotel staff and security.</p> <p>Posters about modern slavery and how to seek support in a variety of languages</p> | Oxfordshire Anti-Slavery Coordinator | <p>The Illegal Migration Act and Nationality and Border Act will both have significant implications on Asylum seekers seeking support as victims of modern slavery. Unfortunately, asylum seekers are at greater risk of being targeted groomed by serious organised crime gangs and it is vital so support them as early as possible and make information easily available.</p> | Yes |

Priority 8: Counter Terrorism

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 states that the following organisations have a statutory responsibility around counter-terrorism:

Oxfordshire County Council, including Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue, Children's Social Care and Adults Social Care
 West Oxfordshire District Council
 Thames Valley Police
 NHS and Health colleagues
 Probation

As such, the West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership is the best mechanism to ensure joined up working around radicalisation and terrorism when we need to engage with our communities about this issue.

| Counter Terrorism | | | | |
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| What | How | Who | Why | Youth Focused |
| Training | Each Partner organisation to ensure they have a Prevent Lead so that important information and training can be shared. | All WOCSP Members | Organisations and their employees will have an understanding of radicalisation and how to refer residents for support. They will also be clear about the importance of information sharing and multi-agency working around extremism and terrorism. | Universal |
| Chanel Panel | The Channel Panel is part of the Prevent Strategy, it is a multi-agency approach to identifying and supporting individuals are risk of being drawn into terrorism. | WODC OCC Children's Social Care OCC Adults Social Care BOB ICB Thames Valley Police | The Channel Duty highlights the need to protect people susceptible to radicalisation and being drawn into terrorism and the Channel Panel provides an opportunity for a range of agencies to discuss concerns about an individual and tailor support where needed to help them reflect on | Universal |

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| | | | the journey they have taken to reach the extreme beliefs they now hold. | |
| Counter Terrorism Local Profile Process | Participating in the CTLP Annual Questionnaire | WODC Safer Communities Officer | The Counter-terrorism local profiles identify the threat and vulnerability from terrorism and extremism relating to terrorism in local areas. It encourages a consistent approach nationally. | No |

Glossary

| Acronym/Term | Meaning |
|--------------|---|
| ASB | Anti-social behaviour |
| BOB ICB | Buckingham, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board |
| DA | Domestic Abuse |
| Drive | Domestic abuse perpetrators programme |
| CCE | Child Criminal Exploitation |
| CSP | Community Safety Partnership |
| CSE | Child Sexual Exploitation |
| IDVA | Independent Domestic Violence Advisor |
| JATAC | Joint Agency Tasking and Coordination Group – held to discuss perpetrators and victims of crimes prioritised in the Community Safety Plan |
| ODAS | Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service |
| OPCC | Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner |
| OSAB | Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board |
| OSCB | Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board |
| MARAC | Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference – held to discuss high risk victims of domestic abuse |
| MATAC | Multi-agency Tasking and Coordination – held to target and disrupt repeat, high risk perpetrators of domestic abuse |
| SOPCG | Safer Oxfordshire Partnership Coordination Group |
| TVP | Thames Valley Police |

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| TTCG | Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group – held to discuss significant incident and agree Local Area Priorities |
| VRP | Violence Reduction Partnership (supersedes VRU) |
| VRU | Violence Reduction Unit |
| YJES | Youth Justice and Exploitation Service |

References

Captive and Controlled: Domestic Abuse in Rural Areas <https://www.northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Domestic-Abuse-in-Rural-Areas-National-Rural-Crime-Network.pdf>

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents/enacted>

Crime and Disorder Act 1998 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/contents>

Illegal Migration Act 2023 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/37/contents/enacted>

Nationality and Borders Act 2022 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/36/contents/enacted>

Office for National Statistics, National Crime Survey 2023
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingjune2023>

Oxfordshire's Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2025
https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/our-work-communities/oxfordshire_overarching_domestic_abuse_strategy.pdf

Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, Police and Criminal Justice Plan 2021-2025
<https://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/police-and-criminal-justice-plan/>


Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/32/contents>

Safe Young Lives: Young People and Domestic Abuse (2017)
<https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Young%20Lives%20web.pdf>

Safer Oxfordshire Partnership, Oxfordshire Strategic Intelligence Assessment 2023 including Serious Violence https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/OxonSIA2023_FINAL.pdf

West Oxfordshire District Council, Youth Needs Assessment 2022
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdJChoGUu9I>

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|  <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> | <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> |
| <p>Name and Date of Committee</p> | <p>EXECUTIVE – 14 FEBRUARY 2024</p> |
| <p>Subject</p> | <p>NATURE RECOVERY PLAN AND NATURE RECOVERY OFFICER</p> |
| <p>Wards Affected</p> | <p>ALL</p> |
| <p>Accountable Member</p> | <p>Councillor Andrew Prosser – Executive Member for Climate Change. Email: Andrew.Prosser@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Accountable Officer</p> | <p>Charlie Jackson – Assistant Director, Planning and Sustainability. Email: charlie.jackson@publicagroup.uk</p> |
| <p>Report Author</p> | <p>Rachel Crookes – Biodiversity and Countryside Land Management Officer. Email: rachel.crookes@publicagroup.uk</p> |
| <p>Purpose</p> | <p>To present the West Oxfordshire District Council Nature Recovery Plan, which is proposed to be adopted and resourced by the Council from April 2024, and to set out the business case to appoint a new Nature Recovery Officer.</p> |
| <p>Annexes</p> | <p>Annex A – West Oxfordshire District Council Nature Recovery Plan; Annex B – Outline Resourcing Plan; Annex C – KPI Tracker; Annex D – Summary of Consultation Responses.</p> |
| <p>Recommendations</p> | <p>That the Executive Resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the West Oxfordshire District Council Nature Recovery Plan and recommend to Council that it is adopted as part of the Council's compliance with the new biodiversity duty. 2. Agree to part-fund a Nature Recovery Officer over the next 15 months at a cost of £12,538.75 and fully fund the post for nine months at a cost of £37,616.25 over 9 months. |
| <p>Corporate Priorities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All • A Better Environment for People and Wildlife |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire |
| Key Decision | YES |
| Exempt | NO |
| Consultees/ Consultation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The West Oxfordshire District Council Nature Recovery Plan has been developed in close consultation with key officers, stakeholder partners and Councillors within the Council to inform the proposals within this report and Annexes. A six week long public consultation has been undertaken on the Council's online consultation platform, with 177 respondents. Consultation responses are summarised in Annexe D. • Councillor Andrew Prosser. |

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** In June 2019, West Oxfordshire District Council passed a motion to declare a climate and ecological emergency, leading to the development of a Climate Change Strategy (2021-2025). A key theme within this strategy is the Protection and Restoration of Natural Ecosystems. Strategic objectives were outlined within this theme, including the protection and restoration of Council land and a desire to engage, support and communicate good practice for biodiversity and nature recovery with the West Oxfordshire community. This strategy runs to 2025, and good progress has been made on the objectives – a new Biodiversity and Countryside Land Management Officer post was created, and new habitat management plans were implemented across WODC owned and managed land.
- 1.2** The West Oxfordshire District Council Nature Recovery Plan (the Plan) has been developed to take forward and expand on the Climate Change Strategy's objectives and outline the specific objectives and actions that the Council will take to support nature recovery across the district to 2030. The separation of the nature recovery actions from the Climate Change Strategy will give a more focussed and detailed approach, although links between the two are still strong.
- 1.3** The Plan sets out ambitious yet achievable aims and actions to tackle biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation across the district and the wider inter-connected landscape. With the introduction of the Environment Act 2021, local authorities must also comply with the new, strengthened 'biodiversity duty', where public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity – the Plan will demonstrate to central government that the Council complies with this new duty. The Plan also delivers on the Council's climate and ecological emergency commitments, which have the overarching aspiration to achieve district-wide carbon neutrality and climate change resilience by 2050.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1** The district is rich in locally distinctive habitat types such as grasslands, woodlands, wetlands, parkland, and agricultural land - a large number of areas and sites across the district have been designated due to their importance for wildlife on local to national scales. Like much of the country, the district's biodiversity has suffered overall declines during the last few decades due to cumulative factors such as habitat loss and fragmentation, pollution, agricultural intensification, and climate change.
- 2.2** The process of "nature recovery" involves the building of resilient landscapes for the future through natural restoration. It involves identifying where both healthy and degraded wildlife habitats already exist, how they can be improved and made bigger, and how they can be connected to produce a more resilient landscape using nature-based solutions that introduce natural processes to the landscape.
- 2.3** The Plan aims to take forward and expand on the Climate Change Strategy's objectives and outlines the specific objectives and actions that the Council will take to support nature recovery across the district to 2030. As its overall vision, the Plan adopts the same message as is set out for the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership – to "Radically enhance nature, its

positive impact on our climate and the priority it's given, helping to make West Oxfordshire a place where people and nature thrive”.

- 2.4 The actions outlined in the Plan will be taken both in the short term over the next 1-3 years, and as part of multi-year programmes to support longer-term success. The Plan has been informed by plans and policies from local to national levels, data from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre, the expertise of officers within the Council and local communities and residents through consultation.
- 2.5 Although the delivery of the Plan will be led by the Council's Biodiversity and Countryside Land Management Officer and climate officers, the success of the Plan will be underpinned by collaboration with local environmental groups, policy makers and residents. The district is fortunate to have organisations and experts currently working to support nature's recovery including the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership, river catchment partnerships, Lower Windrush Valley Project, Wild Oxfordshire, the Wychwood Forest Trust, and others. Working with these groups will help to develop and deliver existing and new nature initiatives across the district.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 There are three key areas identified within the Plan in which the Council can advance nature recovery across the district and encourage others to participate in landscape-scale positive change. The Council can:
- 3.2 **Protect and enhancing biodiversity on Council owned sites.** WODC owns and manages approximately 106ha of green space, which includes parks, fields, greens, and public open spaces within housing estates. Although work has been done to improve these sites for wildlife and people in recent years through working with Ubico and volunteer groups, there is more that can be done to protect and restore habitats and species across the Council's landholdings. There are also new opportunities that the Council can take to expand and improve Council landholdings and connect with others to better improve habitats across the district.
- 3.3 **Safeguard and enhance biodiversity through policies and development.** As a local authority, WODC can ensure that biodiversity is protected and enhanced within the planning system and deliver the key principles for biodiversity set out in national planning guidance. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a new approach to development that aims to leave nature in a measurably better state than it was beforehand on a site – a 10% improvement will be mandatory for major schemes from January 2024, and most other schemes from April 2024. The Council's planning team is currently collating an evidence base to propose a 20% net gain for major schemes. The Council's planning teams are working to ensure BNG is delivered and monitored effectively through the planning system, and developers are well informed through Design Guides and Design Codes to support this. There are also opportunities through the development of the new Local Plan to strengthen policies around ecological protection and recovery, drawing from best practice guidance.
- 3.4 **Facilitate communities and partnerships for landscape-scale recovery.** West Oxfordshire has a wealth of local environmental groups and knowledge that the Council can potentially link in

with to develop and deliver existing and new initiatives on a landscape-wide scale. By collaborating with groups, the Council can facilitate the restoration of natural ecosystems, improve habitat connectivity, and implement nature-based solutions to help mitigate against climate change. There are also organisations that specialise in data collection and collation that can inform a better understanding of trends of key habitats and species across the district.

3.5 The Plan is centred around these three areas of action, and the workstreams within it all align with Lawton's "Making Space for Nature" principles of creating 'More, bigger, better, more joined up' spaces for nature.

3.6 It is hoped that in following the Plan, by 2030 groups across the district such as residents, landowners, Town and Parish Councils and community groups will have come together to help deliver a measurable improvement in the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. There will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity, with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring. Residents will also benefit from nature recovery activities through co-benefits such as natural flood management, carbon sequestration, cleaner water, and the improvement of their local green spaces and improved access to nature.

4. NATURE RECOVERY OFFICER

4.1 The Biodiversity and Countryside Land Management Officer will lead the delivery of the Plan; however, additional officer resource is required to assist with implementation.

4.2 The Nature Recovery Officer position will provide opportunities for collaboration with external partners on biodiversity enhancement projects and nature recovery. This will include running volunteer sessions to enhance Council sites, coordinating biodiversity related communications, working with Town and Parish Councils, and overseeing events to increase the public's engagement with the natural world.

4.3 This new post will also deliver the Council's Coronation Living Heritage Fund Community Orchard Scheme (2024-25) and monitor long-term progress of the scheme.

4.4 Part of the new officer's role will be to secure funding for projects that will deliver against the Plan.

4.5 The post will be advertised as a full-time position with a 24-month fixed contract, ideally suited to a graduate with an ecology background and an interest in climate change. The Council can look to make this post permanent once its value has been demonstrated overtime.

4.6 The post will be seed funded from Innovate UK's (IUK) Fast Followers programme (0.8 FTE) for 15 months from 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2025. As part of the IUK project, the officer will be required to take part in the Fast Followers events such as carbon and nature finance training that will equip the officer with relevant skills.

4.7 The Council would need to fund 0.2 FTE for 15 months (1 April 2024 – 30 June 2025) then a full-time post for nine months (1 July 2025 – 31 March 2026).

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1 The Council does not adopt the Plan. This risks a lack of clarity on the Council's contribution to the new biodiversity duty to central government, which will first need to be reported in 2025. There may also be reputational risks to this course of action, especially due to the wide publicity of the online consultation and public declaration of the Council's commitment to tackling the climate and ecological crises.
- 5.2 The Plan could also be scaled down from its current level of ambition to smaller projects and a shorter timeframe. However the public consultation and personal communications with internal officers indicate that the Plan as it stands is both ambitious and achievable.
- 5.3 Not employing a Nature Recovery Officer would provide insufficient resource to deliver the Plan.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The Council has committed to responding to the climate and ecological emergencies by taking climate and nature action.
- 6.2 The Council has a biodiversity duty to consider what can be done to conserve and enhance biodiversity in the district. The Plan will deliver against this biodiversity duty and facilitate landscape-scale nature recovery.
- 6.3 A Nature Recovery Officer is required to deliver the Plan and achieve nature recovery across the district.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Securing resources to deliver the actions outlined in the Plan will be critical to achieve nature recovery across the district. Actions may require separate Council approvals to secure funding and resources to implement them. This will be understood in more detail at the scoping stage of each project – there are therefore no capital funds are being requested for the 2024/25 budget.
- 7.2 Oxfordshire's Local Nature Partnership are undertaking work to investigate the financing of nature's recovery using private sources of finance such as private investors carbon credits, and BNG offset funding, and working with businesses to address material risks and dependencies on the landscape. Grants have historically been used to deliver ecology projects across the district – these range from a local level (e.g. Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment) to a national level (Esme Fairburn and the National Heritage Lottery fund). There are also opportunities to use funding from other internal WODC teams if working on collaborative projects, for example within communities and leisure, and funding can also be acquired through Westhive to fundraise for specific projects in partnership with local communities.
- 7.3 The following actions that are proposed for delivery in the financial year of 2024/5 with associated costs are outlined below. Capital items are to be funded through the Climate reserves in this financial year.

| Action | Cost |
|--|-----------|
| Undertake botanical surveys of key council sites in 2024 and 2030: Deer Park Wood and South, Kilkenny Lane Country Park, North Leigh Common, Witney floodplain meadows | £6,000.00 |

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Provide annual funding to volunteer groups managing WODC sites e.g. Friends of North Leigh Common, Kilkenny Lane Conservation volunteers, Witney Woodland Volunteers | £750.00 |
| Run an annual BioBlitz to promote wildlife recording at different Council-owned sites | £750.00 |
| Total | £7,500.00 |

7.4 The costs of a Level 1 specialist are:

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Total |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|
| Employee costs | £38,345.00 | £39,212.00 | £77,557.00 |
| Grant funding 80% in first 15 months | £30,676.00 | £7,842.00 | £38,518.00 |
| Council funded | £7,669.00 | £31,370.00 | £39,039.00 |
| | £38,345.00 | £39,212.00 | £77,557.00 |

7.5 It might be possible to stretch the grant funding to cover 100% of employee costs in the first 15 months; however, this is not yet confirmed.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 With the introduction of the Environment Act 2021, local authorities must also comply with the new, strengthened ‘biodiversity duty’, where public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. As a local authority, the Council must consider relevant strategies: Local Nature Recovery Strategies, species conservation strategies and protected site strategies and:

- Understand their relevance to the Council.
- Be aware of how these strategies affect land that the Council owns or manages and actions that can be taken to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Consider how the Council can contribute to the strategy.

8.2 Adopting and implementing the Plan will ensure that the Council is complying with the new biodiversity duty. The Plan and associated KPI tracker will function as a reporting tool to feed back to central government on action taken by the Council in connection with this.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT

9.1 There is a reputational risk to the Council if it does not use its position to influence positive change for nature recovery, especially considering the new statutory biodiversity duty and its commitment to the ongoing climate and ecological emergency.

9.2 Some actions do not have funding allocated to them for delivery. It should be noted that is a risk that not all the actions will be completed by 2030, due to the existing lack of officer and financial resources to support all projects incorporated.

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT

10.1 Adopting and implementing the Plan for the Council will see positive action to improve the biodiversity and value of nature across the district and will have a shared benefit for all.

11. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATION

- 11.1** Adopting and resourcing the Plan will see benefits to local wildlife populations, such as new and improved areas of habitat for species to live, feed and breed. This will also help the natural world adapt to a changing climate and other pressures on the environment.
- 11.2** As well as improved habitats, actions within the Plan will also deliver co-benefits such as natural flood management, carbon sequestration, cleaner water, and the improvement of their local green spaces and improved access to nature.
- 11.3** A Nature Recovery Officer will support the Biodiversity and Countryside Land Management Officer in delivering the actions set out in the Plan to achieve nature recovery across the district.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1** None

(END)



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
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West Oxfordshire District Council

Nature Recovery Plan 2024 – 2030

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Common abbreviations

BBOWT - Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust

BNG – Biodiversity Net Gain

LNP – Local Nature Partnership

LWVP – Lower Windrush Valley Project

OCC - Oxfordshire County Council

TVERC - Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre

WFT – Wychwood Forest Trust

Introduction

West Oxfordshire is comprised of a mosaic of farmland, semi-natural grassland, woodland, and watercourses. There is also a varied built environment from the district's largest towns of Carterton and Witney to rural towns and villages such as Burford, Charlbury and Eynsham which all contain features which contribute to overall biodiversity resource. The natural environment in the district has experienced large changes over the past century with industrialisation, agricultural intensification and urbanisation, in common with most of south-eastern England. However, there remains a diverse natural environment in the district, rich in different habitats and species.

In June 2019, West Oxfordshire District Council passed a motion to declare a climate and ecological emergency, leading to the development of a Climate Change Strategy. A key theme within this strategy is the Protection and Restoration of Natural Ecosystems. Several strategic objectives were outlined within this theme, including the protection and restoration of Council land and a desire to engage, support and communicate good practice for biodiversity and nature recovery with the West Oxfordshire community. This strategy runs to 2025, and good progress has been made on the objectives – a new Biodiversity and Countryside Land Management Officer post was created, and new habitat management plans were implemented across WODC owned land.

This document aims to take forward and expand on the Climate Change Strategy's objectives and outline the specific objectives and actions that the Council will take to support nature recovery across the district to 2030. The separation of this Nature Recovery Plan from the original climate change strategy will give a more focussed and detailed approach, although links between the two are still strong.

A vision for WODC's nature recovery

The Council fully supports the vision that has been set out for the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership, and adopts its message for this Nature Recovery Plan:

“Radically enhance nature, its positive impact on our climate and the priority it's given, helping to make West Oxfordshire a place where people and nature thrive”.

By 2030, groups across the district such as residents, landowners, Town and Parish Councils and community groups will have come together to help deliver a measurable improvement in the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. There will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity, with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring. Residents will also benefit from nature recovery activities through co-benefits such as natural flood management, carbon sequestration, cleaner water, and the improvement of their local green spaces and improved access to nature.

Purpose of document

The purpose of this plan is to set out ambitious yet achievable aims and actions to tackle biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation across the district and the wider inter-connected landscape. This plan delivers on the Council's climate and ecological emergency commitments, which have the overarching aspiration to achieve district-wide carbon neutrality and climate change resilience by 2050.

Biodiversity across West Oxfordshire

What is biodiversity and nature recovery?

Biodiversity is a term used to describe the variety of life including all plants, animals, their habitats and the natural systems that support them.

Biodiversity is fundamental to both planet and people. In addition to its key importance, biodiversity also provides a host of services and functions that bring value to our lives, including:

- Provision of food, water, timber and fibre (provisioning services).
- Helping to regulate climate change, floods, disease, waste, and water quality (regulating services).
- Providing recreational, aesthetic and cultural benefits (cultural services).
- Supporting soil formation, pollination, photosynthesis (supporting services).

Nature recovery involves the building of resilient landscapes for the future through natural restoration. This process involves identifying where both healthy and degraded wildlife habitats already exist, how they can be improved and made bigger, and how they can be connected to produce a more resilient landscape using nature-based solutions that introduce natural processes to the landscape.

Undertaking landscape-scale nature recovery will lead to the creation of a Nature Recovery Network - a joined-up system of places needed to allow nature to recover and thrive. The network will provide more space for wild species to live, feed and breed, and help the natural world to adapt to a changing climate and other pressures on the environment.

Biodiversity across West Oxfordshire

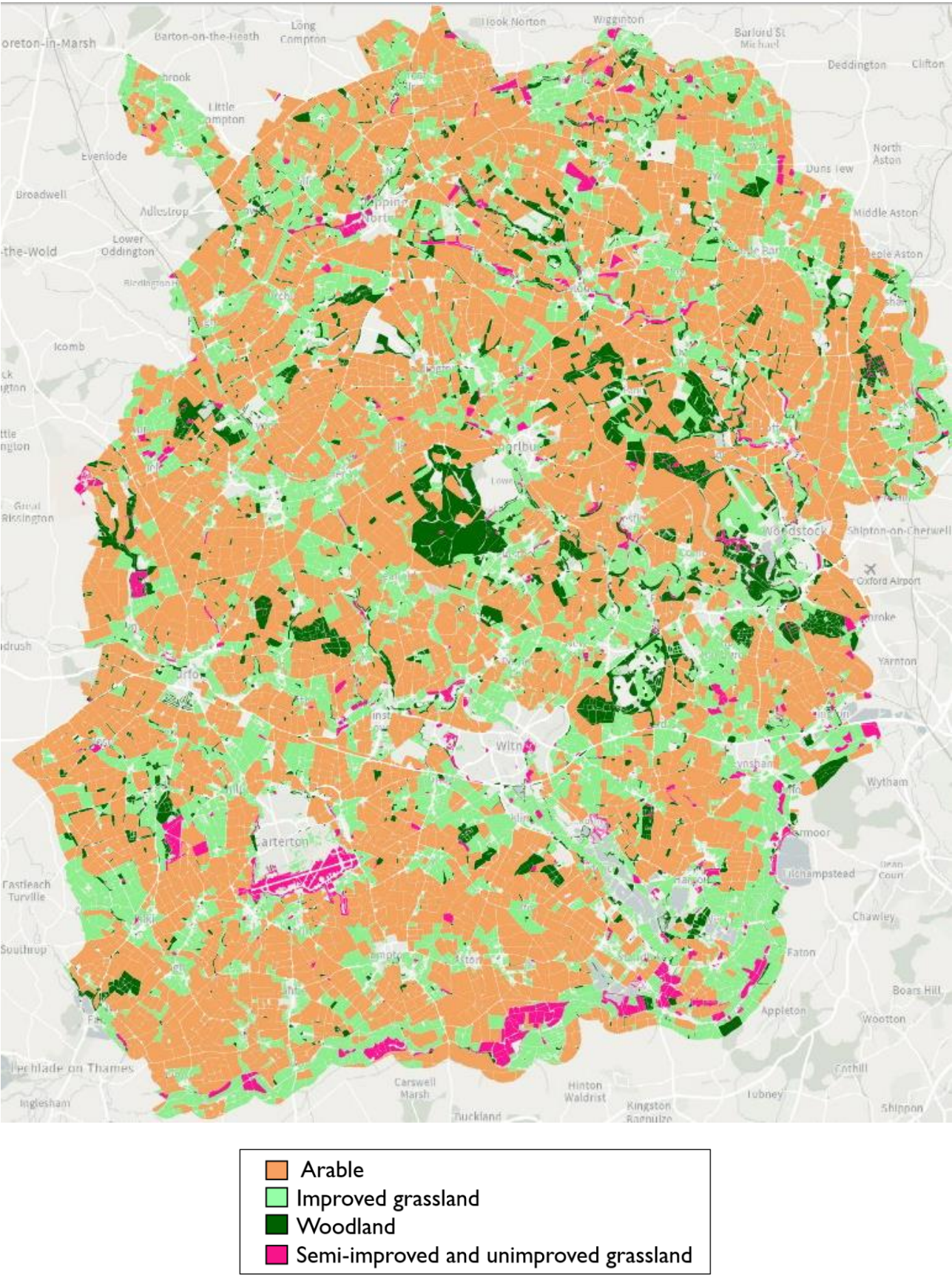
West Oxfordshire is rich in locally distinctive habitat types, including grasslands (including lowland meadows, calcareous and acid grasslands), woodlands (including ancient woodland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland and wet woodland), heathland, wood pasture, parkland and traditional orchards. These in turn are home to a diverse mix of locally distinctive flora, including for example valuable hay meadow and limestone grassland species in the Cotswolds and river meadowlands.

West Oxfordshire is predominantly farmed landscape, with a topography and geology that lends itself well to growing crops; high Agricultural Land Class Grades are found in the south of the district in particular. Over half of the district is made up of arable land (56%), in addition to a significant area of improved grassland (around 23%) that is largely managed as permanent pasture for livestock or cut for silage.

Semi-natural and unimproved grassland is a rarer but more valuable habitat across the district. Small areas of limestone grassland can be found along river and stream valleys, which support a diverse mix of invertebrates and bird life. Floodplain meadow areas along West Oxfordshire's rivers and tributaries are biodiverse habitats, especially where managed traditionally to encourage the growth of rare wildflowers such as snake's-head fritillary and great burnet.

The district has small but important areas of woodland, making up around 5% of the district's land area. These are generally found on the ridges that lie between river valleys and are associated with historic parklands – these include Wychwood Forest that lies within the Cornbury Park Estate and Eynsham Hall, and Blenheim. These woodland areas are generally made up of ash, oak and elm, and in well managed areas host associated flora such as violets and helleborines. Clusters of ancient trees are also present in these estates.

Figure 1: Largest areas habitat types across WODC



West Oxfordshire lies within the River Thames catchment area, with the Thames itself and its tributaries, including the River Evenlode and River Windrush, running through the area. Other key watercourses include the River Dorn, River Glyme, Coombe Brook and Shill Brook – all of these and their associated riparian habitat support a wide range of species including otters, kingfishers and rare freshwater invertebrates. The district's rivers are surveyed for water voles on a regular basis by BBOWT – numbers have generally remained stable over the last 10 years, with the River Windrush identified as a particular stronghold for this species (BBOWT, 2023). As well as these key habitats, smaller areas of habitats including scrub, parkland, lakes and fen are also present in small quantities, each with their characteristic associated flora and fauna.

The district's biodiverse landscape intrinsically holds value in the form of natural capital – this is described as “elements of nature that directly or indirectly produce value to people, including ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, minerals, the air and oceans” (Natural Capital Committee, 2013). From natural capital assets such as habitats, water and ecosystems, we derive benefits in the form of ecosystem services – these can either directly provide resources, e.g. timber and fish production, regulate our environment, e.g. improving air and water quality, or give cultural benefits such as a sense of place or aesthetic beauty. Residents across the district will be receiving multiple benefits from its habitats – in particular, with its floodplain meadow and riverine areas, the valley is likely to be providing a wide range of regulating ecosystem services including carbon storage, water quality, flood resilience and pollination.

Like much of the county, the district's biodiversity has suffered overall declines during the last few decades (Wild Oxfordshire, 2017). Several key factors that have impacted on a wide range of West Oxfordshire's species populations include:

- Habitat loss – Losses of large areas of semi-natural grasslands and floodplain meadows are mainly due to agricultural intensification from the mid-20th century onwards. This was further worsened by losses through sand and gravel extraction, urban and industrial development and hydrological changes to river floodplains. (Rothero et al., 2016).
- Habitat fragmentation - The continuing fragmentation of the landscape through the removal of hedgerows, and increase in infrastructure and other development, has increased the isolation of remaining patches of good habitat and the species they support. In turn this increases the probability of further extinctions of the district's rarer species (Butaye et al., 2005). The losses and fragmentation of semi-natural grasslands, in combination with climate change impacts, are thought to have contributed to the local extinction and decline of some invertebrate species, including butterflies (Van Dyck et al., 2015) and bumblebees (Rothero et al., 2016).
- Climate change - Climate change causes changes in temperature and rainfall leading to shifts in species composition. Changes in the frequency of intense rainfall events, particularly following periods of dry weather, contributes to increased soil loss and related nutrient runoff from agricultural land. This affects local water quality as well as putting strain on local biodiversity and ecosystems (Defra, 2012). Regular summer flooding in Oxfordshire on the scale of 2007 could threaten the conservation value of semi-natural grasslands (BBOWT, 2010).
- Pollution – Water quality and river habitats have been severely impacted by historic modifications to watercourses and pressures from human activity. In recent years, sewage treatment works and Combined Sewage Overflows across the district's rivers are having long term negative effects on aquatic and riparian species. Riverfly monitoring by volunteers (in 2018, 2019) has indicated a reduction in invertebrate diversity and abundance in the River Windrush, and macrophytes in the reach between Burford and Witney have also seen

dramatic declines (Windrush Catchment Partnership Plan, 2021). Grayling, probably the best indicator of water quality, have almost completely disappeared from the River Windrush and populations of coarse fish species such as roach and barbel have notably declined (Cotswold Rives Trust, pers. comms). Other forms of pollution can also have negative impacts on local wildlife populations, such as light pollution and air quality.

- Agricultural intensification – A significant area of the district is used for agriculture. Intense farming practices have resulted in the loss of hedgerows on farms, and increased nitrogen on surrounding environments. The use of pesticides is also having significant negative impacts on pollinator communities (Godfray H.C.J., 2014).
- Disease - The impact that disease has on the landscape has also been significant in recent years. In addition to highly destructive Dutch Elm disease which has killed millions of trees over the last 50 years, ash dieback is expected to kill 95-99% of ash trees in Britain (Hill et al, 2019), changing the composition of large areas of woodland across the district and beyond.

Statutory and non-statutory sites for nature

A large number of areas and sites across the district have been designated due to their importance for wildlife on local to national scales. Key statutory (i.e., those protected by law) and non-statutory sites are summarised below, with maps illustrating their locations in Figures 2 and 3:

Statutory sites

- Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – part of the Oxford Meadows SAC, Cassington Meadows, lies partially within West Oxfordshire's boundaries. This area consists of a cluster of neutral hay meadows and fen, which are surviving remnants of semi-natural vegetation in an area now characterised by intensive arable farming and gravel extraction.
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR) – these sites are designated for their special local interest either biologically or geologically. The district has two LNRs – Crecy Hill LNR, which has a diverse flora and invertebrate population on its calcareous grassland habitat, and Saltway LNR which has the largest known British colony of the very rare downy woundwort.
- National Nature Reserves (NNR) – two sites have received this statutory designation, the Wychwood NNR and Chimney Meadows NNR. The Wychwood NNR is one of the largest areas of ancient semi-natural oak and ash broadleaved woodland in Oxfordshire, with large herds of fallow deer and notable flora including early purple orchid and less common plants such as herb paris and autumn crocus. Chimney Meadows NNR is located in the floodplain of the River Thames and has a spectacular display of wildflowers during the summer months and often provides a safe haven for breeding curlew.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – there are 44 SSSIs across the district, so designated for a wide range of habitats including floodplain meadow, woodland and acid grassland and fen.
- Cotswolds National Landscape – the CNL sits across a large proportion of the north and west of the district, covering around a third of its area. It is the largest National Landscape in England and Wales and was primarily designated for the rare limestone grassland habitats as well as the old growth beech woodlands that typify the area.

Figure 2: Existing statutory site locations

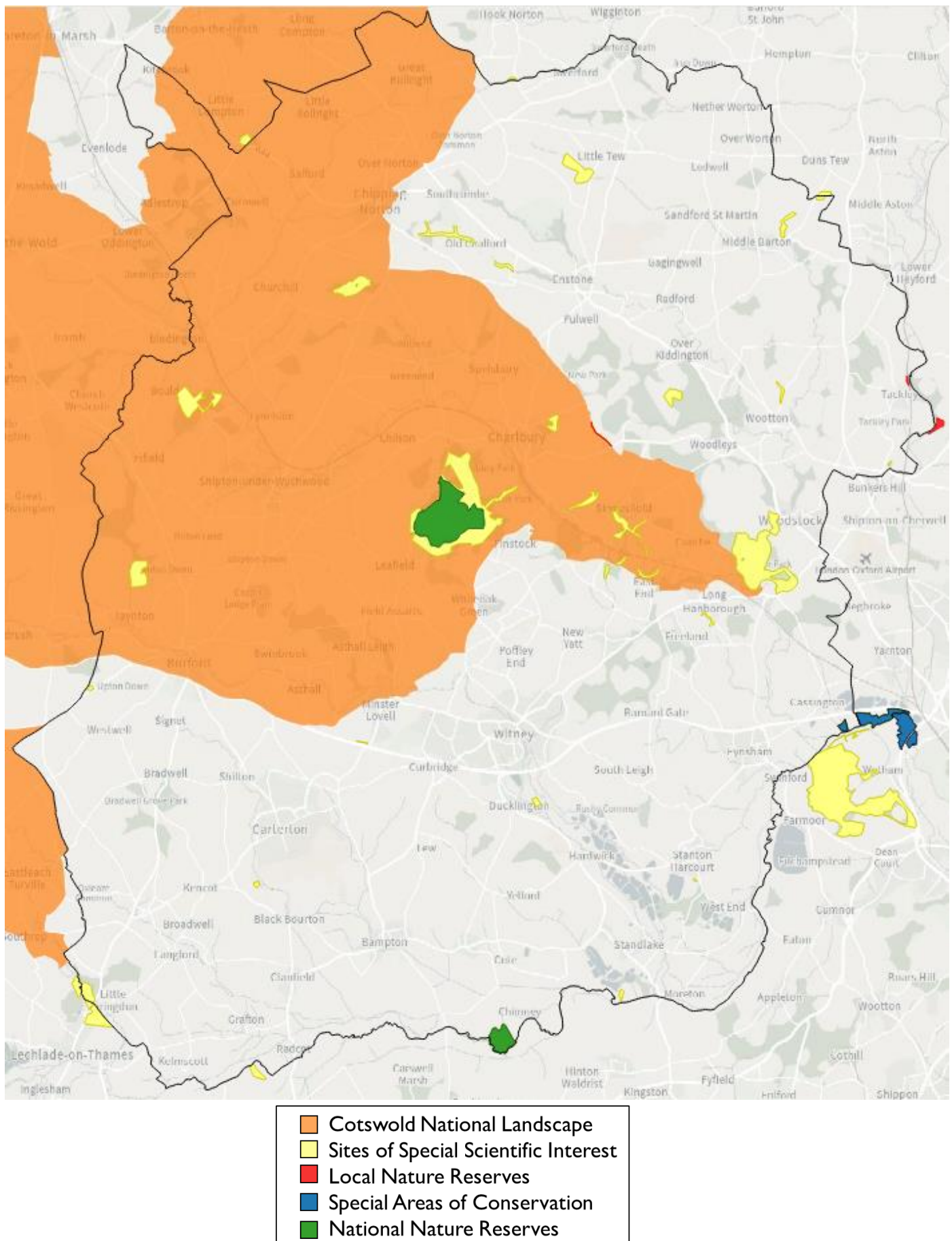
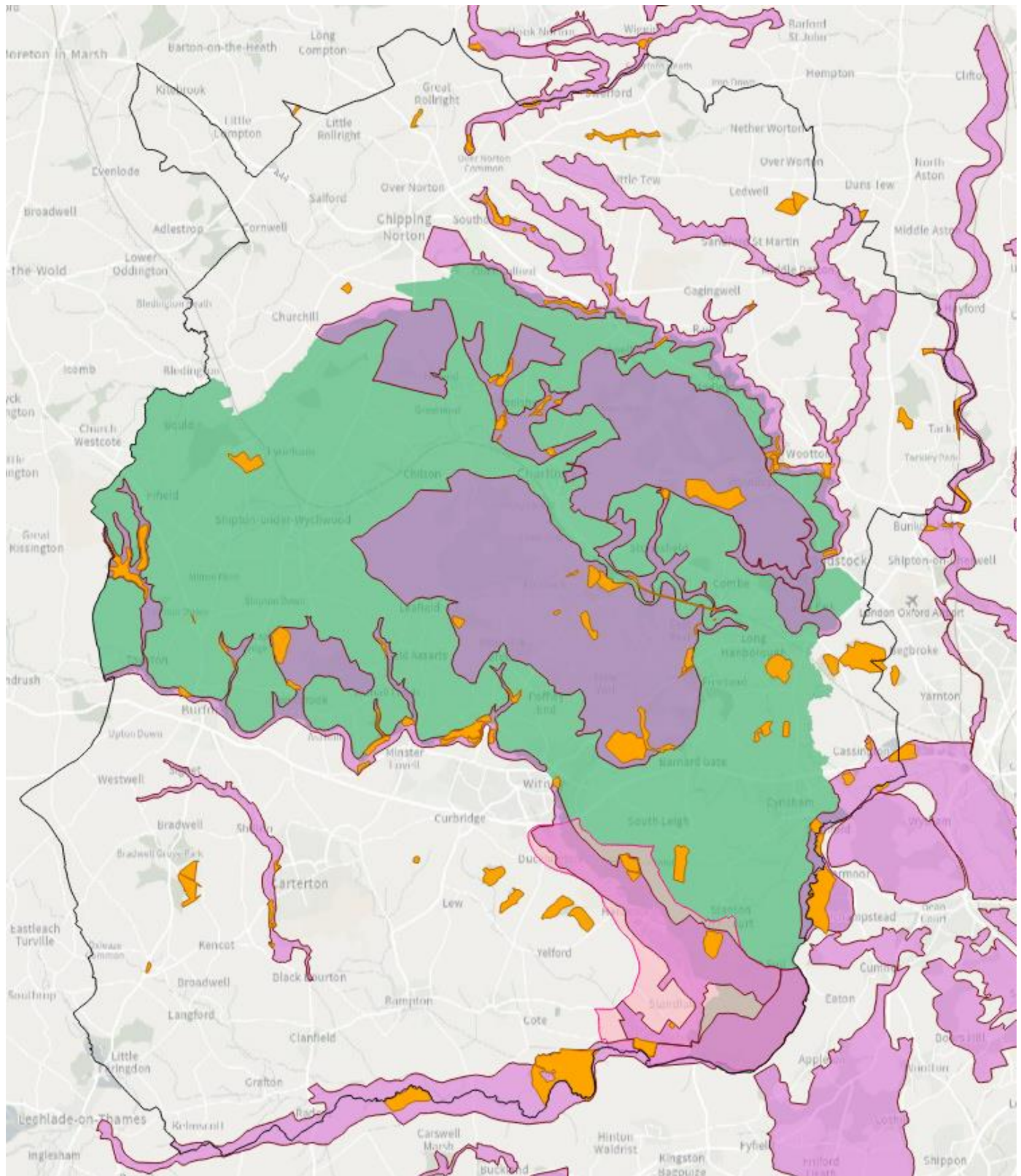


Figure 3: Existing non-statutory site locations



- Local Wildlife Sites
- Conservation Target Areas
- Lower Windrush Valley Project Area
- Wychwood Project Area

Non-Statutory sites

- Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) – the CTAs identify some of the most important areas for wildlife conservation in Oxfordshire, where targeted conservation action has the greatest benefit. Eight CTAs are present across the district, centred primarily around its rivers and woodland areas.
- Local Wildlife Sites – these are sites that have been surveyed and selected by the Oxfordshire Wildlife Sites Project, jointly run by BBOWT and TVERC, as some of the country's most valuable wildlife areas. There are 100 Local Wildlife Sites in West Oxfordshire, totalling 1583 hectares of habitat.
- Wychwood Project area – this area and associated project aims to restore the landscape character and mix of habitats associated with the Royal Hunting Forest of Wychwood.
- Lower Windrush Valley Project area – this strategic area has a network of important habitats including floodplain meadows and lakes formed by the gravel extraction that has occurred in the valley. It has particular importance for resident migratory waterfowl.
- Windrush in Witney Project area – this area consists of a network of floodplain meadows and pathways into the Lower Windrush Valley, fundamental component of the town's landscape character.

Local groups and partnerships

The district is fortunate in having a number of local groups and initiatives currently working to support nature's recovery;

- Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership – the OxLNP is an organisation of key partners working together to radically enhance nature. It aims to develop strategies and plans, influence relevant local and national government policy and legislation; establish voluntary working groups and task and finish groups as required; and lever resources into the sector. The partnership's outputs guide and influence the work of LNP members and others.
- Evenlode and Windrush Catchment partnerships – hosted by Wild Oxfordshire and Cotswold Rivers Trust respectively, the catchment partnerships help local people and organisations work together to improve river water quality, enhance biodiversity, improve flood management and resilience to climate change, and build greater community engagement with the river and its tributaries.
- Wychwood Forest Trust - this conservation charity works with local communities to protect and restore the spaces once part of the historic Wychwood Forest - 120 square miles and 41 parishes in West Oxfordshire. They also run projects promoting the Wychwood's unique cultural identity and help people learn traditional rural skills and crafts such as dry-stone walling and hedgelaying.
- Lower Windrush Valley Project – set up in 2001 following extensive mineral extraction works across the valley, the LWVP works with environmental organisations, mineral operators, landowners and communities to deliver a wide range of initiatives that aim to strengthen and develop the evolving landscape of the valley, protect and enhance the biodiversity it supports, and improve opportunities for people to access and enjoy the countryside.
- Wild Oxfordshire – this charity seeks to create a more natural, resilient, and biodiverse Oxfordshire for the benefit of all and primarily collaborates with individuals, communities and organisations offering expert and bespoke ecological advice through their community ecology programme. They also carry deliver targeted conservation action with initiatives such as the Curlew Recovery Project and the Oxfordshire Hedgerow Heroes Project.

- Cotswolds National Landscape – this organisation works to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds AONB, increase understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities, and foster the social and economic well-being of local communities. Their network of over 400 wardens enables them to have wide-reaching impact across their area.
- North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster – this group is made up of 137 farms covering 42,000 hectares with a vision to lead landscape-scale regeneration of the farmed environment and local food networks through collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) – West Oxfordshire is located in the western-most area that this Wildlife Trust covers, with sites such as Chimney Meadow and Foxholes nature reserves managed by its volunteers and staff. BBOWT also manages the Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Sites Project provides free wildlife surveys and information about conservation.

The groups listed above are some of the larger organisations that operate within the district; many others also work more locally to deliver significant impacts such as local Nature Recovery Groups, Long Mead, Burford Environment Action Group, Green Fifield.

Key policy influences

This Nature Recovery Plan does not sit in isolation - it considers and is aligned with a range of national, regional, and local policies and plans to ensure cohesion and a net positive contribution to wider strategic initiatives across the district and beyond.

National policies

Environment Act 2021 – this national framework for environmental protection aims to improve air and water quality, tackle waste, improve biodiversity and make other environmental improvements. Key drivers of action around nature recovery include:

- Biodiversity Net Gain - this is a new approach to development that aims to leave nature in a measurably better state than it was beforehand with onsite ecological enhancement, using off-site measures as a last resort. Using habitat data, a site's biodiversity value can be quantified both before and after a development has been delivered. A minimum biodiversity gain of 10% will be mandatory for major developments from January 2024, with requirements for minor developments coming later in the year.
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies – this is a new, England-wide system of spatial strategies that will establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits. An Oxfordshire LNRS is being produced by a partnership of organisations, co-ordinated by OCC, which WODC will feed in to as a key stakeholder – a Nature Recovery Network will also be created as the spatial element of the plan.

Natural England has also recently introduced the Green Infrastructure Framework. This provides a number of tools and guides for planners, developers and communities investing in nature in urban areas and creating climate resilient towns across England. Mapping tools, green infrastructure standards and principles, and process journeys all form part of the Framework.

With the introduction of the Environment Act 2021, local authorities must also comply with the new, strengthened 'biodiversity duty', where public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. As a local authority, the Council

must consider relevant strategies: LNRs, species conservation strategies and protected site strategies and:

- Understand their relevance to the Council.
- Be aware of how these strategies affect land that the Council owns or manages and actions that can be taken to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Consider how the Council can contribute to the strategy.

Local policies

Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan, 2023-2050 – this document, commissioned by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, includes a route map and joint climate and nature-based actions that the Oxfordshire local authorities can take together to provide a catalyst for positive action across the region. The most relevant action is Action 12, which seeks to “Explore opportunities to enhance carbon sequestration through land use change, including targeted habitat restoration and creation”.

West Oxfordshire District Council Plan 2023-2027 – the Council Plan documents key aims and priorities to improve the district for its residents. Relevant priorities include:

- Priority 2 – “Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All”, with actions including “Ensure the timely provision of built and green infrastructure which meets the needs of existing and incoming residents and that supports health and care to enable physical and mental well-being, community cohesion and delivers a high quality of life.”
- Priority 3 – “Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife”, with actions including “Work with others, and fulfil our statutory obligations, to ensure that land, air and water support biodiverse habitats, reduce pollution and bring about nature recovery to the District, putting it at the forefront of local decision making.”
- Priority 4 – “Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency”, with actions including “Encourage the use of nature based solutions to sequester carbon and combat the risks arising from climate change at a river catchment scale, such as restoration of meadows and trees to reduce flooding and improve water quality.”

West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2031 – The West Oxfordshire Local Plan sets out a vision of the district to 2031 and provides an overarching framework to guide and deliver that vision. Relevant policies include:

- Policy EH2: Landscape character
- Policy EH3: Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Policy EH4: Public realm and green infrastructure

The new West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2041 is currently being prepared to update planning policies and proposals, ensuring they effectively tackle vital issues like nature recovery and climate change.

WODC Carbon Action Plan – this document is due to be published in 2024, and sets out actions to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and to carbon inset/offset residual emissions.

Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023-2025 – this is a statutory plan, which sets out the vision, outcomes and policies for the management of the Cotswolds National Landscape

for the period 2023-2025. The plan defines the landscape's key qualities, and sets out its key issues including the climate emergency, Nature's decline and the Ecological Crisis and Health and societal changes. Key relevant policies include;

- Policy CE7: Biodiversity and nature recovery
- Policy CE8: Rural land management policy
- Policy CE9: Problem species, pests and diseases

Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan 2021 – this plan was developed by the Cotswolds National Landscape in partnership with the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Forum. It gives details on the species and habitats of the Cotswolds, and what action can be taken to help them flourish and spread across the landscape.

Our work to date and role as a Council

WODC produced its first Climate Change Strategy in 2020, with “Protection and Restoration of Natural Ecosystems” as one of its key themes. A full time, permanent Biodiversity and Countryside Land Management Officer has been employed since its publication, who has led on different initiatives and made progress against the strategy's objectives. Key actions within this are listed below:

- A review of land management practises across key sites has been undertaken to improve them for both people and wildlife. Working with the ground's maintenance team at Ubico, grass cutting and vegetation management regimes have changed to allow for longer flowering periods for pollinators and more traditional management of wildflower meadows.
- A series of biodiversity projects were undertaken in 2022 to kick-start the Council's response to the ecological emergency – these include:
 - Setting up a hedgehog highways scheme, where residents are invited to create a hedgehog hole in their gardens to improve connectivity for urban hedgehog populations
 - Creating wildflower meadows across our public open green spaces.
 - Planting hedgerows and trees in strategic locations across our estates with the help of volunteer groups, schools and Council employees.
 - A BioBlitz at Kilkenny Lane Country Park to encourage members of the public to observe wildlife at the site and collect data for the local environmental records centre.
 - Establishing a new conservation volunteer group at Kilkenny Lane Country Park.
 - Expanding the reach of the Witney Woodland Volunteers with a licence to manage Deer Park South.
 - Providing tools and training to the Witney Woodland Volunteers to better manage Deer Park Wood.
- Connections to other environmental organisations such as the Wychwood Forest Trust, Wild Oxfordshire and Lower Valley Windrush Project have been strengthened with new projects and partnership work.

- Advice has been given to several Town and Parish Councils on land management, and where relevant worked with Ubico to change maintenance regimes on their land to improve habitats on Council owned land.
- Officers are members of the Windrush and Evenlode Catchment Partnerships, shaping catchment plans and reviewing project work delivered by these groups.
- WODC is a member of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership, sitting on several of the sub-groups that guide the partnership's activities.
- WODC financially supports groups such as Wild Oxfordshire, the Wychwood Forest Trust, TVERC and the Local Wildlife Sites Partnership

The Council's Planning Service also continue to assess the ecological impacts of planning applications that are submitted across the district. Key actions from this team over the last few years include:

- Biodiversity Officer Capacity to assess planning applications has increased.
- Guidance around biodiversity net gain and its best practice use has been developed by the Council's planning ecologists and is used to secure tangible improvements to developments' green infrastructure and ecological value.
- The Salt Cross Area Action Plan was accepted by the Planning Inspector with a policy requiring the scheme to achieve 25% biodiversity net gain.
- Officers have helped to shape county-wide policies, and continue to input into the Oxfordshire LNRS and LNP.

In addition to the work above, the Council has worked to ensure that biodiversity is considered in its decision-making processes. Each report and decision brought to the Council's Executive and Cabinet meetings includes a section on the proposal's climate and ecological emergencies implications – here officers detail any anticipated impacts on land use, wildlife and habitats as a result of the proposal.

Consultation

This Nature Recovery Plan has been prepared in consultation with key officers, Councillors, local environmental groups and local communities, to gain a full understanding of the barriers and opportunities available to delivering the plan.

One of the key changes following the local environmental group consultation was the change in name from "Biodiversity Action Plan" to "Nature Recovery Plan". This was made after suggestions that the term "Biodiversity Action Plan" is a more antiquated environmental term, and new name would be more positive and forward looking, to signal the alignment with the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy and a wider reinvigorated conservation effort. Additional actions and clarification were added in the document where deemed appropriate.

The public consultation feedback generally reflected diverse opinions on biodiversity and environmental strategies. Positive responses highlighted eagerness to collaborate, emphasizing partnerships with community groups aligned with the plan's goals. Participants emphasized the necessity of promoting biodiversity education in schools and extending the plan's coverage to include all new housing developments. Some respondents also highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to address challenges such as climate change effects, waterway clean-up,

and collaborative efforts with local landowners and farmers. The feedback generally indicated a desire for tangible, measurable actions, greater collaboration with local communities and stakeholders, and a stronger focus on immediate environmental concerns while balancing long-term biodiversity preservation.

Aims and objectives

There are three key areas within which WODC can advance nature recovery across the District, and encourage others to participate in landscape-scale positive change. The District can:

1. Protect and enhance biodiversity on sites owned and managed by the Council.
2. Safeguard and enhance biodiversity through policies and development.
3. Facilitate communities and partnerships for landscape-scale recovery.

1. Protect and enhancing biodiversity on Council owned sites

WODC owns and manages approximately 106ha of green space, which includes parks, fields, greens and public open spaces within housing estates. Although work has been done to improve these sites for wildlife and people in recent years through working with Ubico and volunteer groups, there is more that can be done to protect and restore habitats and species across the Council's landholdings. There are also new opportunities that the Council can take to expand and improve Council landholdings and connect with others to better improve habitats across the district.

2. Safeguard and enhance biodiversity through policies and development

As a local authority, WODC is able to ensure that biodiversity is protected and enhanced within the planning system, and deliver the key principles for biodiversity set out in national planning guidance. BNG is a new approach to development that aims to leave nature in a measurably better state than it was beforehand on a site – a 10% improvement will be mandatory for major schemes from January 2024, and the majority of other schemes from April 2024. The Council's planning team is currently collating an evidence base to propose a 20% net gain for major schemes. The Council's planning teams are working to ensure BNG is delivered and monitored effectively through the planning system, and developers are well informed through Design Guides and Design Codes to support this. There are also opportunities through the development of the new Local Plan to strengthen policies around ecological protection and recovery, drawing from best practice guidance.

3. Facilitate communities and partnerships for landscape-scale recovery

As outlined in the "Local groups and partnerships" section above, West Oxfordshire has a wealth of local environmental groups and knowledge that the Council can potentially link in with to develop and deliver existing and new initiatives on a landscape-wide scale. By collaborating with groups, the Council can facilitate the restoration of natural ecosystems, improve habitat connectivity, and implement nature-based solutions to help mitigate against climate change. There are also organisations that specialise in data collection and collation that can inform a better understanding of trends of key habitats and species across the district.

Connections within the District Council's teams, such as Estates, Communities, Development Planning and Flooding can continue to be strengthened, through collaborative projects of mutual benefit. WODC Communications team uses several platforms on which the Council can promote opportunities for conservation volunteering and share best practice with others. Bespoke outreach activities could also take place to encourage residents to better engage with the natural world.

These three focus areas form the structure of Nature Recovery Plan, set out in the section below. All actions set out within this align to Lawton's "Making Space for Nature" principles of 'More, bigger, better, more joined up', - delivering action on a landscape scale will lead to more resilient, healthy and connected ecosystems, and improve habitat quality and species populations across the district.

Nature Recovery Plan

The purpose of the Nature Recovery Plan is to provide direction for the Council, local groups, officers and Councillors, giving a comprehensive set of actions to achieve nature recovery across the district and deliver on the three key areas outlined above. The Plan outlines actions that both contribute to and go beyond the Council's biodiversity duty.

The actions will be taken both in the short term over the next 1-3 years, and as part of multi-year programmes to support longer-term success. The Plan has been informed by the plans and policies outlined above, data from TVERC, the expertise of officers within the Council and local communities and residents through consultation. The success of the Nature Recovery Plan will be underpinned by collaboration with local environmental groups, policy makers and residents.

Delivering the plan

The delivery of the Nature Recovery Plan will be led by WODC's Biodiversity and Countryside Land Management Officer and other members of the Council's climate team. A large number of the actions rely on partnerships with other local groups and Council teams – this collaborative effort will help us extend action beyond Council land. The roadmap below sets out an indicative timeline of how some of these actions could be delivered to 2030.

Monitoring and reporting

Actions will be monitored using a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and progress reported annually. This process will help identify actions which require further support and others where more ambitious targets can be developed as delivery progresses and recognise actions that are looking unlikely to be achieved. The Nature Recovery Plan sets out actions required over the next seven years to support nature recovery across the district; however, the plan will be a flexible and living document. It will be reviewed and updated in response to changes in the policy and legislative climate, future opportunities and the results of annual monitoring.

Resourcing implications

The workstreams outlined below demonstrate the extensive actions that WODC can take to improve biodiversity on Council owned land and beyond. Securing resources to deliver these actions will be critical to achieve nature recovery across the district. Actions may require separate Council approvals to secure funding and resources to implement them. This will be understood in more detail at the scoping stage of each project.

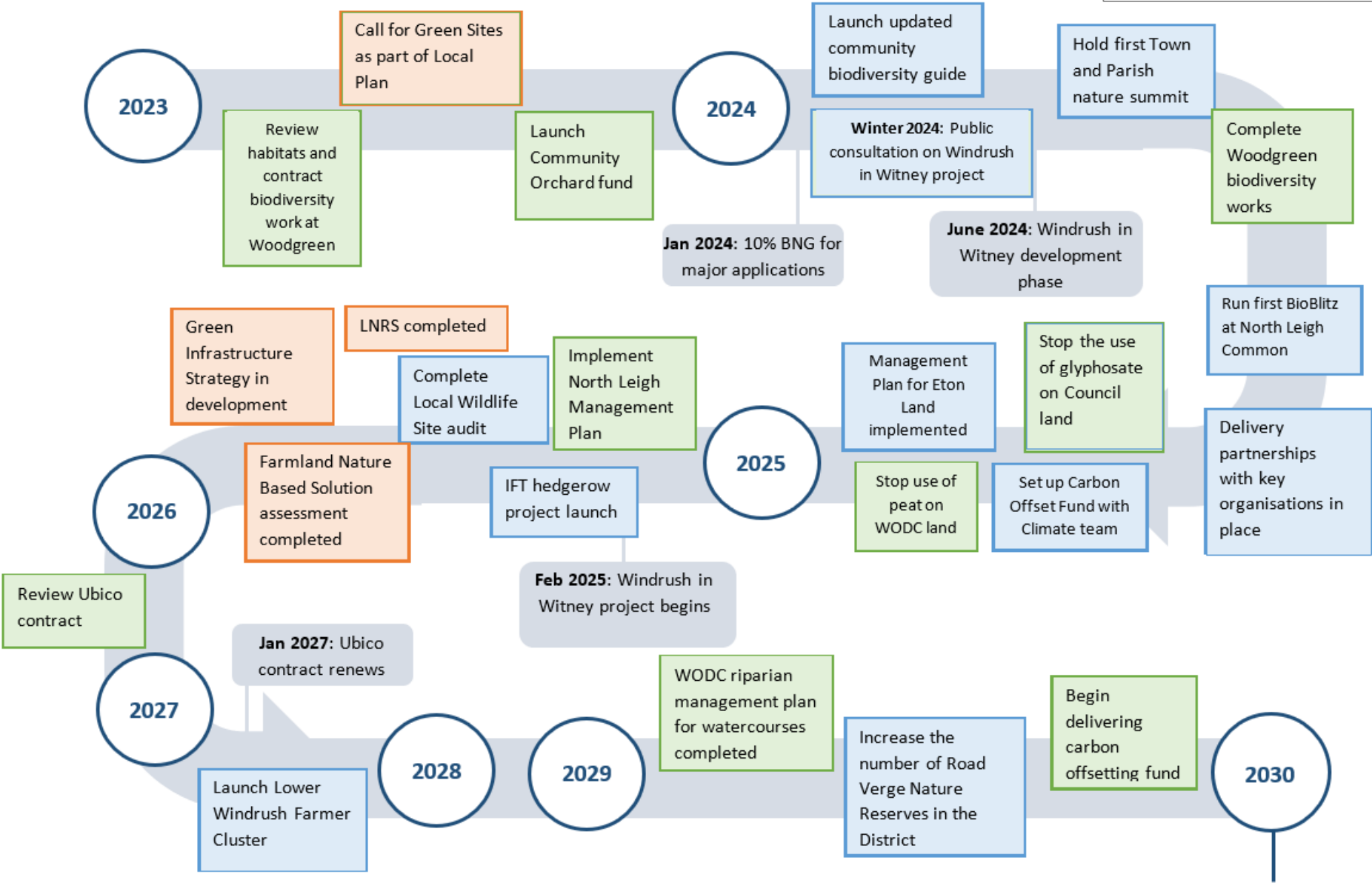
Work is being undertaken by Oxfordshire's LNP to investigate the financing of nature's recovery using private sources of finance such as private investors carbon credits, and BNG offset funding, and working with businesses to address material risks and dependencies on the landscape. This is best articulated in the Oxfordshire Nature Finance Strategy. Grants have historically been used to deliver ecology projects across the district – these range from a local level (e.g. Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment) to a national level (Esme Fairburn and the National Heritage Lottery

fund). There are also opportunities to use funding from other internal WODC teams if working on collaborative projects, for example within communities and leisure, and funding can also be acquired through Westhive to fundraise for specific projects in partnership with local communities.

The Council's climate change team, and other teams within the Council, will continue to seek out and welcome any proposals of partnership working to further nature related actions.

Figure 4: Nature Recovery Road Map

- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity on council owned sites
- Safeguard and enhance biodiversity through policies and development
- Facilitate communities and partnerships for landscape-scale recovery



Protect and enhance biodiversity on Council owned and managed land

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|---|---|
| 1) Protect and enhance biodiversity on sites owned and managed by the District Council | |
| WODC owns and manages approximately 106ha of green space, which includes parks, fields, greens and public open spaces within housing estates. Although work has been done to improve these sites for wildlife and people in recent years through working with Ubico and volunteer groups, there is more that can be done to restore biodiversity across the Council's landholdings. | |
| Key delivery partners | |
| Friends of North Leigh Common, Kilkenny Conservation Group, offset providers, recording groups, Ubico, Witney Woodland Volunteers, Wychwood Forest Trust | |
| Actions | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue working with Ubico on Council owned sites to enhance biodiversity across the estate, and extend the areas with targeted biodiversity management Develop and resource the long-term management of North Leigh Common Stop the use of glyphosate across all WODC land, and seek alternative weed management strategies such as hot foam or mechanical removal Stop the use of peat compost across all Council owned land Employ best practice procedures to eradicate invasive non-native species such as Himalayan Balsam and Japanese knotweed across Council owned sites Undertake botanical surveys of key Council sites in 2024 and 2030 - Deer Park Wood and South, Kilkenny Lane Country Park, North Leigh Common, Witney floodplain meadows. Implement biodiversity features at WODC offices at Woodgreen in Witney Provide annual funding to volunteer groups managing WODC sites e.g., Friends of North Leigh Common, Kilkenny Lane Conservation volunteers, Witney Woodland Volunteers Develop and resource a management plan for the Eton Land with the WFT Identify and create community orchards in public estates Review and potentially expand wildflower areas across Council owned estates in Witney and Carterton Proactively manage woodland areas within WODC's public estates | |
| Key Performance Indicators | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of Land Management Plan actions successfully completed by Ubico annually m3 of North Leigh Common in active management Litres of glyphosate used annually by Ubico on Council owned land Litres of peat compost used by Ubico on Council owned land m3 of invasive species on Council land Flora species diversity and abundance at each site | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> m3 of habitat enhanced at Council owned offices £ annually given to groups for maintenance costs Site in active management Number of orchards created m3 of Council owned wildflower meadow areas Number of proactively manage woodland areas within WODC's public estates |
| Co-benefits | |
| Air and water quality, access to public green spaces, carbon sequestration, improved natural flood management | |
| Risks and dependencies | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance between managing spaces for both wildlife and people Requires coordinated partnerships with multiple stakeholders, including Ubico and volunteer groups Resourcing of Ubico Selling or purchasing WODC land | |

Safeguard and enhance biodiversity through policies and development

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| 2) Drive nature recovery through the planning and development process | |
| <p>The mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity on developments is one of the key functions of WODC's planning department. The integration of high quality green infrastructure on these schemes is key to ensure they see gains for both people and wildlife.</p> <p>BNG is a new approach to development that aims to leave nature in a measurably better state than it was beforehand on a site – a 10% improvement will be mandatory for major schemes from January 2024, and the majority of other schemes from April 2024. The Council's planning team is currently collating an evidence base to propose a 20% net gain for major schemes. The Council's planning teams are working to ensure BNG is delivered and monitored effectively through the planning system, and developers are well informed through Design Guides and Design Codes to support this.</p> | |
| Key delivery partners | |
| BNG offset providers, Councillors, developers, Publica BNG lead, WODC planning department | |
| Actions | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that planning applications provide high integrity ecological surveys and reports • Implement Oxfordshire's BNG Guiding principles into the Local Plan, and explore the potential implementation of a higher BNG requirement than the mandatory 10% national benchmark • Feed relevant policies developed by the LNRS into the upcoming Local Plan • Provide regular BNG training opportunities for planners and ecologists • Work closely with offset providers to deliver appropriate gains in strategic locations within the district where BNG offsetting is required • Increase the capacity of our ecology team to effectively evaluate applications for BNG • Keep our biodiversity guidance up to date for developers through SPDs and guidance notes • Monitor on-site BNG to ensure the targeted habitats and conditions are being achieved • Encourage Town and Parish Councils to include policies around biodiversity, nature recovery strategies or Local Green Space within their Neighbourhood Plans | |
| Key Performance Indicators | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % BNG in the Local Plan • % of LNRS suggested policies in Local Plan • Ecology training sessions per year • Developer financial contributions towards offsetting through developments • Number of FTE WODC planning ecologists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of years since developer biodiversity guidance updated • % schemes monitored by WODC • Number of Neighbourhood Plans containing policies related to nature recovery |
| Co-benefits | |
| Air and water quality, access to public green spaces, carbon sequestration, local cooling, improved natural flood management | |
| Risks and dependencies | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of land for offsetting across the district • Requires co-ordinated partnerships with multiple groups • Resourcing of planning and ecology team | |

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| 3) Take a spatially strategic approach to nature recovery | |
| There are opportunities through the development of the new local strategic plans to strengthen policies around ecological protection and recovery, drawing from best practice guidance, and deliver gains for biodiversity. | |
| Key delivery partners | |
| Communities, farmers, landowners, OCC, residents, Town and Parish Councils, WODC planning department., | |
| Actions | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the district • Have a call for and include sites identified for nature recovery as part of the next Local Plan and GI Strategy • Undertake an assessment of farm Land Grades across the district for targeted nature based solutions and BNG unit creation, in partnership with Evenlode/Windrush catchment partnership • Consider the purchase of land for biodiversity offsetting purposes | |
| Key Performance Indicators | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GI Strategy published • Number of sites identified for nature recovery included within the Local Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmland nature based solutions assessment completed • Sites acquired by WODC for purpose of offsetting |
| Co-benefits | |
| Access to public green spaces, air and water quality, carbon sequestration, improved natural flood management, | |
| Risks and dependencies | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourcing production of plans • Uncertainty around BNG legislation, offsetting payments and conservation covenants • Willingness of landowners to engage in nature recovery | |

Facilitate communities and partnerships in the district for landscape-scale recovery

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| 4) Work with Councils, regional and local partners to identify and deliver strategic opportunities for the restoration of natural ecosystems, improving habitat connectivity, wildlife corridors, and nature-based solutions in land-use management | |
| <p>WODC has a wealth of local environmental groups and knowledge that we can potentially link in with to develop and deliver existing and new nature initiatives across the district. By collaborating with groups, and facilitating wider action, strategic opportunities for the restoration of natural ecosystems, improve habitat connectivity, and implement nature-based solutions to help mitigate against climate change can be maximised. The Oxfordshire LNP forms a key part in leading and informing action within this priority,</p> | |
| Key delivery partners | |
| <p>Community groups, farmers, landowners, OCC, Oxfordshire LNP, residents, schools, Town and Parish Councils, TOE, TVERC, WTC, Witney Woodland Volunteers, Wild Oxfordshire,</p> | |
| Actions | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and fund the Windrush in Witney Project • Set up delivery partnerships with key organisations such as Lower Windrush Valley Project, Wild Oxfordshire and Wychwood Forest Trust • Continue to feed into the Oxfordshire LNRS and action plans beyond this • Engage in the forming of the final Nature Recovery Network to ensure WODC land with high ecological value or potential is included • Work with OCC with their Woodland Creator Accelerator Fund project • Work with OCC on the Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Project • Support OLNP on the Enabling Nature-based Carbon Offsetting in Oxfordshire Project, including by helping to identify potential delivery sites • Work with Town and Parish Councils on assessing and enhancing their landholdings for biodiversity • Run WODC "Nature Summit" annual forum to showcase local project work • Facilitate the development of a Windrush Farmer Cluster • Identify land in WODC ownership that could become resident managed for community benefit • Link with International Tree Foundation and Wild Oxfordshire on a district-wide hedgerow planting scheme • Work with OCC to identify more Road Verge Nature Reserves for designation in the District, and support with appropriate management and monitoring of existing verges • Promote and showcase wildflower grasslands and good verge management for biodiversity for town and parish Councils and other land owners | |
| Key Performance Indicators | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windrush in Witney Project delivered • Number of SLAs with environmental groups • Continued WODC contribution at OxLNP meetings and projects • Trees planted in the district through WCAF project • Number of Town and Parish Councils with biodiversity projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of nature summits delivered • Formation of a Windrush Farmer Cluster • Number of resident-led land stewardship schemes • Metres of hedgerow planted through planting scheme • Number of RVNRs in active management |

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| Co-benefits |
| Improved natural flood management, carbon sequestration, air and water quality, access to public green spaces |
| Risks and dependencies |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires co-ordinated partnerships with multiple groups • Grant funding may not be successfully secured • Officer resource and capability • Resourcing the long term management of sites and features |

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| 5) Improve understanding of the district's habitats and enhancement opportunities |
| Data is required to gain a picture of how species populations are responding to changes in land use and climate, as well as where funds can best be directed for nature recovery. There are organisations that specialise in data collection and collation that can assist in better understanding ecological trends across the district. |
| Key delivery partners |
| BBOWT, offset providers, OxLNP, recording groups, TVERC, |
| Actions |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource an audit of the district's Local Wildlife Sites to understand the condition of these sites, and understand where BNG resources could be used • Receive public wildlife records from TVERC on a twice-yearly basis • Support the development and implementation of a green finance strategy across the county |
| Key Performance Indicators |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Local Wildlife Sites surveyed • Receipt and analysis of data from TVERC • Green finance strategy actioned |
| Co-benefits |
| Air and water quality, carbon sequestration, improved natural flood management, |
| Risks and dependencies |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer resource and capability • Requires coordinated partnerships with multiple groups • Willingness of landowners to engage in nature recovery and provide access to data |

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| 6) Work across Council departments to link the objectives of this Strategy with other Council Plan 2023-2027 priorities | |
| There are connections within the District Council's teams that can be strengthened – there are strong links with our internal teams such as Estates, Communities, Development Planning and Flooding, which can be improved on to develop collaborative projects that benefit each team's agendas. | |
| Key delivery partners | |
| EA, flood management team, healthy place shaping team, NHS, landowners, OCC, residents, tree team, Windrush Catchment Partnership, WODC climate change team | |
| Actions | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Council's communities team to deliver nature and health initiatives in strategic locations, such as the recent UKSPF Deer Park Access improvement project and acting on some of the next steps in the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery's 'equitable distribution of accessible green space' report. • Investigate the potential for green prescribing on a district-wide scale, in partnership with the Council's communities team and ONLP, linking in with the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire Integrated Care Strategy • Work with the flood management team to develop and resource a riparian management plan for watercourses across the Council's estate • Work with the climate change team to develop a carbon offsetting strategy • Work with the Planning Policy team in relation to the development of the emerging Local Plan 2041 and BNG | |
| Key Performance Indicators | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects completed with communities team • Number of surgeries with green prescribing practices • Local Plan published with strong ecology and BNG policies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metres of WODC owned riverside in active management for nature • Carbon offsetting strategy successfully completed |
| Co-benefits | |
| Air and water quality, carbon sequestration, Improved natural flood management, resident mental and physical health | |
| Risks and dependencies | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer resource and expertise • Requires coordinated partnerships with multiple groups | |

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| 7) Improve communication and community involvement | |
| WODC has a strong Communications team, with several platforms on which the Council can promote opportunities for conservation volunteer and best practice to others. Bespoke outreach activities could also take place to encourage residents to better engage with the natural world. | |
| Key delivery partners | |
| Friends of North Leigh Common, Kilkenny Conservation Group, offset providers, WODC planning team, recording groups, Ubico, Witney Woodland Volunteers, Wychwood Forest Trust | |
| Actions | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly promote opportunities for conservation volunteering on the Council's website, climate bulletin and greenlight nature and climate online hub • Disseminate best practice on creating and managing biodiverse spaces to Town and Parish Councils • Run an annual BioBlitz to promote wildlife recording at different Council-owned sites • Work with schools across the district to deliver biodiversity enhancements on their sites and encourage pupils to interact with the natural world • Encourage Town and Parish Councils to include policies around biodiversity, nature recovery strategies or Local Green Space within their Neighbourhood Plans | |
| Key Performance Indicators | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued social posts and bulletin • Number of Town and Parish Councils engaged with WODC on biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records collected from BioBlitzs • Number of schools engaged with WODC on biodiversity |
| Co-benefits | |
| Access to public green spaces, sense of place, enhanced health and wellbeing of local communities | |
| Risks and dependencies | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires co-ordinated partnerships with multiple groups • Time and resources needed from several parties | |

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| Activity | Short/medium/long target completion | Current status | Current funding | Indicative cost to 2030 | Future funding source | 2024 budget request | 2025 budget request |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------|--|--|---|--|---|
| 1) Protect and enhancing biodiversity on sites owned and managed by the District Council | | | | | | | |
| a) Protect and improve the existing biodiversity value of land under the Council’s stewardship | | | | | | | |
| Continue working with Ubico on our sites to enhance biodiversity across our estate, and extend the areas with targeted biodiversity management | Medium | Ongoing | Ubico are funded to manage sites in accordance with current LMPs. CDC contracted for tree works. | Biodiversity enhancements have been financed through cost neutral changes to Ubico's contract. Future changes are likely to increase Ubico's contract fees, which will be calculated as part of the LMP review. Contract due to be updated in March 26. | Council funding | Officer to review LMPs. | |
| Develop and resource the long term management of North Leigh Common | Medium | Not started | Ubico undertake works across c10% of the site's area. FNCL undertake works across c20% of the site's area. | Cost of producing a woodland management plan for North Leigh Common, c£10k. Likely that Friends of North Leigh Common can undertake some management actions. Group should be formalised. Other actions, e.g. tree management, will require additional funding. | Council funding | Officer to coordinate FNCL group. | Cost of tree management works. |
| Stop the use of glyphosate across all WODC land, and seek alternative weed management strategies such as hot foam or mechanical removal | Short | Not started | Ubico are funded to manage land using glyphosate. | Officer time to assess the extent of glyphosate use and alternative weed management strategies. Additional cost for alternative management regime as minimal cost savings from reducing the purchase and application of glyphosate. Costs can be calculated as part of the assessment. | Council funding | Officer to undertake assessment. | Additional cost of new management regime. |
| Stop the use of peat compost across all WODC land | Short | Not started | | Officer time to assess current use of peat compost, develop new policy and recommend alternatives. Additional cost of alternative products to peat. | Council funding | Officer to undertake assessment. | |
| Employ best practice procedures to eradicate invasive non-native species such as Himalayan Balsam and Japanese knotweed across Council owned sites | Medium | Ongoing | Ubico are funded to manage sites in accordance with LMPs. | Officer time to coordinate FNLC and Ubico. | Council funding | Officer to coordinate eradication actions. | |
| Undertake botanical surveys of key council sites in 2024 and 2030: Deer Park Wood and South, Kilkenny Lane Country Park, North Leigh Common, Witney floodplain meadows | Short | Not started | | c£12,000 to undertake two surveys at each site in 2024 and again before 2030. | Climate reserve | £6,000 | |
| Implement biodiversity features at WODC offices Woodgreen | Short | Started | Woodgreen enhancements funded through agile working budget. | £16,000 to undertake ecological enhancements at Woodgreen. | Council funding | | |
| Provide annual funding to volunteer groups managing WODC sites e.g. Friends of North Leigh Common, Kilkenny Lane Conservation volunteers, Witney Woodland Volunteers | Medium | Not started | | c£5,250 per year to support volunteering work. | Climate reserve/Westhive | £250-£750 for each group. | £250-£750 for each group. |
| Develop and resource a management plan for the Eton Land with the WFT | Short | Not started | | Officer time to develop a management plan for Eton land, likely to include meadow cut and collection, and tree pollarding. Cost of implementing the plan will be calculated as part of the plan. | Heritage Lottery Fund to 2029. SLA post 2029. | | |
| Identify and create community orchards in public estates | Medium | Not started | £49,932 funding secured from Defra. | £49,932 for capital works for delivery October 23. Officer time for delivery. | | Officer to deliver phase 2 scheme. | |
| Review and possibly expand the wildflower areas across WODC owned estates in Witney and Carterton | Long | Not started | Ubico currently plant wildflower areas. £2,000 budgeted for previous wildflower enhancement areas. | Costs can be confirmed once potential additional areas and Ubico capacity have been assessed. | Council funding | | |
| Proactively manage woodland areas within WODC’s public estates | Short | Not started | | Costs can be confirmed once woodland management plan has been commissioned | Council funding | | |
| 2) Safeguard and enhance biodiversity through policies and development | | | | | | | |
| a) Drive nature recovery through the planning and development process | | | | | | | |
| Implement Oxfordshire’s BNG Guiding principles into the Local Plan, and explore the potential implementation of a higher BNG requirement than the mandatory 10% national benchmark | Short | Not started | | Biodiversity/planning officer time to develop BNG principles in the Local Plan. | Council funding | | |
| Feed policies from the Local Nature Recovery Strategy into the upcoming Local Plan | Short | Not started | | Biodiversity/planning officer time. | Council funding | | |
| Provide regular BNG training opportunities for planners and ecologists | Short | Not started | | Costs can be confirmed once training need and delivery has been identified. | Council funding | | |
| Work closely with offset providers to deliver appropriate gains within our District where BNG offsetting is required | Short | Not started | | Biodiversity/planning officer time. | Council funding | | |
| Increase the capacity of our ecology team to effectively evaluate applications for BNG | Short | Not started | 0.5 Assistant biodiversity officer for WODC in post, down from 1.5 in 2022. Some funding from DEFRA. | One mid-level biodiversity officer c£35k + NI, pension etc. | Council funding/DEFRA? | | |
| Keep our biodiversity guidance up to date for developers through SPDs and guidance notes | Short | Ongoing | | Biodiversity/planning officer time. | Council funding | | |

[illegible]

| Activity | Short/medium/long target completion | Current status | Current funding | Indicative cost to 2030 | Future funding source | 2024 budget request | 2025 budget request |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------|--|---|---|--|--|
| Work with the Council's communities team to deliver nature and health initiatives in strategic locations, such as the recent UKSPF Deer Park Access improvement project and acting on some of the next steps in the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery's 'equitable distribution of accessible green space' report. | Medium | Ongoing | | Officer time to develop and deliver nature and health projects. | Communities funding? | Officer to work with communities team. | Officer to work with communities team. |
| Investigate the potential for green prescribing on a district-wide scale, in partnership with the Council's communities team and ONLP, linking in with the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire Integrated Care Strategy | Medium | Not started | | Officer time to explore opportunities to support green prescribing, possibly with targeted surgeries. | Communities/OCC funding? | Officer to coordinate with OCC. | Officer to coordinate with OCC. |
| Work with the flood management team to develop and resource a riparian management plan for watercourses across the council's estate | Long | Not started | Ubico undertake drain clearance works, Witney Woodland Volunteers look after Colwell Brook on DPS. | Officer time to assess landholdings, work up plans and agreements. | Council funding | | |
| Work with climate change team to develop a carbon offsetting strategy | Long | Not started | | Officer time to work with climate officers on offsetting strategy. | Council funding | | |
| Work with the planning policy team in relation to the development of the emerging Local Plan 2041 and BNG | Short | Not started | | Officer time to work with Planning policy team | Council funding | | |
| d) Improve communication and community involvement | | | | | | | |
| Regularly promote opportunities for conservation volunteering on the Council's website, climate bulletin and greenlight nature and climate online hub | Short | Ongoing | Dedicated climate and waste officer. BLMO feeds into newsletter and greenlight. | Officer time to create content. | Council funding | | |
| Disseminate best practice on creating and managing biodiverse spaces to Town and Parish councils | Short | Not started | Climate budget. | Officer time to identify and communicate best practice to communities. | Council funding | | |
| Run an annual BioBlitz to promote wildlife recording at different Council-owned sites | Short | Not started | | Officer time to organised annual event, plus c£750/yr to run with experts. | Climate reserve. TVERC recorders grant (c500/yr)? | £750 and officer to organise event. | £750 and officer to organise event. |
| Work with schools across the district to deliver biodiversity enhancements on their sites and encourage pupils to interact with the natural world | Medium | Ongoing | | Officer time to work up education materials and engage with schools. | Council funding | Officer to coordinate engagement. | Officer to coordinate engagement. |

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West Oxfordshire District Council Nature Recovery Plan Tracker

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| | Ongoing |
| | Not Scheduled to Start Yet |
| | Complete |
| | At Risk |

| Activity | Short/medium/ long target completion | Start Date | Due Date | KPI | Current status | Date of Latest Update | Latest KPI Return | Commentary | Theme |
|---|--|---------------|-------------|--|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Protect and enhance biodiversity on sites owned and managed by the Council | | | | | | | | | |
| a) Protect and improve the existing biodiversity value of land under the council's stewardship | | | | | | | | | |
| Continue working with Ubico on our sites to enhance biodiversity across our estate, and extend the areas with targeted biodiversity management | Short | Mar-23 | 2030 | % of Land Management Plan actions successfully completed by Ubico annually | Ongoing | | | | Ubico |
| Develop and resource the long term management of North Leigh Common | Medium | | | M³ of North Leigh Common in active management | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Habitat delivery |
| Stop the use of glyphosate across all WODC land, and seek alternative weed management strategies such as hot foam or mechanical removal | Short | | | Litres of glyphosate used annually by Ubico on WODC land | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Ubico |
| Stop the use of peat compost across all WODC land | Short | | | Litres of peat compost used by Ubico on WODC land | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Ubico |
| Employ best practice procedures to eradicate invasive non-native species such as Himalayan Balsam and Japanese knotweed across Council owned sites | Medium | Mar-22 | 2030 | M³ of invasive species on Council land | Ongoing | | | | Ubico |
| Undertake botanical surveys of key Council sites in 2024 and 2030 - Deer Park Wood and South, Kilkenny Lane Country Park, North Leigh Common, Witney floodplain meadows | Short | | | Flora species diversity and abundance at each site | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Data collection |
| Implement biodiversity features at WODC offices Woodgreen | Short | Aug-22 | 24-Mar | M³ of habitat enhanced | Ongoing | | | | Habitat delivery |
| Provide annual funding to volunteer groups managing WODC sites e.g. Friends of North Leigh Common, Kilkenny Lane Conservation volunteers, Witney Woodland Volunteers | Medium | | | £ annually given to groups for maintenance costs | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Internal team working |
| Develop and resource a management plan for the Eton Land with the WFT | Short | | | Site in active management Y/N | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Habitat delivery |
| Identify and create community orchards in public estates | Medium | | | Number of orchards created | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Habitat delivery |
| Review and possibly expand the wildflower areas across WODC owned estates in Witney and Carterton | Long | | | M³ of WODC wildflower meadow areas | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Habitat delivery |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--|----------------------------|--|--|--|------------------|
| Proactively manage woodland areas within WODC’s public estates | Short | | | Number of proactively manage woodland areas within WODC’s public estates | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Habitat delivery |
| 2. Safeguard biodiversity through policies and new development | | | | | | | | | |
| a) Drive nature recovery through the planning and development process | | | | | | | | | |
| Implement Oxfordshire’s BNG Guiding principles into the Local Plan, and explore the potential implementation of a higher BNG requirement than the mandatory 10% national benchmark | Medium | | | % planning applications using BNG | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Planning and DM |
| Feed policies from the Local Nature Recovery Strategy into the upcoming Local Plan | Medium | | | % of suggested policies in Local Plan | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Planning and DM |
| Provide regular BNG training opportunities for planners and ecologists | Medium | | | Training sessions per year | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Planning and DM |
| Work closely with offset providers to deliver appropriate gains within our District where BNG offsetting is required | Medium | | | % schemes using offsets (NB this is a last resort in the mitigation hierarchy) | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Planning and DM |
| Increase the capacity of our ecology team to effectively evaluate applications for BNG | Medium | | | Number of planning ecologists | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Planning and DM |
| Keep our biodiversity guidance up to date for developers through SPDs and guidance notes | Medium | Feb-23 | 2030 | Number of years since guidance updated | Ongoing | | | | Planning and DM |
| Monitor BNG sites to ensure the targeted habitats and conditions are being achieved | Short | Jan-23 | 2030 | % schemes monitored by WODC | Ongoing | | | | Planning and DM |
| Encourage Town and Parish Councils to include policies around biodiversity, nature recovery strategies or Local Green Space within their Neighbourhood Plans | Short | | | Number of Neighbourhood Plans containing polices related to nature recovery | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Planning and DM |
| b) Take a strategic approach to development-funded nature recovery for optimum outcomes | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the district | Long | | | GI plan published | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | WODC Strategy |
| Have a call for and include sites identified for nature recovery as part of the next Local Plan and GI Strategy | Short | Aug-23 | Dec-25 | Number of Green Sites | Ongoing | | | | WODC Strategy |
| Undertake an assessment of farm Land Grades across the district for targeted nature based solutions and BNG unit creation, in partnership with Evenlode/Windrush catchment partnership | Long | | | Assessment completed | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Data collection |
| Consider the purchase of land for biodiversity offsetting purposes | Long | | | Sites acquired by WODC for purpose of offsetting | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | WODC Strategy |

| 3. Facilitate communities and partnerships in our district for landscape-scale recovery a) Work with councils, regional and local partners to identify and deliver strategic opportunities for the restoration of natural ecosystems, improving habitat connectivity, wildlife corridors, and nature-based solutions in land-use management | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|---|----------------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Develop and fund the Windrush in Witney Project | Long | Mar-22 | Mar-29 | Project delivered Y/N | Ongoing | | | | External team working |
| Set up delivery partnerships with key organisations such as Lower Windrush Valley Project, Wild Oxfordshire and Wychwood Forest Trust | Short | Apr-24 | 2030 | Number of SLAs with groups | Ongoing | | | | Internal team working |
| Continue to feed into the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and action plans beyond this | Short | 22-Jul | 2030 | Continued WODC attendance at meetings | Ongoing | | | | Feeding into other strategies |
| Engage in the forming of the final Nature Recovery Network to ensure WODC land with high ecological value or potential is included | Short | 22-Jul | Jul-25 | Continued WODC attendance at meetings | Ongoing | | | | Feeding into other strategies |
| Work with OCC with their Woodland Creator Accelerator Fund project | Medium | May-23 | May-26 | Trees planted in WODC | Ongoing | | | | Feeding into other strategies |
| Work with OCC with their Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Project | Medium | Jun-23 | TBC | Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Project successfully completed | Ongoing | | | | Feeding into other strategies |
| Support OLNP on the Enabling Nature-based Carbon Offsetting in Oxfordshire Project, including by helping to identify potential delivery sites | Medium | Jun-23 | TBC | Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Project successfully completed | Ongoing | | | | Feeding into other strategies |
| Work with Town and Parish Councils on assessing and enhancing their land holdings for biodiversity | Medium | | | Number of T/PCs with biodiversity projects | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | External team working |
| Run WODC Nature Summit annual forum to showcase local project work | Short | | | Number of annual forums delivered | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Engagement |
| Facilitate the development of a Windrush Farmer cluster | Long | | | Cluster Y/N | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | External team working |
| Identify land in WODC ownership that could become resident managed for community benefit | Medium | | | Number of resident-led schemes | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | WODC Strategy |
| Link with International Tree Foundation and Wild Oxfordshire on a District-wide hedgerow planting scheme | Long | | | M of hedgerow planted | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | External team working |
| Work with OCC to identify more Road Verge Nature Reserve for designation in the District, and support with monitoring existing verges | Long | | | Number of RVNRs in active management/surveyed | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | External team working |
| Promote and showcase wildflower grasslands and good verge management for biodiversity for town and parish Councils and other land owners | Short | | | Number of wildflower grassland case studies reported | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Engagement |

| b) Improve understanding of the district habitats and enhancement opportunities | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|--------|------|---|----------------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Resource an audit of WODC's Local Wildlife Sites to understand the condition of these sites, and understand where BNG resources could be used | Long | | | No. of Local Wildlife Sites benefiting from BNG funds | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Data collection |
| Receive public wildlife records from TVERC on a twice-yearly basis | Long | Feb-21 | 2023 | Receipt and analysis of data from TVERC | Ongoing | | | | Data collection |
| Support the development and implementation of a green finance strategy across the county | Long | | | | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | WODC Strategy |
| c) Work across council departments to link the objectives of this Strategy with other Council Plan (2023-2027) priorities | | | | | | | | | |
| Work with the Council's communities team to deliver nature and health initiatives in strategic locations, such as the recent UKSPF Deer Park Access improvement project and acting on some of the next steps in the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery's 'equitable distribution of accessible green space' report. | Medium | Feb-22 | 2023 | Number of projects with Communities team | Ongoing | | | | Internal team working |
| Investigate the potential for green prescribing on a district-wide scale, in partnership with the Council's communities team and ONLP, linking in with the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire Integrated Care Strategy | Medium | | | Number of surgeries with green prescribing practices | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Internal team working |
| Work with the flood management team to develop and resource a riparian management plan for watercourses across the council's estate | Long | | | m of WODC riverside in active management | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Internal team working |
| Work with climate change team to develop a carbon offsetting strategy | Long | | | | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Feeding into other strategies |
| Work with the Planning Policy team in relation to the development of the emerging Local Plan 2041 and BNG | Short | | | Delivery of Local Plan | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | WODC Strategy |
| d) Improve communication and community involvement | | | | | | | | | |
| Regularly promote opportunities for conservation volunteering on the Council's website, climate bulletin and greenlight nature and climate online hub | Short | Feb-21 | 2023 | Social posts | Ongoing | | | | Engagement |
| Disseminate best practice on creating and managing biodiverse spaces to Town and Parish councils | Short | | | Town and parish councils engaged with WODC on biodiversity. | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Engagement |
| Run an annual BioBlitz to promote wildlife recording at different Council-owned sites | Short | | | Records collected from BioBlitzs | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Engagement |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|--|--|--|----------------------------|--|--|--|------------|
| Work with schools across the district to deliver biodiversity enhancements on their sites and encourage pupils to interact with the natural world | Medium | | | Schools engaged with WODC on biodiversity. | Not Scheduled to Start Yet | | | | Engagement |
|---|--------|--|--|--|----------------------------|--|--|--|------------|

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Internal officers and Cllrs

General

- Fantastic work on this and I am really supportive, so any help our team can give, please ask. Of course I am most interested in the plan for the Council owned land. If there was any time to use information gathered from improving the habitat enhancement at the Council offices to somehow roll this out to the commercially let sites, such as Des Roches this would be another win. Also how will the community orchards work? Is this something that the Council would provide and maintain?
- It's really good to get all of these things into one document – well done! My main concern would be about raising expectations. How feasible is the BAP within existing resources? Or are you planning to use this document to increase resources and funding?!
- I note the intention to look into the riparian use of the council owned watercourses. I do not have any comments on the document at this time.
- From our perspective we are very happy to work with you as described in the document – look forward to those conversations.
 - I wonder if this document is the right place to have ambitions about food and growing spaces more broadly with reference to the food strategy (Oxfordshire recently won Sustainable Places Silver award <https://gfo.org.uk/blog/oxfordshire-wins-sustainable-food-places-silver-aw/>) – not knowing about biodiversity I'm not sure if it would be appropriate.
 - The UKSPF Carterton Town Strategy work might be an interesting connection as I note your proposed area for non-statutory conservation target areas includes Carterton – be good to ensure that this is live in the thinking of the folks working on that.
 - I think if you're mentioning health I think it might be of value to reference the BOB ICB Strategy in conjunction with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Oxfordshire – also perhaps weaving in mention of Healthy Place Shaping and using phrases like the Building Blocks to Health which is from the H&WB strategy which also acts as the action plan for the ICB strategy. ICB strategy is in place and H&WB strategy has just completed consultation and will be adopted in December. Hope that makes sense. <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/health-wellbeing>
- Look forward to discussing in more detail. It is a really good report, here are some initial thoughts:
 - Report structure: Would some of the sections in the first part of the report, e.g., information on local organisations and policies, be better as appendices or later sections in the report? It takes a while to get to the core issues and recommendations.
 - Will be good to understand as a next step what TVERC and other national/international organisations are using in terms of existing KPIs, and look at using those. There may also be other broader KPIs that we could consider using going forward, e.g. estimating Glyphosate use across the wider community, vegetation cover (and insect preponderance) across the District, which may need more development and thinking about.
 - Resourcing - could we give some figures/indications of grant money already obtained and won/applied for (e.g. Orchards), Also need to mention Westhive/involvement of communities teams/youth needs/link with leisure, as potential sources of funding to help deliver strategy.
 - Could there be some more context in terms of need to increase vegetation/habitat, but acknowledging that there is also a desire for tidiness and maintenance of vegetation for cycle paths and road visibility in some areas? Ideas on how that should be addressed going forward.
 - Tree management on council-owned and managed land, regular pollarding, wood for beetles, etc.
 - Peat on Council land - can we ban earlier if practical? What are the alternatives?
 - Verges: need to mention link up action with highways management, parishes and land owners across the District even if involvement is limited going forward.
 - Work with developers, e.g. Solar and housing, and other land owners. What role could/should WODC play in enhancing biodiversity beyond the BNG mechanism?
 - BAP 6: mention tool kit/case studies from Wild Oxfordshire contracted project
 - BAP 7: mention how initiatives such as Hedgehog highways and Swift/bird conservation groups, can be really effective in terms of engagement with residents (and link to supporting insect diversity and preponderance)
- One issue is around planning, where you are mainly talking about BNG but there is more to it than that – there is protecting designated and non-designated sites, species protection, ensuring on site landscape or GI provision is good for wildlife etc etc. I would not want Members to think that BNG

was the be all and end all and that we didn't have to worry about anything else, this is far from the truth! It is a really good piece of work and is certainly ambitious – the costs to deliver could be quite high, but we should be aiming high, so well done.

- Understandably, since Rachel wrote the plan, this very much comes across as a BAP focused on her main areas of work but if it is a plan for the whole Council I think we should add in more on the planning side - the work that Janice does + the Biodiversity Officers in Planning + some of the work that Nick does in terms of community etc. Would give a more complete picture.
- We should probably add some wording in the introduction to the consultation to the effect that we intend to review and update the strategy based on feedback from the consultation, our Council priorities, and what is deliverable in terms of Council and partner resources.

Introduction

- Perhaps give Eynsham as an example or another lowland settlement
- Is the above vision that of the OLN and this one is WODC's vision? Perhaps make a little clearer.

Biodiversity across West Oxfordshire

- The term nature recovery is often used - is it worth explaining the relationship with biodiversity here?
- The impact of disease is also significant e.g. Dutch Elm Disease in the past and Ash Dieback now
- Include the National Landscape and its size
- + Nature Improvement Areas
- What about the Windrush in Witney Project Area? Worth mentioning?

Local groups and partnerships

- There are scores of other local groups too. Such as, Long Mead, Eynsham, Nature Recovery Groups (e.g. at Charlbury and Eynsham), Old Woodstock Line Nature Reserve and Woodstock Community Woodland.
- This may be covered later but does this document need to signpost towards the work on nature recovery (mapping etc.) that has been done in support of the now defunct Oxfordshire Plan 2050?
- LWVP was set up with WODC, OCC and possibly Smiths

Document Context

- Perhaps retitle this to 'Key Influences' or something similar?
- Add Natural England GI Framework
- Not essential but you could perhaps cite paragraph 174 (d) of the NPPF here?
- Series of made Neighbourhood Plans (many of which identify areas of Local Green Space and local policies for biodiversity), West Oxfordshire Design Guide, Conservation Area Appraisals.
- Something about the Oxon nature recovery mapping work here perhaps? And also perhaps Salt Cross AAP with the 25% BNG policy having been accepted by the Planning Inspector.
- Does the plan saying anything more specifically about biodiversity or nature recovery that could be quoted here?
- Add CNL Position Statements
- Worth also citing the Cotswolds National Landscape Climate Change Strategy 2022 here. Also the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan and Natural Capital Atlas.
- You have mentioned the Environment Act but there are a huge range of legislation and policies such as the Habitats Regs, WCA, NPPF etc - all of which are key

Our work to date and role as a council

- Should we add something here about developing the Salt Cross AAP with our 25% BNG policy having been accepted by the Planning Inspector?
- Should we also mention that the Council has employed a p/t Biodiversity Officer (within the Planning Service) for some years and recently appointed a f/t Assistant Biodiversity Officer (within the planning service). + also the work that people like Nick and Janice do around biodiversity.

- Where do we flag the everyday planning work - run of the mill biodiversity input into planning apps etc?

Aims and objectives

- Is this just about safeguarding? Is it not about positive gains/enhancement?
- The detail of this is included later on (page 14). I would suggest either cross-referring to that detail here or re-ordering the document so that everything on each of the 3 key areas appears in the same place in order.
- Design Guide and Design Code(s) could also be used to provide guidance
- Small Sites and other BNG schemes from April
- The text below could usefully explain what is meant by landscape-scale recovery.

Biodiversity Action plan

- As the whole document is the BAP - should this section be retitled to something like 'Identified or Key Actions'?
- Link to the road map below? Otherwise it has no context.
- Any scope for agri-environment monies?
- I'm not sure that should be limited to the climate change team, everyone involved in biodiversity within the Council should be doing that.

Biodiversity Road Map

- This is good - nice and visual but if it links to actions in the tables below, you need to make it clearer.
- Could add in the April BNG date for all apps other than householders (roughly)

Protect and enhance biodiversity on council owned and managed land

- Would suggest that the list of key delivery partners appears after the key indicators - perhaps with a brief bullet point on their expected role?
- Perhaps give greater emphasis to Ubico's role as this is the one partner that we do have control over!
- Proactively manage woodland areas within WODC's public estates - Good to see this in here
- Number of Proactively manage woodland areas within WODC's public estates - Not sure how easy that would be to measure - might need to be a bit more specific

Safeguard biodiversity through policies and development

- It may well be that not all the policies are relevant to us e.g. for high density development in the city
- Should we be saying something here about looking at taking a holistic landscape-scale approach here? Rather than pockets of improvements here and there.
- As the Government are proposing to do away with SPDs, to future proof this document it might be worth just referring to guidance.
- Are there any other forms of accreditation available? Should we be referencing just one? The AAP Inspector felt we shouldn't back one particular horse and made any references much more general.
- Is another possible indicator the amount (£) of financial contributions received towards offsetting?
- The Local Plan will allocate strategic sites for development. How about the Council committing to adopt the ecological areas to ensure long term management?
- NB The role of Neighbourhood Plans and Local Green Spaces.
- Gi Strategy Good - but who is doing this?
- We have just done a call for sites including nature recovery/biodiversity.
- Define what is meant by a Green Site. This is very general and could include any number of things.
- Is offsetting site acquisition something that is planned?
- I think we are probably focusing too much on BNG, as I said before there is much more to biodiversity and planning. How about -
- "Driving nature recovery through the planning and development process."

- Then in the next paragraph talk more generally about biodiversity, GI and planning before you use the para that you have written here.
- % planning applications with BNG - That is a measure of the development industry and not of our performance.
- % of suggested policies in Local Plan - Not that meaningful as a stat as biodiversity could be covered in lots of short policies or one long policy!
- Financial contributions towards offsetting through developments - What do you mean by that? And how is it different to BNG?
- Do you mean offsetting or do you mean off-site BNG delivery?

Facilitate communities and partnerships in the district for landscape-scale recovery

- KPI What about all the m of hedgerow lost? A net gain figure?)
- KPI Number of LWS surveyed
- Metres of WODC owned riverside in active management - Active management for nature (not active management as a drainage channel)
- Add KPI Neighbourhood Plans containing nature recovery policies and/or Local Green Space
- Number of Local Wildlife Sites surveyed - Who by?
- Box 6 - No mention of planning

General comments

- This is a very good document and we greatly welcome the ambition of what the District is doing.
- More 'Opportunity mapping' to be included in the plan (by overlaying conservation target areas with priority habitats and land use maps). This can direct conservation efforts, to be followed up by rigorous monitoring and evaluation to determine which conservation efforts work, and which do not. This will work well into your adaptive, strategic approach to nature recovery.
- Be ambitious. Set tough (but realistic) targets for the action plan that you can work towards. More definition for your Key Performance Indicators, adding figures to your targets (e.g., instead of % of planning applications with BNG: rather 'we aim to have 95% of planning applications with BNG'? or stating how many planning ecologists do you expect to need?), and how often you plan to report on these Key Performance Indicators. It can be good to have a goal to work towards.
- Perhaps some more on WODC's plans to involve the landowner community, and fast-track the development of the Windrush Farmer Cluster, perhaps through the Rural Enterprise Grant. If 79% of West Oxfordshire is under agricultural management, this is where most land is available for nature recovery—achieved through the promotion of government schemes, events, etc.
- Room for greater focus on WODC's rivers and waterbodies (their current condition, the reasons for this, and steps to address the problem) – backed up by data. E.g., from the river Windrush [cda311_c6239944bde4dfc86348d7a0b72f044.pdf](#) (windrushwasp.org)
- Data-based evidence of the current habitat conditions. By stating the data as it stands now (e.g., phosphate levels in a river or hectares of woodland management for biodiversity) it will give a baseline which can be used for reference in the future.
- The need to work closely with neighbouring LPAs to ensure a consistent approach, shared learnings, and streamline common responsibilities (especially when it comes to BNG).
- Increase resource allocation where possible for the ecology team to ensure that WODC gets the most out of BNG.
- A name and number for the Biodiversity and Countryside Officer would be useful.
- For BNG monitoring- need to state this as monitoring on ONSITE and separate mention of provision to manage monitoring reports submitted by offset providers- again work across LPA to design a consistent recording, reporting, and management process.
- This document along with the commitment and proactive approach it represents is very welcome and great to see. The comments below should be taken within this overall positive context.
- I am not so sure about the name. Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) are widely seen as dating from the 1990's. The UK Bap is dated 1994 & the Gloucestershire BAP 2000. They represented a great deal of excellent and valuable work though their impact is widely perceived as having been disappointing. Calling this document, a BAP runs the risk of making it appear dated and associated with a process that was to a certain extent not as successful as we hoped it would be.
- I wonder if calling it a Nature Recovery Plan would be more positive and forward looking. It would also further signal the alignment with the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy which the document recognises. Calling it a Nature Recovery Plan distinguishes it from the strategy but signals that it is very much part of a wider reinvigorated conservation effort. All very exciting.
- I support the adoption of the LNP ambition on page 2 and I am pleased to see the name Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) used throughout. The integration with the LNP, LNRS, CNL & the CNL Management Plan and Nature Recovery Plan is welcome and supported.
- Well done, this is a great piece of work!
- What's in a name? Well, I think calling it the Nature Recovery Plan for West Oxfordshire is a better framing than the BAP, which feels out of date and out of sync with new policy. But it probably doesn't really matter.
- This is a very good document and we greatly welcome the ambition of what the District is doing. It has also been a very interesting document to review
- I'd like to applaud such a helpful document, well organised and written in such clear, accessible style. I feel sure this will be really valuable for local councils and community groups to frequently refer to and use.

Introduction

- Need to reference the LNRS here.

- Worth referencing climate adaptation? Worth mentioning carbon sequestration?
- Apologies if the following is covered in the document, and we have missed it. We do not know if this is already happening as a result of the climate and ecological emergency commitments, but we think it really important that both matters are considered in all council decisions and policies. So with respect to biodiversity, can the document acknowledge that biodiversity should not be considered only in biodiversity or planning policies, but that instead all decisions and policies of the council on all topics should consider impacts on biodiversity and how those areas can contribute to achieving the 30x30 (see comment box on that below) and 2050 targets.

Biodiversity across West Oxfordshire

- A map of the broad habitat types and a table of their coverage (%/hectare) would be useful
- Photos of these habitats in WODC? Some in good condition (maybe some in bad condition?) to show comparison and what can be achieved with good conservation work.
- A map visualising priority habitats/high-quality habitats would focus conservation efforts
- A map of the rivers and water body catchments for the district to encourage river/riparian restoration works. And a map of which water bodies are in what condition
- An opportunity map for ecosystem services and habitats to identify where best to locate different habitat types for different biodiversity services would help concentrate conservation efforts.
- Grayling, probably the best indicator of water quality, have almost completely disappeared from the River Windrush and populations of coarse fish species (Roach, Barbel) have notably declined.
- Unimproved species rich grasslands feature strongly in the description and there are good actions to deliver these on council owned land. It would be good if the Council could be more proactive in helping promote wildflower grasslands more widely. A wildflower grasslands hearts, minds and action campaign taking the grasslands created in public open space as a starting point. In general terms there is a gap between the public sectors promotion of grasslands and woodlands and Plantlife have highlighted this. <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/our-work/the-grassland-gap/>. Including a grasslands campaign based on much of what you plan to do anyway offers the opportunity to put the Council ahead of much of the rest of the sector in this respect.
- This whole section Biodiversity in West Oxfordshire is excellent – a really good Introduction.

Key policy influences (Document Context)

- Urban environments have a disproportionately important role in providing benefits for physical health and mental well-being arising from an improved and biodiverse environment. What are the challenges of working within built environments? What are the District's ambitions for the existing green spaces in urban areas, new green areas being developed, and getting people outside and into these green areas
- Room for expansion in terms of the state of water bodies in WODC E.g. adhering to the EU Water Framework Directive (although UK is no longer an EU member state) to have all water bodies in 'good ecological condition' by 2027
- Can you mention the Oxfordshire Nature Finance Strategy here? <https://www.olnp.org.uk/financing-nature-based-solutions-in-oxfordshire>
- Whilst OCC are key to this as responsible authority, we consider the LNRS is being produced by a partnership of organisations, co-ordinated by OCC as responsible authority. Hence the suggested wording change.
- Document mentions CTA but not NRN. It would be good to explain how this BAP does/doesn't recognise/use Oxfordshire's NRN.
- CAG Oxfordshire is partnering with Natural England on a project researching how best to understand and use NRNs in parish-level planning and action, across Oxon/Bucks. Some resources on this are listed below. Engaging with this could significantly help with local engagement with the BAP. So is there a good way to jointly promote the two in combination? I'd be very happy to include appropriate promotion of the BAP CAG's NRN-related activities between now-March.
- Many parishes now designate blue-green corridors. It would be good to describe (here, or elsewhere in the document) how these can be valuable for planning and strategy (forming a more local complement to CTAs and the County's NRN).
- Parishes (and similar) have a key role to play in planning and action for nature's recovery in their areas. This role will be far more effective if they are properly equipped (with mapping and decision-support tools) and also personal support. It will be important to clearly mention and describe this,

and the help that's available. Clearly this is what CAG's Oxfordshire Nature service provides – but this is not about 'blowing our own trumpet'! Organisations like Wychwood Forest Trust, Wild Oxfordshire and BBOWT and OALC have much to contribute in this.

- It's probably also worth mentioning Charlbury Land and Nature Group, and mid Windrush Valley Land and Nature group alongside the others listed at the end of the page. They will be valuable exemplars whose approach and work can be replicated by other groups.
- Sophus zu Ermgassen and colleagues at Oxford University have been extensively researching BNG, and published an easy-to-use checklist to help Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and developers ensure that Biodiversity Net Gain plans are correctly completed, feasible and fit the local ecological and local context of the development. Since it would be valuable for parish councillors and others to know about (and use) this, it would be helpful for this document to appropriately reference this; perhaps even summarise key 'check list' questions (perhaps later on document p17)

Our work to date and role as a council

- This is not a comment on the document as such, but just to say that we greatly welcome all this work that is happening that is described in the above section.

Aims and objectives

- Clearly this will come out through the Local Plan process, but as we know 10% won't lead to net gain (DEFRA themselves said that's the lowest level they believe might reasonably be considered to result in no net loss), and as we have a aim to enhance rather than just safeguard, surely, surely, we can go for 20% as a minimum? Possibly the single biggest (and cheapest/easiest) action WODC can take to enhance biodiversity across the district.
- This is not a comment on the document as such, but just to say we greatly welcome the work that is taking place and future work to improve the Council's land for wildlife, and people's enjoyment of wildlife.
- This is not a comment on the document as such, but just to say we greatly welcome the work that is taking place, as described in sections 2 and 3.
- The Lawton principles actually include *four* elements: more, bigger, better, joined up. It would be better to express in this way (rather than just 'bigger, better, more joined up') so that everyone recognises that *more* nature areas is itself also an important element. It would also be very helpful to include the illustrative diagram at this point – a picture is worth a thousand words here!

Biodiversity Action Plan

- Work with businesses to address material risks and dependencies on the landscape. This is best articulated in the Oxfordshire Nature Finance Strategy.
- Can we make this less generic and vague, instead incorporating some SMART goals here?
- I'd recommend setting up some kind of small working group (involving wodc and key external people) to come up with a strategy and specific action points on how best to leverage funding for wodc, by combining wodc financial+in-kind support with other support to multiply/leverage funding in West Oxon particularly.
- Also the big 'elephant in the room' here is that adequately delivering nature's recovery for West Oxfordshire will cost hundreds of £millions (cf OLNP's recent assessment of £800million, which itself is far from exhaustive) – whereas the sources of funding listed in this BAP only total a small fraction of this. And of course if we don't adequately resource nature's recovery, we will be paying a much higher price in terms of absent ecosystem services in a degraded future West Oxon. Can we include some words to at least recognise this important resourcing deficit – and hopefully include some pointers to steps that might be taken to address this?

Biodiversity Roadmap

- It is good to see the Local Wildlife site (LWS) audit in the road map and the corresponding action & KPI. I think it would be better if the plan reflected encouraging conservation activity on LWS beyond understanding their condition. The Local Wildlife Sites Partnership both surveys sites and provides conservation advice and support. This could be recognised along with the Council's support of the

Partnership by including it under the local groups and partnerships section. Your support for the Partnership could also be mentioned in the “our work” to date section.

- Suggest your carbon offset fund timeline could be more ambitious. Cherwell are looking to require developers to pay into this for operation carbon of new developers through their local plan. You can probably just nick the ABI approach from OxCity.
- Suggest you aim to stop use of peat sooner - 2025 is the point at which it become illegal - surely the council aims to beat that!
- Very interested in your farmland nbs assessment.
- Lower Windrush Farmer Cluster - clusters need to be led by farmers. If you already know about interested farmers, I suggest you start trying to get them together, perhaps working with a partner org for facilitation? Cotswold Rivers Trust have a new farmer CEO...
- This is very helpful!
- Can we incorporate more on using WODC’s authority and [limited] resources to *catalyse and leverage* greater impact by others?
- Perhaps convening a few key people to brainstorm strategy and produce some achievable actions here would help.
- Could you include a date in the diagram (even if tentative) on BNG for small developments?

Protect and enhance biodiversity on council owned and managed land

- Could also mention looking at private finance - i.e., BNG
- Invasive species - work with owners of adjacent sites, or they will just come back!
- This is not the only place this is relevant to but we would greatly welcome mention of the 30 by 30 target and what the District could do towards that, whether on council owned land (hence us writing it in this section I.) but also elsewhere, which is more relevant to most of the below sections. These links are just for background info – we are not asking for them to be included:
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-commits-to-protect-30-of-uk-land-in-boost-for-biodiversity>
 - <https://www.bbwt.org.uk/news/wildlife-trusts-reveal-new-strategy>
 - <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/TheWildlifeTrustsStrategy2030.pdf>
- In this context, perhaps it would be worth considering assessing how land management techniques on council-owned land can deliver nature-based solutions to tackling climate change, or alternatively to consider it as part of 4. which refers to nature-based solutions.
- this and all the following ‘panels’ are very informative, but can we clarify how they relate to the previous body of text?

Safeguard and enhance biodiversity through policies and development

- Scope for coordination between LPAs? Sometimes there will be a need to place units generated by developments in neighbouring LPAs because the required habitats might not be available in the LPA where there development is being built. Could WODC be front-runners pushing for a standardised s106 agreement that covers Oxfordshire (and beyond!)?
- BNG will be most effective where there is communication and coordination between the planning, legal, and environment departments. Is there scope for regular BNG-related meetings?
- Need to work closely with other LPA's within Oxfordshire to ensure consistent approach, shared learnings and streamline common responsibilities
- Increasing capacity needs to be prioritised/emphasised. Evaluating metrics and habitat management/monitoring plans is extremely time-consuming. The lack of ecological staff and expertise within LPAs will become the bottleneck in WODC's BNG aspirations.
- In the event of habitats not reaching their promised condition/state after the 30-year agreement, will WODC have the legal provision to enforce the necessary remedial action? If not, scope for training/expansion?
- Should say monitor on-site BNG. Separate item for managing and acting on monitoring reports provided by offset providers
- % BNG in the Local Plan Needs to specify how a performance indicator- onsite? Offsite? Area? Habitat type?
- Throughout the document the rate for Biodiversity Net Gain is quoted as the legal minimum of 10%. The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan includes an aspiration that within the protected

landscape the rate should be 20%. This is stated within policy CE7.4 - Development proposals should provide a net gain in biodiversity of at least 20% particularly with regard to the species and habitats listed in Appendix 7. Appendix 8 further outlines why biodiversity is an important consideration within the Cotswolds National Landscape.

- Increased ecologist capacity really important
- Monitor BNG sites to ensure the targeted habitats and conditions are being achieved - This is particularly important for onsite.
- Take a strategic approach to development-funded nature recovery - I'm not clear what this means? Funded by new housing/infrastructure development? In which case, can we include 'explore production of a policy requiring developers to offset the first 30 years' operational carbon of their developments via contribution to WODC's carbon offset fund'?
- supporting famers/landowners to create BNG units eg via soft loans – much cheaper than purchase!
- We welcome this proposal. We consider it important to seek a minimum of a 20% net gain.
- Is this still part of 'safeguard and enhance biodiversity through policies and development'? If not, should this 'panel' be a different colour from the previous one, to make this clear?
- Under risks and dependencies, it would again be good to deal with the discrepancy between currently available and needed funding

Facilitate communities and partnerships in the district for landscape-scale recovery

- Continue working with Thames Water to ensure that Thames Water waste water treatment works have the capacity and technology to cope with current and anticipated sewage and thus end the very damaging discharges to West Oxfordshire water courses.
- Good to see an aspiration for more Parish Council biodiversity projects. TOE could be on this list should you wish to utilise the Local Environment Fund.
- Funding Wild Oxfordshire a great idea!
- Windrsh FC - Needs to be sooner than planned- would suggest fund through Rural Enterprise Grant?
- Although bringing all LWS into a favourable condition is completely necessary, I think it would be a missed opportunity if they put all their BNG funds into existing sites rather than creating new sites. Where would the NET GAIN be?
- Supporting the monitoring and conservation of LWSs is one of the key things a local authority can do to support biodiversity & nature recovery. Indeed, only the local authority can emphasise their importance and give them protection through the local plan. You have mapped them and included policies to protect them within the Local Plan. It would be good to refer to and reaffirm this within this plan too. This is a significant element in ensuring compliance with the strengthened biodiversity duty. A clear statement of support for the Local Wildlife Sites Partnership would further strengthen this plan.
- Might this be the right section in which to express LPA support for ensuring availability of sufficient offsite BNG units?
- Oxfordshire LNRS - I suggest this whole point needs to be guided by the LNRS. Its right you need to identify local priorities, but these should be led and informed by LNRS. Many of the groups you want to work with work at a supra-district scale so tying in with county-wide strategy will be vital
- OLNP has a policy group meeting on this on Weds 22nd, come along if you can/want
- Potentially fund Wild Oxfordshire [...] - Most other points say 'work with...'. This one says 'fund...'. Seems strange to me - I suggest keeping it consistent, and not 'potentially' committing to funding in a doc like this.
- If you include supporting availability of offsite BNG units in this section, then co-benefits include ensuring private funding for nature recovery can remain in the county, as well as helping to ensure there are no delays to the planning system
- Note there is already an Oxfordshire Nature Finance Strategy - <https://www.olnp.org.uk/financing-nature-based-solutions-in-oxfordshire>
- Work with Alison Smith's ecosystem service mapping to assess opportunities for enhancing ecosystem service provision and distribution
- Act on some of the next steps in the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery's 'equitable distribution of accessible green space' report.
- Work with climate change team - , and consider how to link this to planning (note that CDC's local plan included a policy of requiring developers to offset the operational carbon of their development for the first 30 years of its operation)
- Cobenefits - enhanced health and wellbeing of local communities

- We welcome this proposal
- We welcome this proposal. In particular we welcome the ambition in terms of restoring natural ecosystems and improving habitat connectivity. One of our biggest asks of this work is to ask could West Oxfordshire DC consider how, working with partners and neighbouring authorities, it could encourage the creation of a landscape-scale nature reserve or reserves in the District. Both West Oxfordshire and its neighbouring areas could benefit so much from the creation of large nature reserves, potentially with, when appropriate in terms of location and wildlife, well managed visitor access and visitor facilities. This could even lead over time potentially to a project on the scale approaching those found in many other counties in England, like the Great Fen Project <https://www.greatfen.org.uk/> , Wicken Fen Vision <https://www.wicken.org.uk/> or Avalon Marshes <https://avalonmarshes.org/> . An ambitious Vision in the District for this could lead to a landscape-scale nature reserve or reserves that could:
 - Help to provide a home for the many species of wildlife that are not compatible with urban development, as a result of which on-site biodiversity net gain will not help them, because of their incompatibility with urban areas, like curlews and other waders, and many other types of wildlife.
 - Be of great value for helping people experience wildlife. In a county where there is so much development then it is especially important for people to experience wilder places and the wonder of nature at scale. There is currently a deficit locally of nature reserves with visitor centres and other such facilities.
 - Could be of great benefit to the rural economy and the tourism economy.
- We welcome seeing something here on road verges. One of the best ways of maximising the contribution that road verges can make for wildlife, would be to look into schemes that allowed the collection and removal of arisings from verge mowings. This is happening in some parts of the UK and there may already be work on this happening locally so apologies if this is underway in the District and we were unaware. Collection and removal of arisings can greatly increase plant diversity in verges by reducing nutrient build-up. There are proposals we understand in some cases for arisings then being taken to a biodigester to create biogas. We are not fully aware of who is responsible for which verges in the District so whether this is something the District could do directly, or indirectly through influencing others, we would greatly welcome it being considered either way.
- West Oxon now has two parish-cluster 'Land and Nature' groups – one well-established one around Charlbury and one newly forming around Burford. It would be helpful all round to recognise these in the BAP, and devise some strategic actions for leveraging coordination/collaboration between WODC and these groups (alongside all the other great groups in West Oxon). In particular it would help to reference the draft NR plan which Charlbury LNG are in the process of issuing, since it could help inspire similar ones by others.

Public consultation

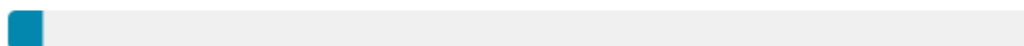
1) Please select who you are responding to the survey as:

177 out of 177 people answered this question

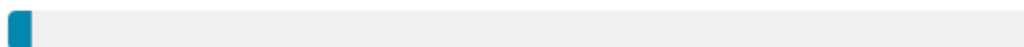
A West Oxfordshire resident 162 resp. 91.5%



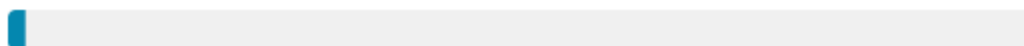
A Councillor 6 resp. 3.4%



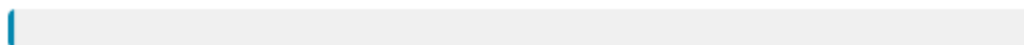
An environmental organisation 4 resp. 2.3%



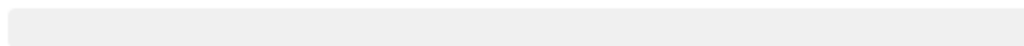
A member of the public outside of West Oxfordshire 3 resp. 1.7%



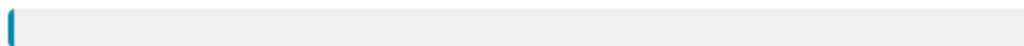
A local business 1 resp. 0.6%



A Local Authority 0 resp. 0%



Other 1 resp. 0.6%



Volunteer at a local charity

15 days ago

2) The overall vision for the Biodiversity Action Plan is the following:

“Radically enhance nature, its positive impact on our climate and the priority it’s given, helping to make the district a place where people and nature thrive”.

Do you agree with our vision?

173 out of 177 people answered this question

Yes 147 resp. 85%



No 26 resp. 15%



3) Which of these three key actions do you think that Council should prioritise for delivery?

Please rank from most important (1) to least important (3).

145 out of 177 people answered this question

#1 Facilitate communities and partnerships for landscape-scale recovery. #1.9 average

40% #1 58 responses

30% #2 43 responses

30% #3 44 responses

#2 Safeguard and enhance biodiversity through policies and development. #1.94 average

39% #1 57 responses

27% #2 39 responses

34% #3 49 responses

#3 Protect and enhance biodiversity on sites owned and managed by the Council. #2.15 average

21% #1 30 responses

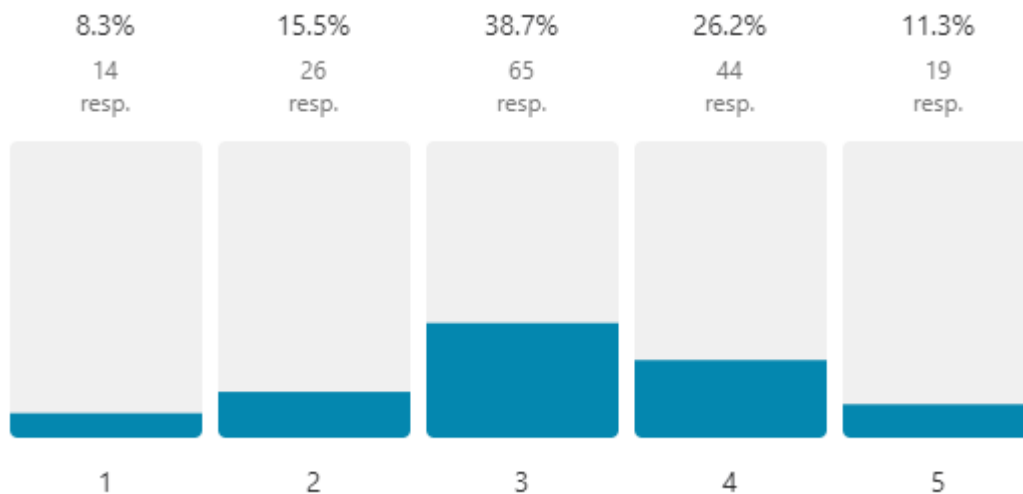
43% #2 63 responses

36% #3 52 responses

4) How ambitious are our proposed priorities?

1 is not ambitious at all, 5 is unachievably ambitious.

168 out of 177 people answered this question



5) Are there any areas of action that we can deliver that are not included within the plan?

Offensive language has been removed from the results

- A longer time-frame. Six years is impossibly short and policies need to be in place for much longer
- Actively promote biodiversity through education in schools.
- All new housing should be covered by the plan.
- Assist decarbonising transport by off street parking charges at all WODC car parks
- be extremely sensitive about granting planning permission for building on agricultural land, land within conservation areas and encourage building on brown field sites.
- be more critical of planning proposals that have a negative effect on the landscape and its biodiversity. e.g. solar panels belong on buildings not in fields
- Better footpaths on country walk. If people are out in nature and able to appreciate it then people might care more
- Bring protection of biodiversity to the forefront when making planning decisions, especially in rural areas
- Can't think of any!
- Communication with communities
- Consider more advice & cooperation with local farmers on hedgerow management to reduce flailing off all the flowering shoots of the hedgerows that they are obliged to maintain along highways and byways.
- cut back the verges and grass in housing areas. It looks a * mess!
- Declare 30%+ BNG on all housing developments
- Deliver what your residents need. Cut back hedges, get rid of LTN areas making life difficult for residents and visitors. You are supposed to supply services. Waste, roads, etc.
- District Heating System
- Do not develop housing beyond kingschool to Hailey road
- Do your actual job. Not this green *
- Don't dare not mow around Witney again
- education on biodiversity, specifically working landowners to manage land to the benefit of nature, vehicles for mainstreaming biodiversity protection - BNG, Carbon Credits etc
- Encourage and support parish level nature recovery plans working with town & parish councils and associated groups (e.g. Charlbury TC Land & Nature Group) and also through Neighbourhood Plans
- Encourage Cottesway to join these actions
- Encourage local communities eg litter collection

- Encourage residents to record wildlife and plants seen in their neighbourhood
- Enhance Witney green spaces to facilitate greater use
- Ensure all developments include robust biodiversity targets that are enforceable
- Ensure native species of trees and shrubs planted at all sites and new developments
- Ensure that companies such as Thames Water are stopped from polluting areas from sewage outlet. eg in Clanfield
- Ensure that you work WITH business and the community to achieve your aims.
- Ensuring new developments are environmentally friendly and landscaped to benefit wildlife and their population
- Ensuring the development of brown field sites is promoted rather than greenfield sites that are rich in biodiversity.
- Firstly, the ranking of your priorities is a bit odd. ALL 3 of them need equal focus as the appalling state of the natural world requires a joined up approach across all areas. Developers need to do far more with habitat protection and creation on developments. We need far more swift bricks, House Martin nesting cups, hedgehog highways, fruiting trees, hedgerows, wildflower areas and also areas that are just 'scruffy' and let go a bit. The over eagerness to tidy and cut and strim is highly detrimental.
- Fix the potholes. More important than the nonsense of net zero, bio diversity and all the other waste of money that you come up with.
- Get solar panels on as many buildings as possible. Stop the use of weed killers and pesticides.
- Getting people to connect with nature
- Given we live in a rural area of England, more support should be given to landowners to help/assist in the protection and promotion of habitat and wildlife
- hedgerow tree planting with parishes and farmers
- Housing plan
- I don't see much in it for young people who are the inheritors of the poor state of nature we have created
- I hope it gets decent funding. So much depends on the on-the-ground implementation. Not sure always about BNG - some losses cannot be compensated for. Would be nice for schools and churches to be explicitly involved. Could be opportunities for creation of employment through apprenticeships in e.g. hedgelaying. Nice to see a KPI for metres of hedgerow planted, but regeneration and sympathetic management of existing hedgerows would have more immediate payoff. Need to prioritise cleanup of rivers, fundamentally reduce pollution by sewage first.
- I think you have too many focus areas to realistically deliver significant change in the period. You should max out on amplifying the impact on non-WODC land with the influence you have. Focusing on the 20% job with you own land is just a PR tool.
- I'm not sure if it's included but clearing out existing ditches and watercourses would be a good place to start to
- Improve traffic flow to improve air quality and actually implement the Shaws Green A40 Junction to take pressure off the town centre and surrounding area.
- Improved education and local information about biodiversity
- In matters of planning wodc is completely lacking
- include the health benefits to individuals of greater access to natural habitats (and don't exclude their pets)
- Investing in renewable, green energy eg solar panels on all new homes, solar arrays on council owned land
- It is necessary to have specific outcomes against which the Indicators of success can be evaluated (e.g. the increase in woodland cover) ; as it stands the strategy / action plan represents a series of worthwhile projects but there is no sense as to whether they are adequate in scale and content to address the issues faced by the WO District. There are also areas of the district that lie outside the project areas for which there is no action proposed. Even though these areas may be of lesser biodiversity they need action (indeed they may be a greater priority than the established project areas because they are of lesser biodiversity value in their existing condition. I was also looking for more understanding of what are the specific actions required to adapt or mitigate the effects of climate change in WO district. May be there are none but given that this strategy is a response to the climate

emergency I wondered whether there were specific actions required and not merely good practice which most of the proposals are.

- It's all very well having solid words that make you sound like you are taking biodiversity and the environment seriously but those are totally worthless if you don't also have practical tangible targets that are measurable. If you did nothing else in the next two years other than clean up the river Windrush and restore the river and its surrounding environment to 'full health' you would have achieved more than any other administration in the last 20 years. Instead you focus too much on trying to sound good and patting each other on the back for saying the right things when only practical ACTION will ever make any real difference.
- Keeping trees from being dangerous, some look like branches are ready to fall
- landscape enhancement around the west side of Clanfield
- legislate to have all new build to have solar panels, to stop solar farms on green field sites
- Management of excessive night-time street lighting that has a negative effect on wildlife.
- Managing footpaths / Rights of Way , maintenance of hedgerows balancing road safety . vision for traffic and pedestrians as well as the health of the hedges (many are dying and DEad Mans Beard and Ivy are smothering the hedges, removal of dead wood to encourage growth, cutting back of road verges ; dominant species such as brambles, nettles and cow parsley are taking over preventing other species from growing and in the countryside making some rural roads narrow and visibility dangerous. In the town the lack of verge cutting is leading to lots of sharp grass seed which has caused problems for dogs. I Witney the verges were not cut between March / April and November!a
- Mandatory natural areas in 33% of new developments.
- More direct action with landowners including farming. We need clean water if we are to protect biodiversity and no bee killing pesticides
- More local involvement
- More maintained paths that allow access during wet flooded areas
- More partnerships with local people .
- No
- No it is too ambitious and will be hard to fund
- No real reference to the significant development of housing and need to ensure infrastructure , eg Thames water can meet need. We must stop polluting the rivers. How can we allow development on Ducklington Moors for example see: <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/23304421.oxfordshire-villagers-devastated-120-new-homes-built/>
- NOT allow building on green belt
- Not really
- Oppose Botley West Solar Farm otherwise your other plans will be ineffective
- Pest control
- Plan to have large connected areas of green to allow increased animal movement. Improve the health of rivers and legislate such that water use and sewage become high priority
- Plant hedgerow trees and restore ponds
- Please ensure new developments really do have large green spaces and not token tiny areas
- Prevent further development of land within West Oxfordshire by preemptively creating the government required 5 year plan.
- Protect communities from industries
- Protect urban hedges
- Really good, accessible, mapping. It would be so encouraging to see little pockets of green expand and connect.
- Reduce cars and population growth to safeguard nature
- Reduce the amount of housing being built on green field sites
- Reforest, protect against flooding, increase areas of nature reserves etc
- regeneration of the town centre as a shared space
- Reopening the High Street to cars.
- River & riverside maintenance
- River Evenlode needs protection ie solar panel farm

- River health. Links to public health policy. Protection of species such as swifts in danger as old houses reroofed. Hedgerows and verge. Plan to replace trees following ash die back. More prominent mention of working with farmers .
- School involvement
- Sharper focus on catastrophic damage caused by Thames Water, irresponsible housing projects etc.
- Some of this is what you and all of us should be doing as a matter of course. The rest is a pipe dream ... you are not going to (forgive the fatuous phrase) 'save the planet'
- Specific links to planning processes such as implementation of Grampian conditions
- Stick to the stuff we pay you for !
- Stop Botley West Solar Farm
- Stop building houses and park & rides when so much has now been built & destroyed the area for wildlife
- Stop building houses then paying to help nature recover
- Stop building on every available scrap of village land.
- Stop destroying the country side with more houses and instead of paying land owners for solar give home owners free solar
- Stop rogue developers building without infrastructure being in place and ensure they act according to net zero regulations
- STOP Thameswater sewage discharges
- stop using glyphosate; stricter enforcement of lighting rules
- stopping pollution of the rivers and streams
- Take more action to reduce sewage in the rivers
- The plans needs to include town/parish councils, OCC, local nature groups and NGOs such as Wildlife Trust and Wychwood Project, land owners such as Cornbury and Bleheim estates and ALL developers from day one, to ensure that the nature crisis is being addressed with the urgency required.
- The state of the areas rivers are acknowledged, if the CSO's are controlled then an action plan to restore the rivers needs to be in place and actioned (in cooperation with the listed authorities).
- The state of the river windrush
- The state of the water - making Thames Water clear up their mess.
- There doesn't seem to be any overarching method of communicating with the wide range of groups involved, but especially enthusiastic non-specialist volunteers on Parish Councils, about specific actions which have been completed or specific actions which affect their 'patch'
- To restrict human impact on the environment by taking less land to build on to protect habitats and open space
- Use the land that runs alongside the roads and tidy them up to allow biodiversity to organically develop. You don't need to reinvent the wheel just make the best of what already exists.
- We need a plan similar to the very successful plan in the Second World War, that is to grow food on every acre of ground we have, forget hedges and wild flowers we need food so we do not have to import it this is what we should be concentrating on not dreams of long lost past!!
- Yes - the opportunities for action within residential gardens
- Yes, and a good starting point is to remove all the nonsense about West Oxfordshire having any part to play in changing the global climate and instead focus on cleaning our waterways.
- Yes, forget all this nonsense and focus on what Witney really needs, eg economic growth
- yes, please see document which I'll upload or email
- You could start by listening to local residents and not design local plans by submitting to government pressure to build more & more housing thus increasing the already unsolved sewage problems and need for more roads carrying bigger cars adding to air pollution. Think smaller is better for everyone and build for local needs which means social housing not executive housing.
- You mean like the hedgerows along Buckland Road? Full of lovely big red berries that have now been cut down. Fieldfares in particular love these as do a lot of other wildlife.

6) Is there anything else you'd like to add to your response to the Biodiversity Action Plan?


Offensive language has been removed from the results

- I am very pleased to see the ambition in this plan and I am very keen to see Charlbury TC Land and Nature Group included in the list of partnerships at the bottom of page 8. Our nature recovery work in Charlbury, with neighbouring parishes and with other partners is closely aligned to your plan and we would be keen to work with you.
- A lack of public knowledge about who owns what land hinders progress in this area. For example, the dyke that runs around the Henry Box playing field had water voles and kingfishers in it 10 years ago. Yet WODC & the Environment Agency have quibbles throughout that time over who's actually responsible for it, not to mention the County Council (?) owned field. The aforementioned wildlife has now disappeared and I imagine neither you, the Environment Agency nor OCC will take any responsibility for decisions (or lack thereof) that have been taken to lead to that.
- Actually do something to help nature rather than just talk about it and stop allowing vast areas of housing developments that has already ruined this area forever. Too over populated now, it's tragic how this area has changed in such a short time.
- All hugely important and much needed. We are in a real emergency. How can the public monitor the progress? A facebook group or newsletter perhaps?
- Also remove invasive plant species
- Although we can help the environment thrive is a good thing, climate emergency is a fraud, take a look at west Antarctica the temperature has dropped by 2c over the last 20 years no sign of global warming there and the Sahara is shrinking all recorded facts that MSM don't report
- Another plan but resources and action required
- Be careful with the word salad and buzz words - climate, resilience - and make clear, actionable plans for what people can actually see.
- Be more thoughtful about the location of verges left unmown. Away from junctions and approaches to roundabouts for example. Speak with people who know about the countryside. Steer clear of green zelots
- BWSF developers have no evidence that covering 3400 acres of west OXFORDshire countryside will improve biodiversity. Their "mitigation" plans are laughable.
- Comeate waste of time and money. You appear to be owned by the goals set by the World Economic Forum in their document for global goals 2030. For WODC simply maintain what we have better. Plant more trees in the town centres and do not inconvenience those who pay their council tax.
- Communities should be encouraged to keep families small so that human population does not continue to overwhelm the lives of other living things. This is the crux of our all our problems on planet Earth.
- Controlling Residential Development better
- Council, residents and businesses to stop using non-natural pesticides and fertilisers eg ladybirds not glyphosate !!
- Create a database for citizen recordings
- Creation of farmland ponds
- Cut the * grass
- Development of a realistic transition towards more efficient public transport
- Don't forget business and community!
- Don't let everywhere get overgrown in the name of biodiversity, there needs to be a balance.
- Encourage local community to record species and plants seen in their area on a local database
- Encouragement for local people to be active
- Ensure biodiversity and conservation is taught in schools from preschool to college
- Ensure some areas are left untouched so wildlife can thrive
- Establish a "day of action " for community evolvment to promote local actions in relation to biodiversity management.
- Forget it !
- Full awareness for the public - only how? Get out there and talk clearly...
- Get Thames water to stop feeding sewerage into the rivers

- Get the river pollution sorted - it is dreadful & you are not stopping it
- Give support, advice & rats for villages keen to create NRNs
- Greater influence of the council on planning proposals to enhance the environment which I appreciate comes at a cost to the developer but to the benefit of the community
- Green party nonsense.
- Have joined up green areas to allow animals to migrate. Improve river cleanliness, stop sewage being dumped in rivers
- Heat to see the plan but it can be expanded to accommodate land across the county and not just council owned land.
- hedgerow tree planting and pond restoration
- Help local groups to purchase corridors to link up woodland and wildlife areas such as St.Johns Wood with Hailey Community Woodland and Foxborough Wood. However generous, farmers do not have the needs of the community as a priority and expecting them, without remuneration, to leave strips of land for the the benefit of locals is disingenuous.
- Higher focus on river water quality
- How measure change and how create meaningful joined up action. Accountability and levers to move behaviour e.g rivers, farming. Clearer definition of biodiversity and what this means and how impacted. Making clearer roadmaps for change e.g. how can hedgerows be replaced and what are the levers for this for communities - clarifying responsibilities across OCC (highways etc) local parish and WODC. Lots of communities want to do things but it's really hard working out how and who can open up opportunities. Swifts are in danger of being eradicated in this whole area as older rooves are removed and replaced with no nesting space. Can a solution be found that roof holes are retained (as swifts don't adapt to nest boxes easily)
- I don't think the plan is viable.
- I hope it can be achieved and not just talked about and nothing happens
- "I WILL BE TOTALLY REFUSING TO COMPLY. UNTIL YOU SCRAP THIS 20MPH * I WILL NEVER COMPLY WITH ANY COUNCIL INITIATIVE EVER AGAIN.
-
- I REFUSE TO RECYCLE, CHUCKING EVERYTHING INTO MY GREY LANDFILL BIN. I ONLY USE FIRST GEAR IN ALL 20MPH * AREAS REVING THE HELL OUT OF IT INCREASING NOISE AND AIR POLLUTUON IF HELD UP AT LESS THAN 30. (I OVERTAKE DAILY ANYONE HOLDING ME UP)"
- If you don't control planning making plans is a waste of time
- In addition to the answers to previous question it would be good to have some measure of the scale of resources required and an evaluation of the adequacy of institutional arrangements (including how it is all going to be coordinated (elsewhere this has required special units to be set up).
- Increase litter picking and grow more trees
- It isn't a plan, just a list of possible activities. A plan requires actions to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound. There are no dates or deadlines for each action, many of them are completely unspecific and none of them have any measures to use to verify that the action has achieved what was intended.
- It needs to be clearly stated that any sites with a biodiversity designation should not be considered for or impacted by development
- It should have been protected before planning was approved for 100's new homes in the area. It's tragic.
- Let's hope something can be done. Unfortunately people see green fields and trees and think we have good biodiversity in West Oxfordshire
- Link to Neighbourhood Plans supporting protection of Green spaces and a large protective zone around blue green corridors
- listen to local residents of many years about how an area "behaves" - don't just rely on high level maps (for example flooding)
- Make explicit actions with surrounding district councils to improve biodiversity in areas such as rivers
- Make more funds available for BAP by reducing wasted monies on unnecessary projects. E.g 20 mph signage, High Street pavement reworking.

- Money invested is essential. Great to see dedicated members of staff but action having to rely on grant applications is not good enough.
- monitoring and only adopt funded or voluntary actions.
- More bins around. The amount of rubbish in fields, bushes, flower beds is horrible to see. In residential areas but also out on footpaths
- More detail around the proposed Riparian Owners management plan
- More ponds
- More urgency
- No
- No
- No
- No
- No solar panels in Botley West. Let Clarkson plant trees.
- No thank you!
- On a very local issue, on Shilton Park we still have hundreds of plastic tree guards, some which must be 20 years old on the estate. Surely, these need to come off ? Also during spring and summer some areas of grass could easily be left 4 weeks + between cuts, IE, one cut each month between May-Sept.
- Pest control
- Plant more trees and wildflowers wherever possible
- Please be practical and action orientated and set measurable goals and if you don't achieve them, all promptly resign
- Prevent Further Building in Green Fields
- Put pressure on Thames water to desist form pollution
- Really great to see you are doing this Needs to be much more protection for privately owned land. Landowners can do just about anything they want in terms of land management without any consequences in my experience
- Really like the aspect of including natural flood management
- Reopen Witney High Street to normal traffic to lessen the traffic congestion elsewhere and return speed limits from 20 to 30 to allow freer movement and less pollution.
- Residents are cutting down hedges for car parking which is a loss to habitat and biodiversity
- Scrap it and spend the money on something useful.
- Seek to do no harm before seeking to mitigate harm
- Seems comprehensive and achievable, look forward to milestone updates.
- Set stiff but achievable goals and you will receive cooperation. Set unachievable goals and you will get resistance.
- Should a BAP be a priority at a time when funds are low and many people are struggling to make ends meet?
- Stop approving every planning application in rural areas.
- Stop building houses instead. WO is full.
- Stop chopping trees down needlessly, too many disappearing lately
- Stop wasting money on green issues at the expense of providing the basic services that residents require.
- support and promote use of allotments (and increase the supply of land for allotments)
- The Council controls little land and has little money to achieve anything on the land of others. Need to be more realistic
- The council need to start listening to residents comments when it comes to housing development applications. Local people know the local wildlife under threat in their area, so it's vital BNG doesn't just become a tick box exercise between the WODC ecologist and developers ecologists.
- The KPIs seem to me to be too focused on activities rather than the outcomes we care about. I would suggest putting more emphasis on tracking the status of species. I care about the status of swifts, swallows, hedgehogs, amphibians, native woodland cover etc, not how many ecology training courses are delivered.
- The river Windrush should be a top priority

- The state of the rivers are key and need more attention. The Botley West Solar Farm will also have a significant environmental impact and is not a "green" solution to energy production, it needs to be stopped.
- The use of BNG as the measure of improvement is too narrow. BNG a poor measure of biodiversity even on a good day, it applies to a limited number of cases, and in practice is not doing the job it was intended for - see e.g. Rampling et al 2023. To ask for BNG of 10% is wholly inadequate given the seriousness of the biodiversity crisis. And while having flow charts and good intentions is useful, in the end the only question is how one achieves a joined-up approach to nature conservation and restoration. Some issues are mundane but critical for success - e.g. cutting verges - if the arisings are not removed this one has no hope of getting more biodiverse plant communities in the verges. This is a matter of machinery and timing and clearly Ubico is not up to it. It is also not effective to have NGOs or 'experts' parachuted in to advise councils or volunteer groups - they have neither the expertise nor the vision, nor the local knowledge, nor any relation to the enthusiasts in the community who want to make a difference. Similarly it is futile to have parish councils lead on nature recovery - they simply don't have the in-house expertise. It seems that NGOs and e.g. Parish Councils want to 'own' a protect rather than be partners with other organisations or landowners and farmers, all of whom are essential partners for any landscape-scale project. Maybe this reflect both economics and vanity. Often these players - farmers, landowners, etc. are either not at the table or at the bottom of the food chain. One might also note that in the present rush to build solar power stations, the economic gradient is in the wrong direction for nature recovery - one can make far more money renting a field to a solar developer than one can get from DEFRA. BNG is no help here either.
- This along with Climate Change needs to be factored in right across the council's actions . We also need far more collaboration with other local councils at all levels.
- This work needs real commitment by key stakeholders to deliver it - I'm concerned that finances and politics will stop it from being fully delivered or supported
- To preserve biodiversity in West Oxfordshire, you have to resist any more new housing. The so-called safeguards around new housing and biodiversity are having no effect at all, as anyone can see from looking at the new housing estates. All concrete and suburbia, and cars. More carbon, more untreated sewage. Less space for wild creatures and plants. If biodiversity means anything in a National Landscape it means preserving that landscape without more built intrusion.
- We are disappointed that the Action Plan only goes as far as saying "Implement Oxfordshire's BNG Guiding principles into the Local Plan, and explore the potential implementation of a higher BNG requirement than the mandatory 10% national benchmark". We call for a stated action and commitment to Support the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnerships call for a clear requirement on all forms of development to deliver a 20% net gain in biodiversity.
- Woodlands should be managed properly, and possibly dew ponds should be constructed
- yes, please see document which I'll upload or email
- You have to stop development of the flood plain and in particular water meadows such as the Moors in Ducklington which have an enormous impact on biodiversity

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|  <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> | <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> |
| <p>Name and Date of Committee</p> | <p>EXECUTIVE – 17 JANUARY 2024</p> |
| <p>Subject</p> | <p>LOCAL PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT (AMR)</p> |
| <p>Wards Affected</p> | <p>ALL</p> |
| <p>Accountable Member</p> | <p>Councillor Charlie Maynard – Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development. Email: charlie.maynard@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Accountable Officer</p> | <p>Chris Hargraves – Planning Policy Manager. Email: chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Report Author</p> | <p>Andrew Thomson – Lead Planning Policy and Implementation Officer. Email: andrew.thomson@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Summary/Purpose</p> | <p>To consider the Council's Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report for the two-year period 2021-2023.</p> |
| <p>Annexes</p> | <p>Annex A – Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2021-2023</p> |
| <p>Recommendation</p> | <p>That the Executive Resolves to: I. Note the content of the report.</p> |
| <p>Corporate Priorities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All • Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire |
| <p>Key Decision</p> | <p>NO</p> |
| <p>Exempt</p> | <p>NO</p> |
| <p>Consultees/ Consultation</p> | <p>There is no requirement to consult on the AMR.</p> |

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Members will be aware that under current planning legislation, the Council is required to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).
- 1.2** The main purpose of the AMR is to monitor the implementation of adopted Local Plan policies but it must also include information on the following:
 - Progress of the Local Plan and any other related documents against agreed timetables;
 - Neighbourhood Planning;
 - The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where this has been introduced; and
 - How the Council has fulfilled its obligations under the Duty to Co-Operate.
- 1.3** The AMR must be made available on the Council's website, at its main offices and at any other appropriate locations.
- 1.4** The Council's most recently published AMR covers the period 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021.
- 1.5** The Council did not produce an annual report for 2021/22 (primarily due to a lack of available monitoring officer resource at that time) and so Officers have now prepared a report that covers the extended 2-year period 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2023.
- 1.6** The 2021 – 2023 AMR is attached at Annex A and the key points of interest are summarised in Section 2 below.

2. AMR 2021/2023 – OVERVIEW

Local Plan Progress

- 2.1** The AMR explains that the District Council has committed to the preparation of a new Local Plan covering the period to 2041 and that two rounds of informal (Regulation 18) consultation have taken place to inform the scope and direction of the emerging plan.
- 2.2** Whilst further informal consultation was initially planned to take place before the end of 2023, this is now expected to take place in spring 2024 with a more precise timetable for this and the steps beyond to be agreed through an update of the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) in February 2024.

Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)

- 2.3** The AMR provides an update on the progress of the Salt Cross AAP with the Inspector's final report having been received on 1st March 2023 but any decision to formally adopt the AAP having since been held in abeyance pending the outcome of a 3rd party legal challenge, the hearing into which took place in mid-November 2023.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 2.4** The AMR explains that the District Council has four Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) in place with one of these (Affordable Housing) having been formally adopted within the 2-year period covered by the AMR and two further SPDs (Developer Contributions and the Combe Village Design Statement) having been adopted since, in July 2023.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 2.5 The AMR provides an update on Neighbourhood Planning in West Oxfordshire, explaining that there are now 9 'made' (adopted) Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) in West Oxfordshire with two of these (Charlbury and Woodstock) having been adopted in the 2-year period covered by the AMR and two more (Cassington and Milton under Wychwood) adopted since, in June 2023.
- 2.6 The AMR explains that a further 6 NDPs are currently in preparation.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 2.7 The AMR provides an update on the District Council's progress with introducing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) into West Oxfordshire. In March 2023, the Council's executive agreed that new viability evidence should be commissioned to inform a new draft CIL charging schedule (and also to help inform the emerging Local Plan 2041).
- 2.8 Consultants have since been appointed and the current expectation is that a new draft CIL charging schedule will be published for consultation in early 2024 with submission, examination and adoption to follow later in the year.

Duty to Co-Operate

- 2.9 The Duty to Cooperate is a legal requirement on local planning authorities to engage with other relevant authorities and certain prescribed bodies in relation to cross-boundary strategic planning matters. The AMR therefore provides an update on how the District Council has fulfilled its obligations under the duty.
- 2.10 This includes the conclusion reached by the Salt Cross AAP Inspector that the District Council had met the requirements of the duty in preparing the AAP.
- 2.11 The AMR also outlines that ongoing Oxfordshire-wide discussions are currently taking place around plan-making and are expected to culminate in the publication of a Statement of Common Ground which will form part of the District Council's evidence to demonstrate that it has complied with the duty to co-operate in preparing the new Local Plan 2041.

Implementation of Local Plan Policies

- 2.12 The AMR is structured around the five main sections of the current Local Plan 2031:
- Overall strategy
 - Providing new homes
 - Sustainable Economic Growth
 - Transport and Movement
 - Environmental and Heritage Assets
- 2.13 The key points to note under each heading are summarised below.

Overall Strategy

- 2.14** A total of 3,509 planning applications were determined during the 2-year monitoring period (1st April 2021 – 31st March 2023). The majority of these (2,967 applications) were approved or approved subject to a legal agreement.
- 2.15** Just under 50% of the applications determined were for relatively minor ‘householder’ type proposals and 20% were for full or outline planning approval.
- 2.16** The majority of planning approvals were concentrated within the Main Service Centres, Rural Service Centres and larger villages of the District in accordance with Local Plan Policy OS2, which seeks to focus development primarily at larger settlements due to their relative sustainability in terms of available services and facilities.
- 2.17** 77 appeals were determined during the monitoring period. The majority of these were dismissed with only 17 being allowed or allowed in part.
- 2.18** Over £6.5m was collected towards new infrastructure from new development in West Oxfordshire between 1 April 2021 and 30 March 2023. Over £1.6m was spent on new infrastructure during the same period.
- 2.19** A detailed breakdown of infrastructure funding (received and spent) is set out in the Council’s separate Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) which is now published annually each December.

Providing New Homes

- 2.20** Planning permission was granted for 802 new dwellings during the monitoring period, with 203 of these granted in 2021/22 and 599 granted permission in 2022/23.
- 2.21** The largest concentrations of outstanding residential commitments are located within, or on the edge of Main Service Centres within neighbouring Parishes, e.g. Witney / Curbridge and Carterton /Brize Norton. There are also significant concentrations at Chipping Norton, Woodstock, Eynsham and Hanborough.
- 2.22** There were 1,002 net residential completions in 2021/2022 and 729 net residential completions in 2022/23. Although completions fell slightly below the Local Plan housing requirement of 800 dwellings in 2022/23, this is the first time in 5 years that the housing requirement hasn’t been met.
- 2.23** It is also important to note that since the start of the current Local Plan period 1st April 2011 up to 31st March 2023, a total of 7,036 new homes have been completed which is only 64 less than the Local Plan requirement over the same period (7,100 homes).
- 2.24** There was one major proposal for residential development that was granted at appeal during the monitoring period, for 120 dwellings at the Moors in Ducklington.
- 2.25** Approximately 687 new affordable homes were completed during the monitoring period, comprising a mixture of affordable rented, social rented and shared ownership properties. These were located predominantly on larger sites in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan Policy H3.

- 2.26 Approximately 40% of total housing completions during the monitoring period were classed as affordable, which is broadly consistent with the requirements of Local Plan Policy H3 which adopts a tiered approach ranging from 35% - 50% depending on location. A total of £593,049 was collected in the form of financial contributions towards the off-site provision of affordable homes within the District.
- 2.27 Outside of the monitoring period, in September 2023, the Council undertook a formal review of the Local Plan 2031 in accordance with Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 2.28 Importantly, the review concluded that the Local Plan housing requirement set out in Policy H2 (which has previously been used to calculate the Council's 5-year housing land supply) needs updating because it is based on 2014 evidence which pre-dates the introduction of the standard method for assessing local housing need.
- 2.29 The significance of this is that because the current Local Plan is now more than 5-years old, the District Council is able to calculate its 5-year housing land supply position using the Government's standard method for assessing local housing need.
- 2.30 Using this alternative measure of housing need, the Council's current housing land supply position statement demonstrates a 5.4 year supply of deliverable housing land as of 1st April 2023.

Sustainable Economic Growth

- 2.31 A total of 56,410m² of new business floorspace was approved during the monitoring period, the majority of which was for mixed business uses, including general industrial, offices and storage and distribution.
- 2.32 A significant proportion of new business floorspace was approved at sites identified in the Local Plan for accommodating business development, including Down's Road at Witney and Ventura Park at Carterton.
- 2.33 Any new business development approved in the rural parts of the District during the monitoring period was relatively minor in nature.
- 2.34 The majority of tourism-related development during the monitoring period was for new tourist accommodation.
- 2.35 The mix of town centre uses continues to evolve in the 5 existing town centres in West Oxfordshire, to include retail, hospitality professional services and residential. There have been a limited number of changes of use during the monitoring period but nothing major in nature. There remain a number of empty units within each of the town centres in line with national trends.

Transport and Movement

- 2.36 The majority of new development continues to be focussed within the Main Service Centres and Rural Service Centres, which are the most accessible locations to access services and facilities by a range of transport options, including public transport, walking and cycling.
- 2.37 Funding has been secured from a number of developments during the monitoring period to contribute towards public transport provision.

- 2.38** Access to some key services remains poor in West Oxfordshire compared to the rest of Oxfordshire and car ownership remains higher than the rest of the county.
- 2.39** In terms of the strategic highways schemes identified in the Local Plan, good progress has been made in relation to the A40 with the new Eynsham Park and Ride having secured planning permission and now under construction.
- 2.40** The District Council continues to work closely with Oxfordshire County Council in relation to the wider A40 improvements being progressed under the Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF).
- 2.41** In July 2022, Oxfordshire County Council approved the preferred option proposals for the A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor (Duke's Cut, integrated bus lanes and the extension of the dual carriageway).
- 2.42** However, in light of global inflationary pressures, the A40 improvements programme was extensively reviewed between November 2022 and June 2023 and in July 2023, the County Council approved a new plan to build the programme in phases.
- 2.43** The initial phase includes dedicated bus lanes between Eynsham Park and Ride and Oxford, as well as the addition of controlled crossings and upgraded shared-use paths to make walking and cycling safer along the historically congested A40 between Witney and Oxford. Later phases of work will be planned and delivered as funding becomes available.
- 2.44** The access to Witney (Shores Green) junction improvements will be funded by a combination of Housing and Growth Deal (HGD) funds and Section 106 developer contributions. Planning permission for the scheme was granted outside of the monitoring period, in July 2023.

Environmental and Heritage Assets

- 2.45** No major development was approved within the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly referred to as the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) during the monitoring period.
- 2.46** The majority of new development is steered away from environmentally sensitive locations in West Oxfordshire, particularly areas with ecological, landscape or heritage sensitivities or areas at risk of flooding.
- 2.47** There have been no significant changes to the area of protected habitats or number of protected species in West Oxfordshire during the monitoring period.
- 2.48** One scheme was approved for a ground mounted solar installation during the monitoring period, on land to the west of Ducklington.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1** None.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** The report raises no direct financial implications.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6. Preparation of the AMR is a legal requirement under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The AMR raises no significant risks.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 The report raises no specific equality implications for any specific group/protected characteristic. The adopted Local Plan was supported by a separate Equalities Impact Assessment.

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The AMR reports on a number of climate and ecological related issues.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None.

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West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 Annual Monitoring Report (2021 – 2023)

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Section I - Introduction

Purpose of the Annual Monitoring report

- I.1 The primary purpose of the AMR is to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the policies set out in the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.
- I.2 The AMR is also required to report on the following matters:
- The progress of the Local Plan and any other related documents against agreed timetables;
 - Neighbourhood Planning;
 - The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where this has been introduced; and
 - How the Council has fulfilled its obligations under the Duty to Co-Operate
- I.3 This AMR focuses primarily on the 2-year period 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2023 but includes some information from outside this period where appropriate.

Structure of the report

- I.4 The following section of the report (Section 2) covers the four bullet points listed above whilst Section 3 summarises the implementation and effectiveness of adopted Local Plan policies against relevant indicators.

Section 2 - West Oxfordshire Local Plan and associated documents

Local Plan Progress

- 2.1 The existing West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 was formally adopted in September 2018.
- 2.2 In September 2023, reflecting the fact that the Local Plan became 5-years old, the Council undertook a review in accordance with Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 2.3 The review is available [online](#) and concludes that whilst many of the policies remain consistent with national policy, they would benefit from being reviewed and re-considered in light of updated evidence and to reflect any changing circumstances.
- 2.4 Recognising the importance of having robust and up-to-date policies in place to guide development, the Council has committed to the preparation of a new Local Plan covering the period to 2041.
- 2.5 The timetable for preparing a Local Plan must be set out in a Local Development Scheme (LDS).
- 2.6 The current LDS for West Oxfordshire was published in April 2023 and progress against the key milestones is summarised in the table below.

Table 1 - West Oxfordshire Local Development Scheme

| Stage/Milestone | Progress |
|---|--|
| Regulation 18 initial scoping consultation August/October 2022 | COMPLETE |
| Regulation 18 focused consultation on draft plan objectives, spatial strategy options and call for sites. June/July 2023 | COMPLETE (although consultation took place slightly later than anticipated from August – October 2023) |
| Regulation 18 consultation on preferred policy options/approaches November 2023 | Delayed as a consequence of the Regulation 18 focused consultation taking place later than expected. Now expected to take place in spring 2024. |
| Regulation 19 publication of pre-submission draft Local Plan June 2024 | Not yet undertaken. Revised date to be agreed as part of updated LDS to be published in February 2024. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Regulation 22 submission of draft Local Plan November 2024 | Not yet undertaken. Revised date to be agreed as part of updated LDS to be published in February 2024. |
| Examination and adoption 2025 | Not yet undertaken. Revised date to be agreed as part of updated LDS to be published in February 2024. |

Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)

- 2.7 The Local Plan 2031 identifies land to the north of the A40 near Eynsham as a strategic location for growth (SLG) which is intended to accommodate a free-standing exemplar Garden Village of around 2,200 new homes plus 40 hectares of business land and various supporting services and facilities.
- 2.8 The Local Plan requires comprehensive development of the Garden Village (now referred to as Salt Cross) led by an Area Action Plan (AAP).
- 2.9 Following extensive stakeholder engagement, the final draft version of the AAP was submitted for independent examination in February 2021 with hearing sessions held in June/July 2021.
- 2.10 Following a pause in the examination to enable additional work on infrastructure phasing to be undertaken, the appointed Inspectors wrote to the District Council in May 2022 to confirm that the AAP is capable of being found 'sound' subject to a number of Main Modifications (MMs).
- 2.11 Consultation on those Main Modifications took place from September to October 2022 and on 1 March 2023, the Inspectors' issued their final report which concluded that the AAP can be formally adopted subject to a number of modifications.
- 2.12 However, a legal challenge was subsequently lodged by Rights Community Action (RCA) focusing on the conclusions reached by the Inspectors in relation to the soundness of AAP Policy 2 – Net Zero Carbon Development.
- 2.13 The case was heard in the High Court in November 2023 and the decision regarding the potential formal adoption of the AAP is therefore on hold pending the outcome of that process.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 2.14 West Oxfordshire does not yet have CIL in place but in March 2023, the Council's Executive agreed that new viability evidence should be commissioned to inform a new draft CIL charging schedule (and also to help inform the emerging Local Plan 2041).
- 2.15 Consultants have since been appointed and at the time of writing, are in the process of preparing that new evidence with input from key stakeholders. The expectation is that consultation on a new CIL charging schedule will take place in early 2024 with submission, examination and adoption to follow later in the year.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 2.16 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are intended to build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted Local Plan. The District Council now has a number of SPDs in place, three of which were formally adopted within the period covered by this AMR or subsequently. Details are provided in the summary table below with copies of the SPDS available on the Council's website [here](#).

Table 2 - West Oxfordshire Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

| Title | Purpose | Date of adoption |
|--------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Affordable Housing | Supplements Local Plan Policy H3 – Affordable Housing and provides detailed guidance on the delivery of new affordable housing in West Oxfordshire. | 27 October 2021 |
| Developer Contributions | Supplements Local Plan Policy OS5 – Supporting Infrastructure and provides detailed guidance to developers, infrastructure providers and local communities on likely infrastructure requirements for developments in West Oxfordshire. | 31 July 2023 |
| Combe Village Design Statement | Supplements Local Plan Policy OS4 – High Quality Design and provides design guidelines that can help to shape any future development so that it blends in with Combe's distinctive rural landscape and heritage. | 28 July 2023 |
| West Oxfordshire Design Guide | Supplements Local Plan Policy OS4 – High Quality Design and contains a detailed analysis of both natural and man-made aspects of the District and detailed design advice. | 2016 |

Neighbourhood Planning

- 2.17 Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) provide an extra tier of planning, to address locally specific issues within localities, mainly parishes in the case of West Oxfordshire. NDPs form part of the statutory Development Plan and are therefore a key consideration in decision making in West Oxfordshire.
- 2.18 Nine NDPs have been formally adopted or 'made' in West Oxfordshire with several of these having been approved within the 2-year period covered by this AMR or subsequently. Details of these plans are provided in sequential date order in the table below.

Table 3 - Made Neighbourhood Development Plans

| NDP | Date of adoption | Weblink |
|------------|------------------|---|
| Cassington | 26 June 2023 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/wkojqf3/made-cassington-neighbourhood-plan-for-web.pdf |

| NDP | Date of adoption | Weblink |
|-----------------------|------------------|---|
| Milton under Wychwood | 26 June 2023 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/g4okpjt/milton-under-wychwood-neighbourhood-plan-made-26062023.pdf |
| Woodstock | 23 January 2023 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/saynun5i/woodstock-neighbourhood-development-plan.pdf |
| Charlbury | 14 June 2021 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/wbenslr3/regulation-19-charlbury-decision-statement-14-june-2021-astrid-harvey-1.pdf |
| Eynsham | 6 February 2020 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/ngkckyhi/eynsham-neighbourhood-plan.pdf |
| Hailey | 2 September 2019 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/flmhngyh/hailey-neighbourhood-plan.pdf |
| Shilton | 2 September 2019 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/5fvkylce/shilton-neighbourhood-plan.pdf |
| South Leigh | 8 January 2019 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/mp5klvz1/south-leigh-neighbourhood-plan-v2.pdf |
| Chipping Norton | 15 March 2016 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/tlchsxc5/chipping-norton-neighbourhood-plan.pdf |

2.19 In addition, there are a further six NDPs currently being prepared as outlined below.

- Ascott-under-Wychwood
- Brize Norton
- Ducklington
- North Leigh
- Stonesfield
- Wootton by Woodstock

Duty to Cooperate

2.20 The Duty to Cooperate is a legal requirement on local planning authorities to engage with other relevant authorities and certain prescribed bodies in relation to cross-boundary strategic planning matters. It applies during the period of plan-preparation i.e. up to the point at which the plan is submitted for examination.

2.21 The Duty to Cooperate is important not least because it is the first issue to be considered by a Planning Inspector when a Local Plan reaches the examination stage and if the Inspector finds that the duty has not been complied with, they will recommend that the local plan is not adopted and the examination will not proceed any further.

2.22 West Oxfordshire District Council has a strong track record of working actively and continuously with other local authorities and statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.

- 2.23 In his report into the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, the Inspector concluded that, where necessary, the Council had engaged constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in the preparation of the plan and that the Duty to Co-operate had therefore been met.
- 2.24 More recently, in relation to the Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP) the Inspectors in their report of 1 March 2023 also concluded that the Council had engaged constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in the preparation of the AAP and that the duty to co-operate had therefore been met.

- 2.25 The District Council will continue to work closely with other local authorities and statutory bodies in the preparation of the new Local Plan 2041. Early engagement has already been undertaken through two rounds of informal Regulation 18 consultation and this will continue up until the point of submission and beyond as appropriate.
- 2.26 Discussions are currently taking place between the Oxfordshire local planning authorities regarding the preparation of a countywide Statement of Common Ground – the purpose of which will be to document the progress which has been made during the process of planning for strategic cross-boundary matters.
- 2.27 This will form part of the District Council's evidence to demonstrate that it has complied with the duty to co-operate in preparing the new Local Plan. Where appropriate, the District Council may also seek to agree separate statements of common ground with individual authorities.

Section 3 - Monitoring Results

4.1 The primary purpose of the AMR is to monitor the implementation of adopted Local Plan policies and in this section, we consider the extent to which policies are being delivered under the five main sections of the Local Plan:

- Overall strategy
- Providing new homes
- Sustainable economic growth
- Transport and movement
- Environmental and Heritage Assets.

4.2 For each section, we consider the effectiveness and implementation of the various Local Plan policies with reference to relevant indicators and contextual information.

OVERALL STRATEGY

SUMMARY

- The majority of planning applications submitted during the monitoring period were approved, in accordance with the policies of the Local Plan 2031.
- The majority of planning applications that were appealed during the monitoring period were dismissed.
- The Local Plan continues to deliver in line with the vision and overarching strategic objectives. This ensures beneficial outcomes against the objectives of the West Oxfordshire Council Plan which seeks to enable a good quality of life for all and create a better environment for people and wildlife.
- The majority of planning approvals are granted within the main service centres, rural service centres and villages in accordance with the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy OS2.
- The majority of developments are suitably located to protect and enhance the individual form, character and identity of towns and villages and contribute to the quality of life in West Oxfordshire.
- Ensuring the development is located in the right places enables a good quality of life for all, by ensuring that housing, jobs and infrastructure can be delivered where it is needed, while protecting the characteristics of the district that make West Oxfordshire special.
- Maintaining an up-to-date Local Plan ensures a plan-led approach to managing development in West Oxfordshire can continue and that planning applications can be determined in accordance with the Plan and overarching vision and objectives.
- The majority of residential development has been delivered on undeveloped greenfield sites throughout the monitoring period, due to relatively limited available opportunities for brownfield redevelopment.

- Water quality has deteriorated throughout the monitoring period, in part due to foul water discharge.
- 55% percent of household waste was recycled or composted during the monitoring period, which is someway short of the 70% target to be achieved by 2025.
- The council has continued to secure funding through development for new infrastructure, but there remains a significant funding gap to deliver necessary infrastructure improvements in the district.
- The delivery of infrastructure is important if the Local Plan is to deliver against a range of Core Objectives and to meet the priorities of the West Oxfordshire Council Plan 2023 – 2027. Failure to deliver adequate supporting infrastructure is likely to have a detrimental impact on the quality of life for all.

4.3 The overall strategy for the Local Plan comprises five strands; a presumption in favour of sustainable development, ensuring development is located in the right places (i.e. focused primarily on larger, more sustainable settlements) prudent use of natural resources, high quality design and ensuring that new development is supported by appropriate investment in infrastructure.

4.4 Set out below is some commentary and statistical/monitoring information around these five main strands with links to each policy (and also the Council Plan) provided as appropriate.

Planning Applications Determined in Monitoring Period (links to Policy OSI)

4.5 A total of 3,509 planning applications were determined within the monitoring period (1st April 2021 – 31st March 2023).

4.6 This includes applications that were subsequently withdrawn, but the figures serve to illustrate the level of interest in developing in West Oxfordshire and the important role the planning department plays in determining applications and implementing the policies of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

4.7 A breakdown is provided below for 2021/22 and 2022/23 respectively. As can be seen, the vast majority of applications were approved in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development that is embedded in Local Plan Policy OSI.

Table 4 - Types of planning application decision 2021-2023

| Type of decision | Number of applications 21/22 | Number of applications 22/23 |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Approved / Subject to S106 | 1,589 | 1,378 |
| Prior approval granted / not required | 40 | 39 |
| Refused | 107 | 172 |

| Type of decision | Number of applications 21/22 | Number of applications 22/23 |
|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Withdrawn | 92 | 76 |
| Prior approval refused | 7 | 6 |
| Finally disposed of | 2 | 1 |
| Total | 1,837 | 1,672 |

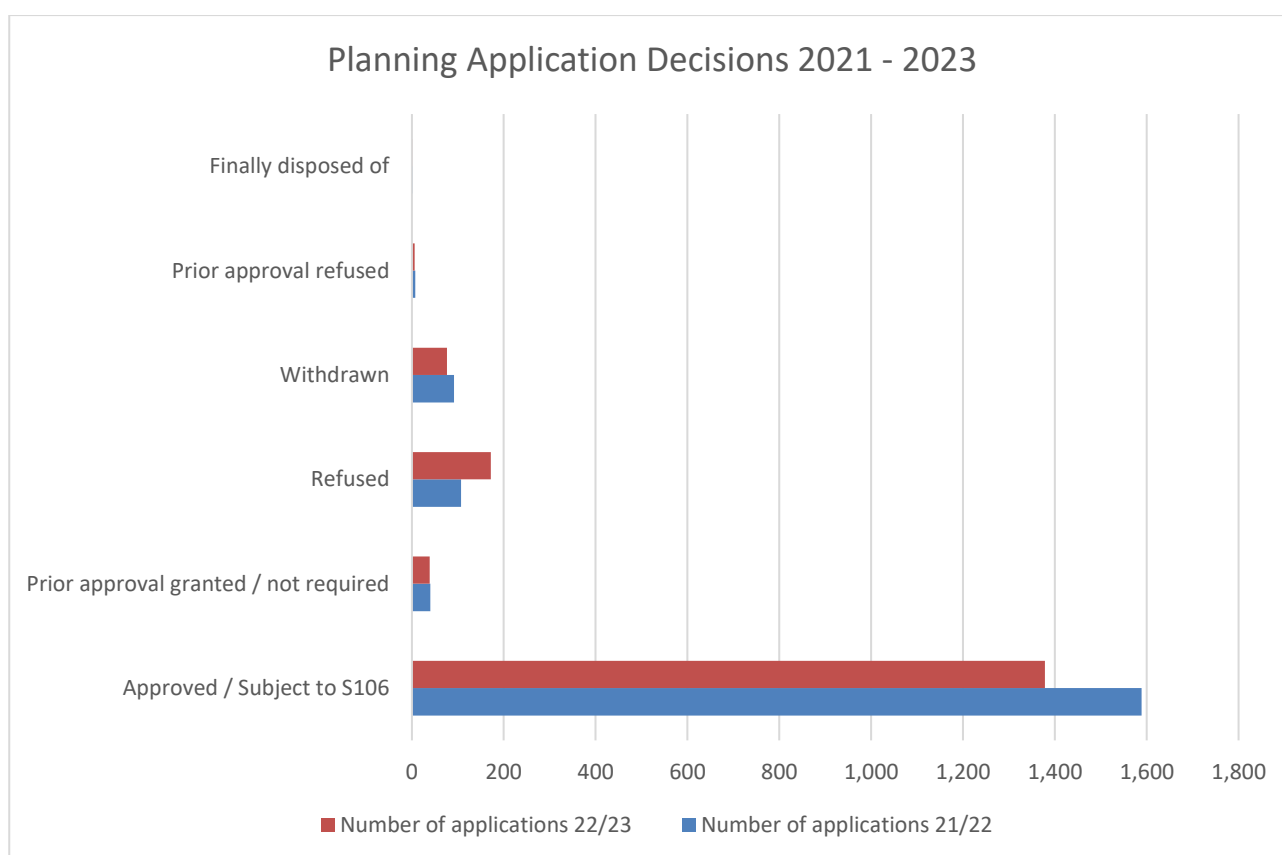


Figure 1 - Types of planning decision 2021 - 2023

Table 5 - Types of planning application 2021 - 2023

| Type of application | Number of Applications 21/22 | Number of Applications 22/23 |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Advertisement | 22 | 23 |
| Certificates of Lawfulness | 60 | 42 |
| Discharge / Removal / variation of conditions | 125 | 104 |
| Full Planning Application | 363 | 355 |
| Householder | 920 | 806 |
| Listed Building Consent | 224 | 224 |
| Non Material Amendments | 50 | 55 |
| Outline Planning | 17 | 15 |
| Prior Approval | 48 | 44 |
| Reserved Matters | 8 | 4 |
| Total | 1,837 | 1,672 |

4.8 Of the 3,509 applications that were determined, the majority were householder applications.

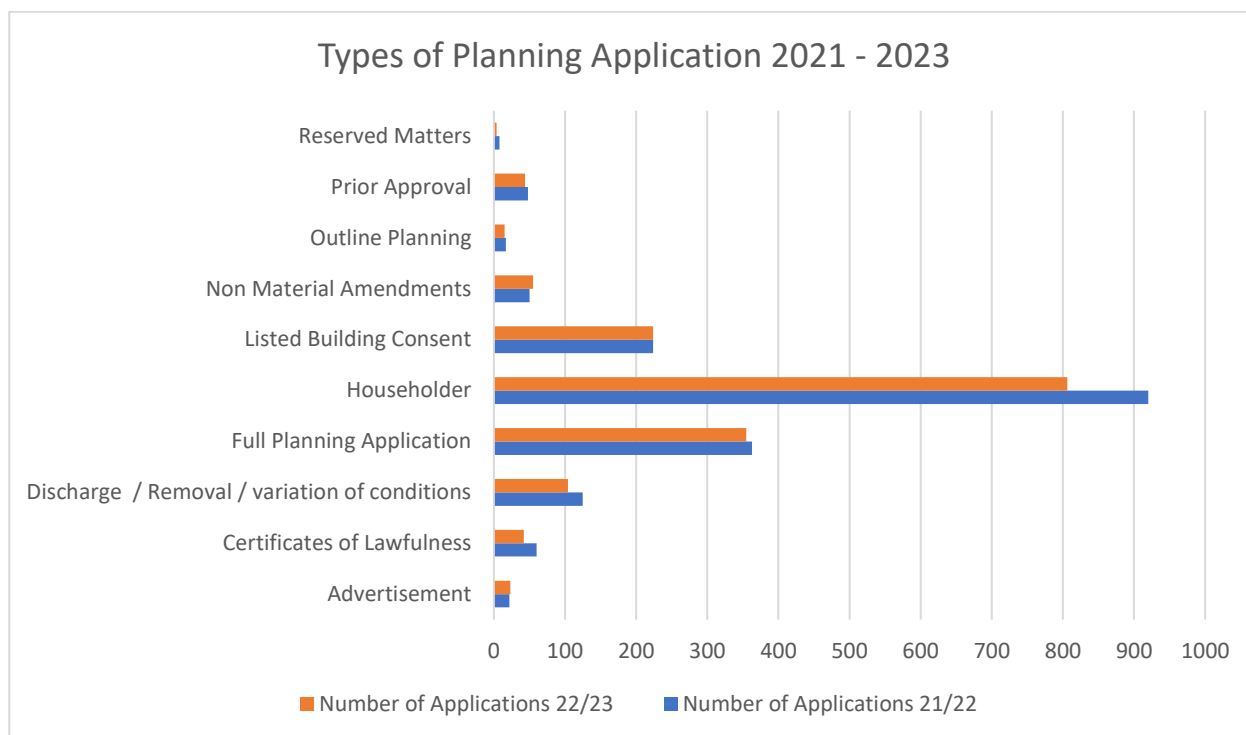


Figure 2 - Types of planning application 2021 - 2023

Planning Appeals (links to Policy OSI)

- 4.9 A total of 77 planning appeals were determined within the monitoring period. The majority of these (54) were dismissed, with 17 allowed or allowed in part.
- 4.10 The allowed appeals included a number of residential schemes as illustrated in table 6 below including one major development proposal at the Moors, Ducklington.

Table 6 - Appeals allowed for residential development 2021 - 2023

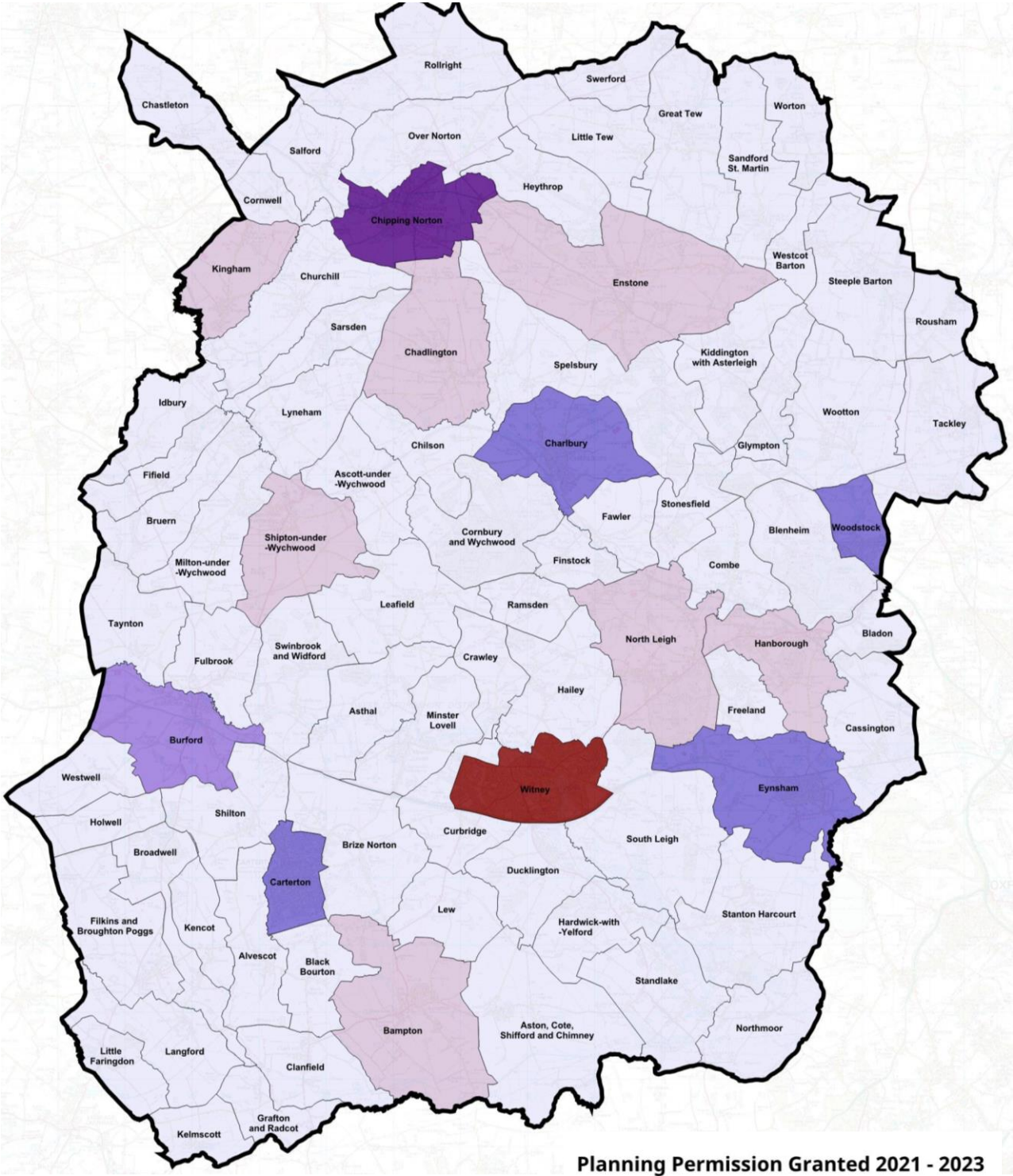
| Reference | Location | Description |
|--------------|------------------|---|
| 19/02406/FUL | Stanton Harcourt | Erection of a single detached dwelling and double garage with associated landscaping and alterations to existing vehicular access |
| 20/00858/FUL | Witney | Erection of two semi-detached dwellings |
| 20/01915/OUT | Brize Norton | Self-Build and/or Custom Housebuilding plots for 2 detached dwellings, (Outline application with all matters reserved except for access) Revised Plans) |
| 21/00801/FUL | Chipping Norton | Change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for four gypsy/travellers families, including the laying of hard |

| Reference | Location | Description |
|---------------|-----------------------|---|
| | | standing, construction of access driveway and associated earthworks (part retrospective) |
| 21/01229/FUL | Milton Under Wychwood | Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of two detached dwellings together with associated works. |
| 22/00017/PN56 | Sturt Farm | Conversion of existing barn to dwelling. |
| 21/03405/OUT | Ducklington | Outline planning permission for up to 120 dwellings with associated landscaping and infrastructure with detailed vehicular access from Witney Road (with all other matters including other access arrangements reserved). |

Location of Development (links to Policy OS2)

- 4.11 Local Plan Policy OS2 seeks to steer development to larger, more sustainable settlements where there are good opportunities for active travel and public transport and a good range of services and facilities available.
- 4.12 In this context, figure 3 below shows the concentrations of planning approvals in each parish between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2023.
- 4.13 As can be seen, the majority of planning approvals were concentrated within the main service centres and rural service centres in line with the general approach of Policy OS2.
- 4.14 There were also higher concentrations of new permissions in a number of larger villages including North Leigh, Enstone and Bampton. These locations have seen increased development activity in recent years, particularly for residential development and have growing populations.

Figure 3 - All planning applications approved 2021 - 2023



Car use and accessibility (links to Policies OSI, OS2 and OS3)

- 4.15 11.5% of households in West Oxfordshire have no access to a car compared to 16% across Oxfordshire as a whole. Higher levels of car ownership may be a reflection of the rural nature of the district and relatively poor access to public transport in rural areas, which may increase car dependency for many communities.

Figure 4 - West Oxfordshire car ownership statistics, Census 2021

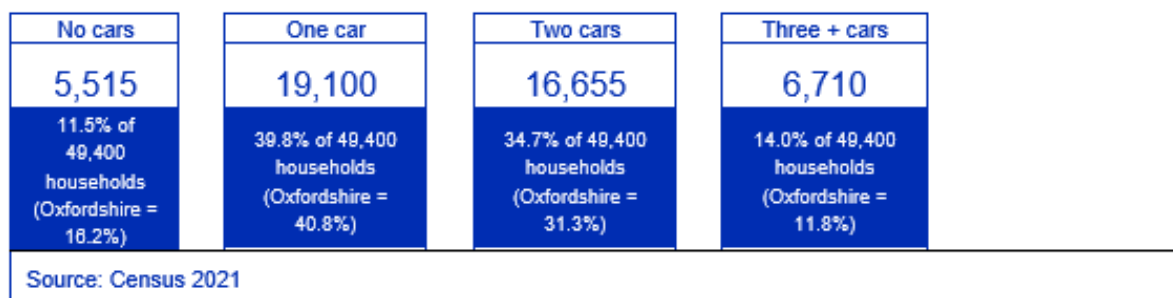
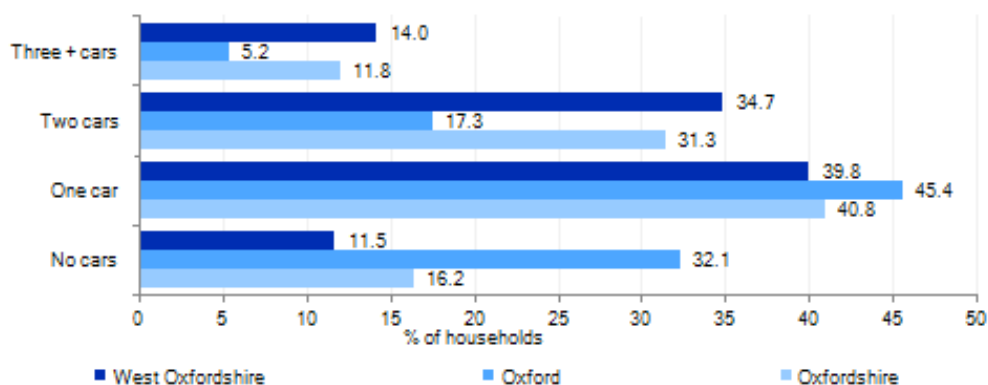


Figure: Car ownership
Source: Census 2021



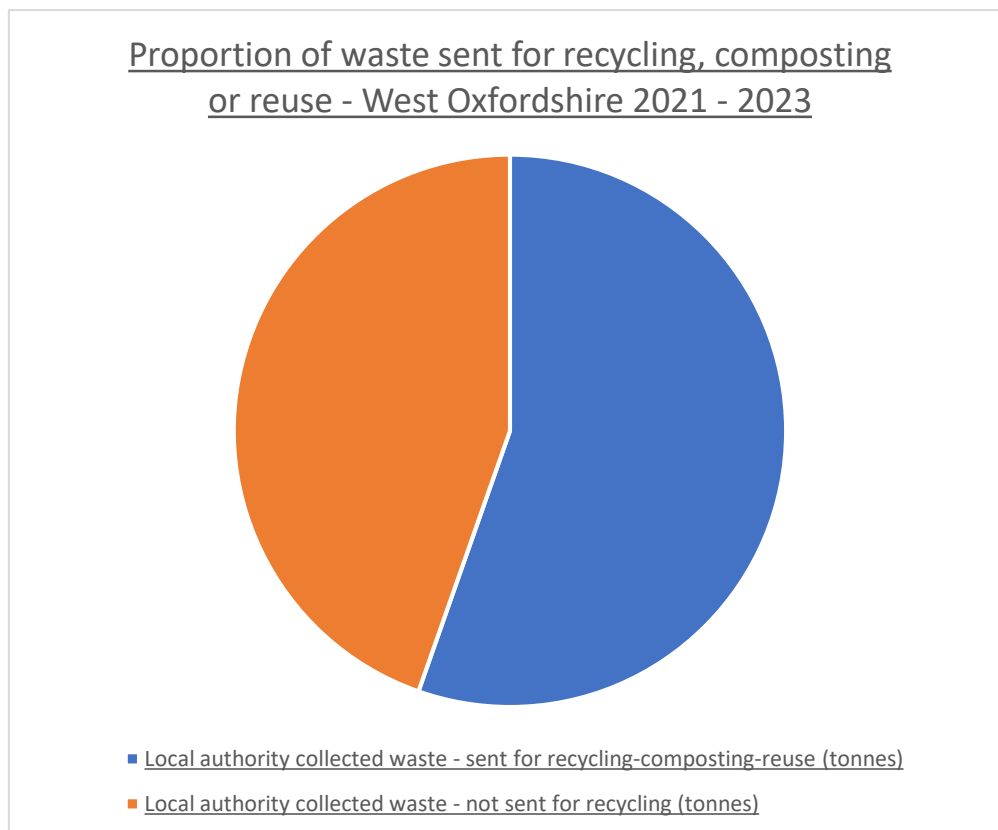
Proximity of development to public transport (links to Policies OSI, OS2 and OS3)

- 4.16 The majority of development is focused within the main and rural service centres and rural service centres which are the most accessible locations for public transport services linking to other centres, particularly bus services.
- 4.17 Financial contributions towards improved bus services have been secured through new development that has been delivered in the district during the monitoring period.
- 4.18 There were 24 new permissions granted for residential development within 1.6km of a railway station, totalling approximately 170 dwellings.

Waste and recycling (links to Policy OS3)

- 4.19 A total of 98,688 tonnes of waste was collected by the local authority between 2021 and 2023¹. The majority of this waste was sent for recycling, composting or re-use, but a significant proportion of waste is not sent for recycling.
- 4.20 The Local Plan includes a target to recycle or compost 70% of household waste by 2025. Only 55% of household waste was recycled during the monitoring period, which leaves performance someway short of the target.

Figure 5 - Proportion of waste sent for recycling, composting or reuse in West Oxfordshire 2021 - 2023



Brownfield land redevelopment (links to Policies OS1, OS2 and OS3)

- 4.21 The Local Plan seeks ensure that development makes the most efficient use of land. There is relatively limited brownfield land available in the District since the majority of former industrial sites have already been developed, yet a significant amount of residential development has been delivered on previously developed land, though conversion or redevelopment.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/env18-local-authority-collected-waste-annual-results-tables-202122>

- 4.22 Approximately 306 dwellings were completed on previously developed land during the monitoring period. This includes the redevelopment of existing properties and replacement dwellings.

Development at risk of flooding (links to Policies OS1, OS2 and OS3)

- 4.23 There were 198 approvals for development within Flood Zone 2 (medium risk) during the monitoring period². The majority of these applications were minor in nature and related to householder development such as extensions to properties.
- 4.24 Further reflections on the location of sensitive land uses such as housing or employment development are set out below in relation to environmental and heritage assets.

Water Quality (links to Policies OS1, OS2, OS3 and OS4)

- 4.25 Water quality is measured on a river catchment scale and West Oxfordshire falls within two catchment areas: the Evenlode and the Windrush which are both major tributaries of the River Thames.
- 4.26 The annual water quality report for the Evenlode (2022)³, identified continuous emissions from sewage treatment works as a clear, significant source of point pollution in the Evenlode and its operational sub-catchments.
- 4.27 Both nitrate and phosphate concentrations were significantly different upstream compared to downstream of the 4 Sewage Treatment Works (STWs) in the Evenlode Catchment. The mean values for nitrate and phosphate were higher in downstream sites than in upstream sites in the Evenlode Catchment and indicates that STWs are important point sources of these nutrients resulting in decreased water quality downstream of these works.
- 4.28 The latest Environment Agency data for the Evenlode Catchment⁴ indicates that all 18 water bodies in this catchment failed their chemical status. In terms of ecological quality 6 were rated poor and 12 were rated moderate.
- 4.29 Within the Windrush Catchment⁵, all 19 water bodies in this catchment failed their chemical status. In terms of ecological quality 2 were good, 9 were moderate, 6 were poor and 2 were bad. Water quality within West Oxfordshire's water courses has continued to decline over the monitoring period.
- 4.30 Discharges from storm overflows into water courses remain an ongoing problem.

² Using GIS analysis, this was any planning approval polygon that intersected the flood zone 2 polygon.

³³ State of the Evenlode: Annual Water Quality Report 2022 (Earthwatch Europe)

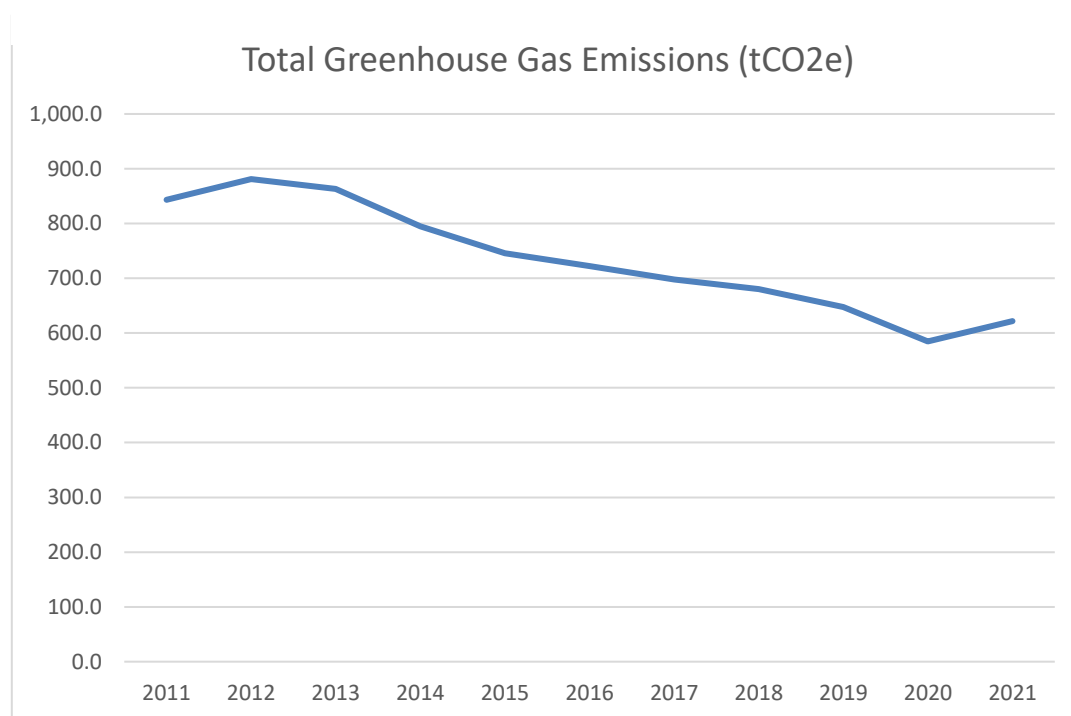
⁴ <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/OperationalCatchment/3181/print>

⁵ <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/OperationalCatchment/3539/print>

Climate and Carbon (links to Policies OS1, OS2, OS3 and OS4)

- 4.31 The government publish statistics⁶, to produce a nationally consistent set of greenhouse gas emission estimates for local authority areas in England. The latest statistics published in June 2021 show the change in greenhouse gas emissions for different sectors over the lifetime of the Local Plan.
- 4.32 Figure 6 below, shows the trend in greenhouse gas emissions in West Oxfordshire since 2011. Notably, there has been a steady decrease since 2011 with a slight uptick in 2021.

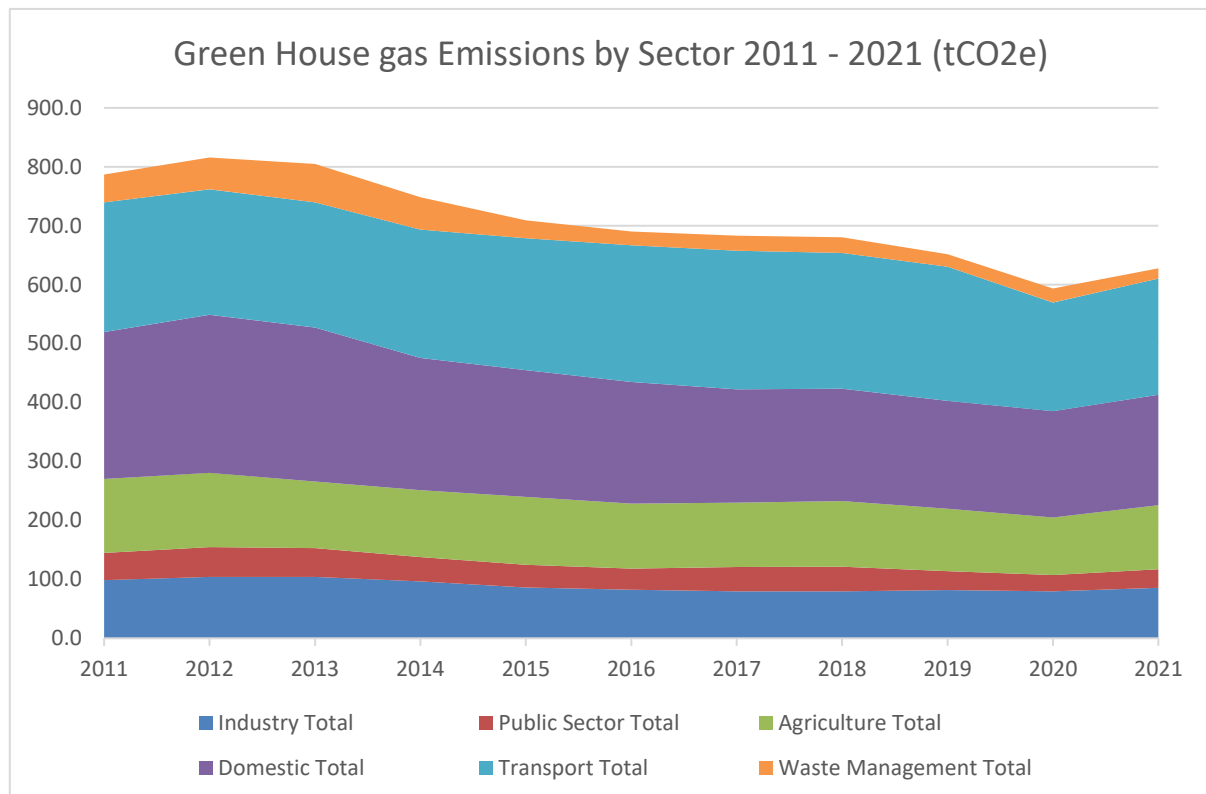
Figure 6 - Total Greenhouse gas emissions for West Oxfordshire 2011 - 2021



⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021>

- 4.33 The majority of greenhouse gas emissions in West Oxfordshire arise from domestic and transport emissions, which account for over 58% of the total.
- 4.34 Further action to reduce emissions from residential development and transport will be necessary to meet targets for net zero emissions by 2050 or earlier.

Figure 7 - West Oxfordshire Greenhouse gas emissions by section 2011 - 2021



Provision of Supporting Infrastructure (links to Policy OS5)

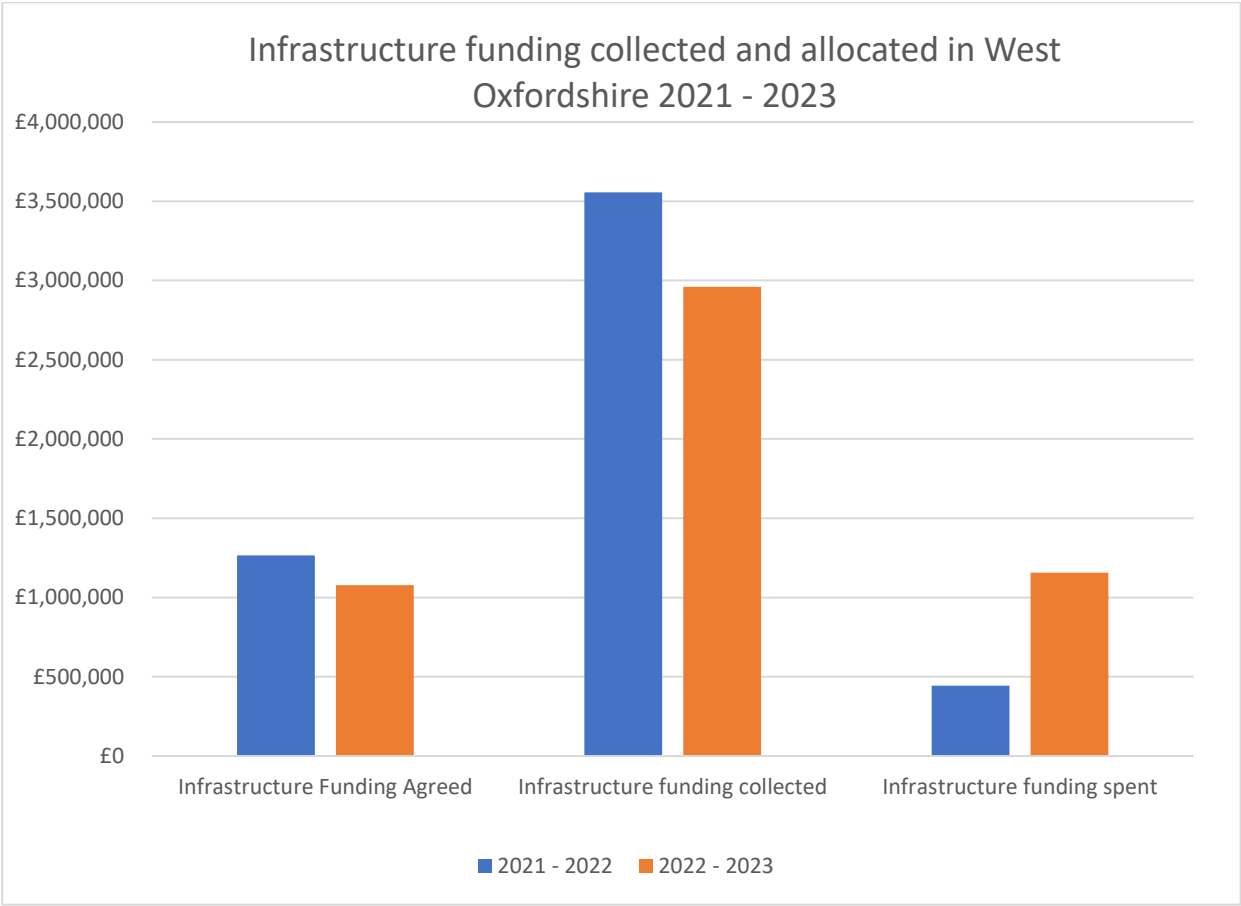
- 4.35 New development is required to deliver or contribute towards the timely provision of essential supporting infrastructure either directly as part of the development or through an appropriate financial contribution.
- 4.36 The local Plan 2031 is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which sets out a range of highways, utilities, community and green infrastructure that is necessary to support the delivery of the Local Plan.
- 4.37 Evidence⁷ suggests that there is a significant funding gap relating to the cost of infrastructure in the district and this will have to be made up through a range of mechanisms including Section 106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 4.38 West Oxfordshire District Council do not currently implement CIL, so the majority of financial contributions for infrastructure funding are secured via S106 at present.
- 4.39 The council collected a total of £6,514,898 of infrastructure funding through the monitoring period. A summary of financial contributions is shown in the table below. Further, detailed information is set out in the Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) published [online](#) annually.

Table 7 - Section 106 infrastructure funding agreed, collected and spent 2021 - 2023

| Year | Infrastructure Funding Agreed | Infrastructure funding collected | Infrastructure funding spent |
|--------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2021 - 2022 | £1,265,635 | £3,555,410 | £ 444,927 |
| 2022 - 2023 | £1,078,895 | £2,959,488 | £1,156,613 |
| Total | £2,344,530 | £6,514,898 | £1,601,540 |

⁷ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/oxnfffxd/infrastructure-funding-gap-analysis-june-2020.pdf>

Figure 8 - Section 106 infrastructure funding agreed, collected and spent 2021 - 2023



PROVIDING NEW HOMES

SUMMARY

- The highest concentrations of new residential development have taken place within Main Service Centres, Rural Service Centres and larger villages in line with the locational policies of the Local Plan.
- In 2021/22, a total of 1,002 new homes were completed, well in excess of the Local Plan requirement for that year.
- In 2022/23, there was a slight downturn to 729 housing completions, below the 800 dwelling annual requirement of the Local Plan for that year.
- Records indicate that there were approximately 74 residential completions during the monitoring period that involved the redevelopment, subdivision or conversion of existing residential properties. This includes a number of replacement dwellings following demolition of existing properties.
- Overall, there has been an upward trend in housing delivery in recent years and it is notable that since the start of the Local Plan period (1st April 2011) up to 31st March 2023, a total of 7,036 new homes have been completed, set against a requirement for 7,100 over the same period (i.e. a modest shortfall of just 64 dwellings).
- As of 1st April 2023, the District Council is able to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land (5.4 years) when calculated using the Government's standard method for assessing local housing need.
- Affordable housing continues to come forward as a significant proportion of total housing permitted and completed in the District.
- 687 new affordable homes were completed during the monitoring period.
- Notwithstanding increased delivery of new affordable homes, the affordability ratio⁸ in West Oxfordshire has worsened, increasing from 9.1 in 2011 to 11.2 in 2022.
- The mix of dwelling types approved is broadly consistent with the indicative guidelines set out in the Local Plan. There have been some additional dwellings to meet the needs older people both permitted and completed during the monitoring period.
- A small number of self-build plots were secured on one qualifying development, to the north of Long Hanborough, during the monitoring period. The provision of self-build plots will continue to increase as larger housing allocations are built out over the lifetime of the Plan.

⁸ Calculated by dividing house prices by annual earnings to create a ratio

4.40 The housing policies of the Local Plan deal with a range of issues including the overall number of homes to be provided, the distribution and location of those homes, affordable housing, housing mix, changes to existing dwellings and provision for specialist housing needs.

4.41 Housing related core objectives are as follows:

- CO4 - Locate new residential development where it will best help to meet housing needs and reduce the need to travel.
- CO5 - Plan for 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.

New residential permissions (links to Policies H1 and H2)

4.42 Planning permission was granted for 802 new dwellings (net) during the monitoring period.

Table 8 - New permissions for residential development 2021 - 2023 (net residential dwellings)

| Year | New permissions for residential development (net dwellings) |
|------------------------------|--|
| I April 2021 – 31 March 2022 | 203 |
| I April 2022 – 31 March 2023 | 599 |
| Total | 802 |

4.43 The relatively low number of applications for residential development during the first part of the monitoring period may have been a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, representing a shift from new major development to smaller scale development and improvements to existing property.

4.44 The majority of permissions across the monitoring period were minor in nature and involve less than 5 dwellings.

4.45 A number of the new residential development permissions related to existing sites that are allocated in the Local Plan or had previously received outline planning approval. These sites now benefit from full planning approval or have reserved matters confirmed, so that development can begin.

4.46 Total commitments for new residential development are illustrated on the figure 9 below. It shows that the largest numbers of outstanding commitments (dwellings with planning permission that are yet to be built) are within and on the edge of Witney, Carterton, Hanborough and Woodstock.

4.47 This pattern of development is consistent with Policy H1, but as the main service centres expand, neighbouring parishes accommodate a growing share of new housing development. This is the case at Witney where housing growth has extended into the parish of Curbridge and at Carterton where housing development has expanded into Brize Norton.

Major outstanding housing commitments

| Site Name | Number of units yet to be built as of 1 st April 2023 | Parish |
|---|---|------------------|
| North Curbridge (West Witney) | 269 | Witney |
| Land east of Carterton | 371 | Brize Norton |
| East of Mount Owen Road, Bampton | 34 | Bampton |
| Land west of Shilton Road, Burford | 72 | Burford |
| Land North Of Burford Road, Witney | 52 | Witney |
| Land at Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney | 16 | Curbridge |
| Land At Butts Piece, Main Road, Stanton Harcourt | 22 | Stanton Harcourt |
| Land North Of Witney Road, Long Hanborough | 150 | Hanborough |
| Witney Road, Ducklington, Witney | 120 | Ducklington |
| Land south of Oxford Road, Enstone | 29 | Enstone |
| Land south of Forest Road, Charlbury | 25 | Charlbury |
| Land South of Giernalls Road, Hailey | 22 | Hailey |
| Chipping Norton War Memorial Hospital Horsefair Chipping Norton | 14 | Chipping Norton |
| Land South East Of 84 – 86 Grove Road, Bladon, Oxfordshire | 10 | Bladon |
| Station Garage, Station Road, Kingham, | 10 | Kingham |
| Land to the rear of 65 High Street, Standlake | 10 | Standlake |
| Site Of Former 19, Burford Road, Carterton | 10 | Carterton |
| 27 Market Square, Witney | 10 | Witney |
| 1 St Marys Court Witney | 30 | Witney |

Total Net Housing Completions (links to Policies H1 and H2)

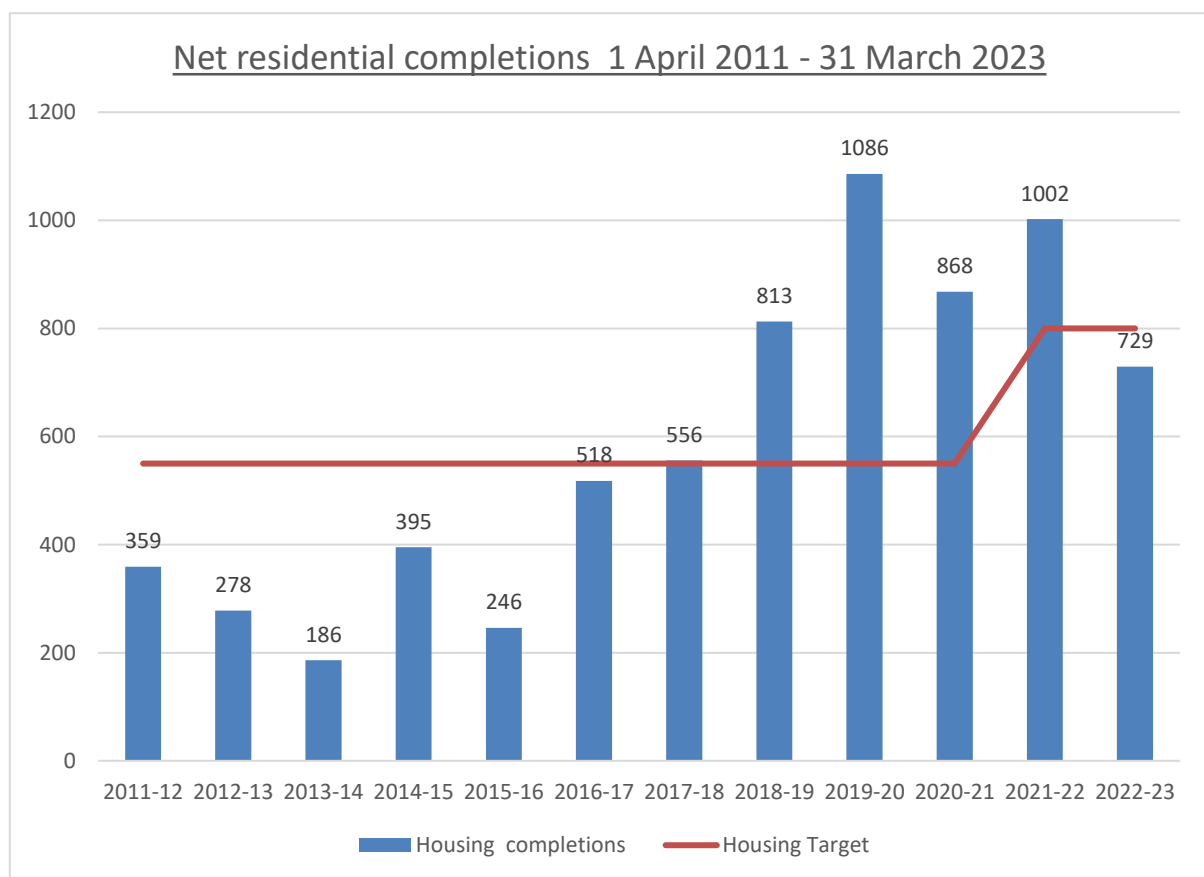
4.48 The Local Plan is based on an overall housing requirement of 15,950 homes (798 per year from 2011 – 2031). This includes 13,200 homes for West Oxfordshire’s own housing needs (660 per year) plus a further 2,750 (136 per year rounded) for Oxford City’s unmet housing need.

4.49 Notably, Policy H2 of the Local is based on a ‘stepped’ housing requirement which increases from 2021 onwards to take account of Oxford’s unmet housing need as follows:

- 550 dwellings per year (2011-2021)
- 800 dwellings per year (2021 – 2023)
- 975 dwellings per year (2023 – 2024)
- 1,125 dwellings per year (2024 – 2031)

4.50 Notably, in the period 1st April 2011 – 31st March 2023, a total of 7,036 new homes have been completed in West Oxfordshire, set against a requirement of 7,100 new homes over the same period. This means that delivery has effectively been on track – with a modest shortfall of just 64 dwellings.

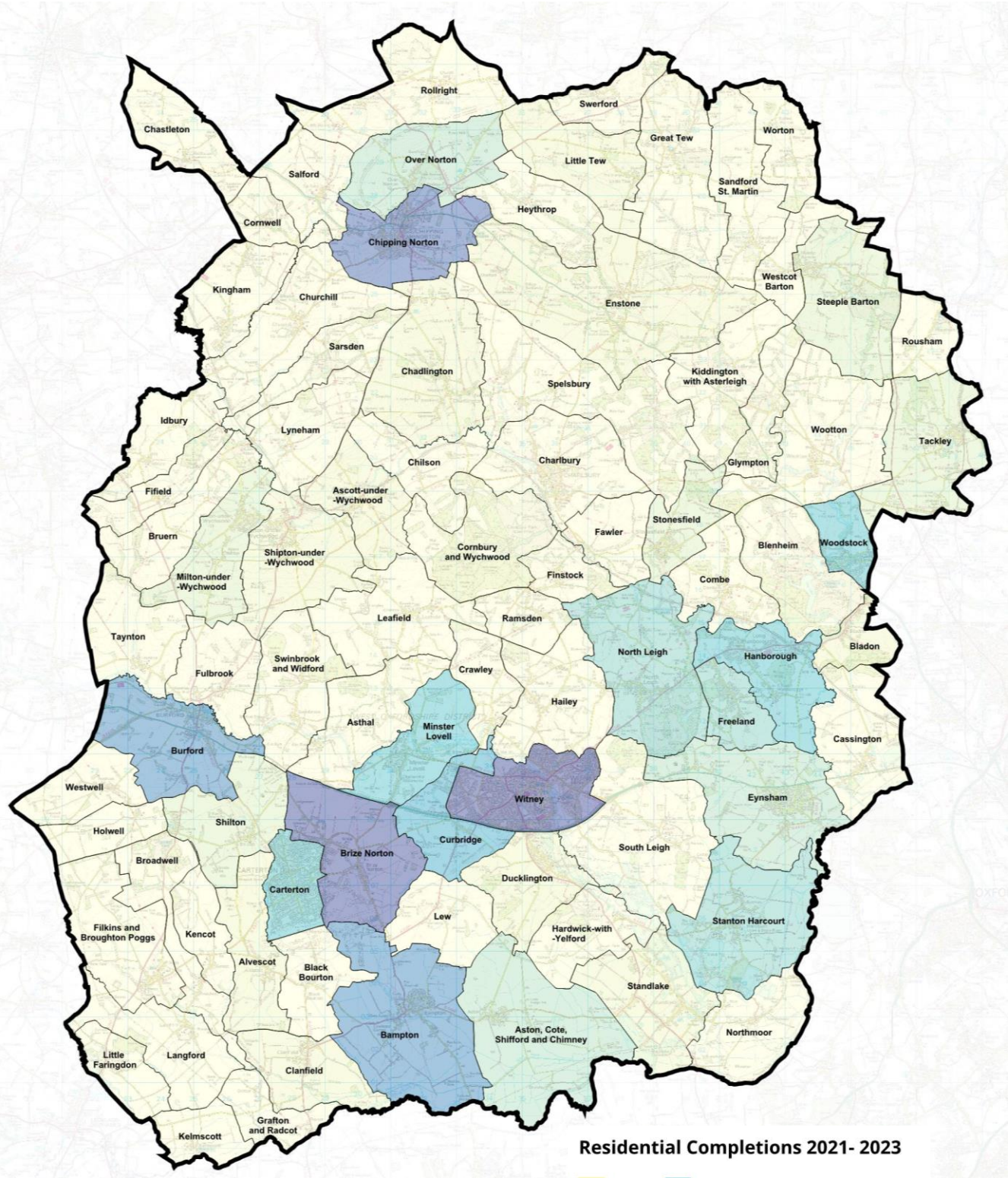
Figure 10 - Net residential completions in West Oxfordshire 2011 - 2023



Net Housing Completions 2021 – 2023 (links to Policies H1 and H2)

- 4.51 A total of 1,002 new homes were completed in 2021/22 which exceeded the Local Plan requirement of 800 homes that year.
- 4.52 In 2022/23, the number of homes completed fell to 729 which was below the Local Plan requirement of 800 homes that year.
- 4.53 Figure 11 below shows the location of these completions on a spatial basis.

Figure 11 - Net residential completions 2021 - 2023

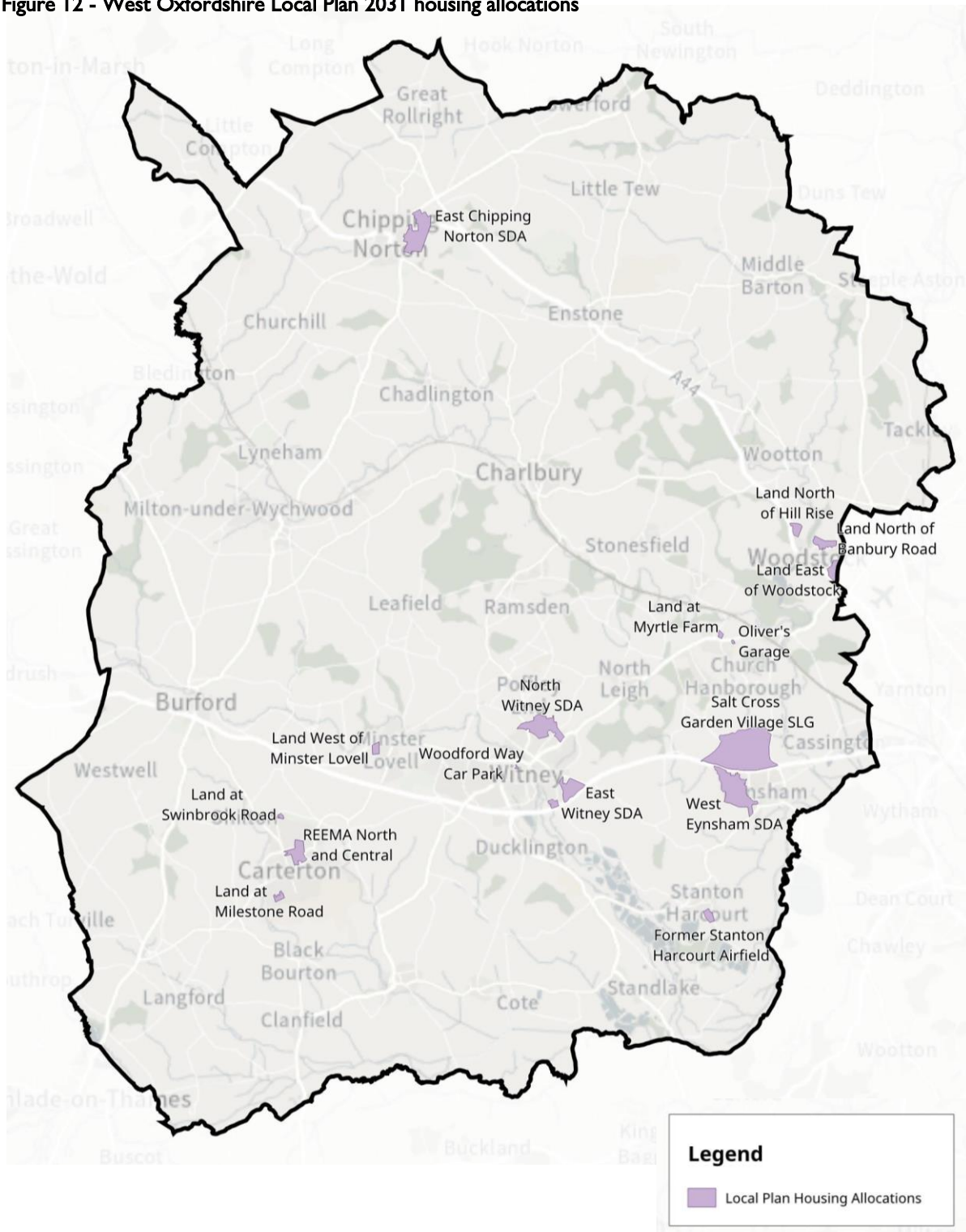


Housing allocations (links to Policies H1, H2 and various site allocations)

4.54 The Local Plan allocates a number of strategic and non-strategic housing sites, some of which (primarily the smaller sites) have now been completed or are under construction and some of which are yet to come forward to construction, particularly the larger strategic sites.

4.55 The location of these allocated sites is shown on figure 12 below.

Figure 12 - West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 housing allocations



4.56 Table 9 below lists the various local plan housing allocations and the total number of completions recorded up to 1st April 2023.

Table 9 - Expected and actual completions on allocated sites

| Site Name | Allocated total dwellings | Expected completions 2018-2023 (Local Plan Housing trajectory) | Total Completions to 1 st April 2023 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|---|
| East Witney SDA | 450 | 75 | 0 |
| North Witney SDA | 1,400 | 75 | 0 |
| Woodford Way Car Park | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| Land west of Minster Lovell | 125 | 125 | 104 |
| REEMA North and Central | 300 | 81 | 81 |
| Land at Milestone Road, Carterton | 200 | 140 | 0 |
| Land at Swinbrook Road, Carterton | 70 | 70 | 0 |
| East Chipping Norton SDA | 1,200 | 173 | 252 |
| Salt Cross Garden Village | 2,200 | 220 | 0 |
| West Eynsham SDA | 1,000 | 312 | 160 |
| Land east of Woodstock | 300 | 275 | 113 |
| Land north of Hill Rise, Woodstock | 120 | 20 | 0 |
| Land north of Banbury Road, Woodstock | 160 | 0 | 0 |
| Myrtle Farm, Long Hanborough | 50 | 50 | 0 |
| Oliver's Garage, Long Hanborough | 25 | 25 | 0 |
| Former Stanton Harcourt Airfield | 50 | 50 | 65 |

Affordable Housing Completions (links to Policy H3)

4.57 A total of 687 affordable homes were completed during the monitoring period. This included:

- 416 Affordable Rented properties
- 49 Social Rented properties
- 218 Shared Ownership properties
- 4 First Homes

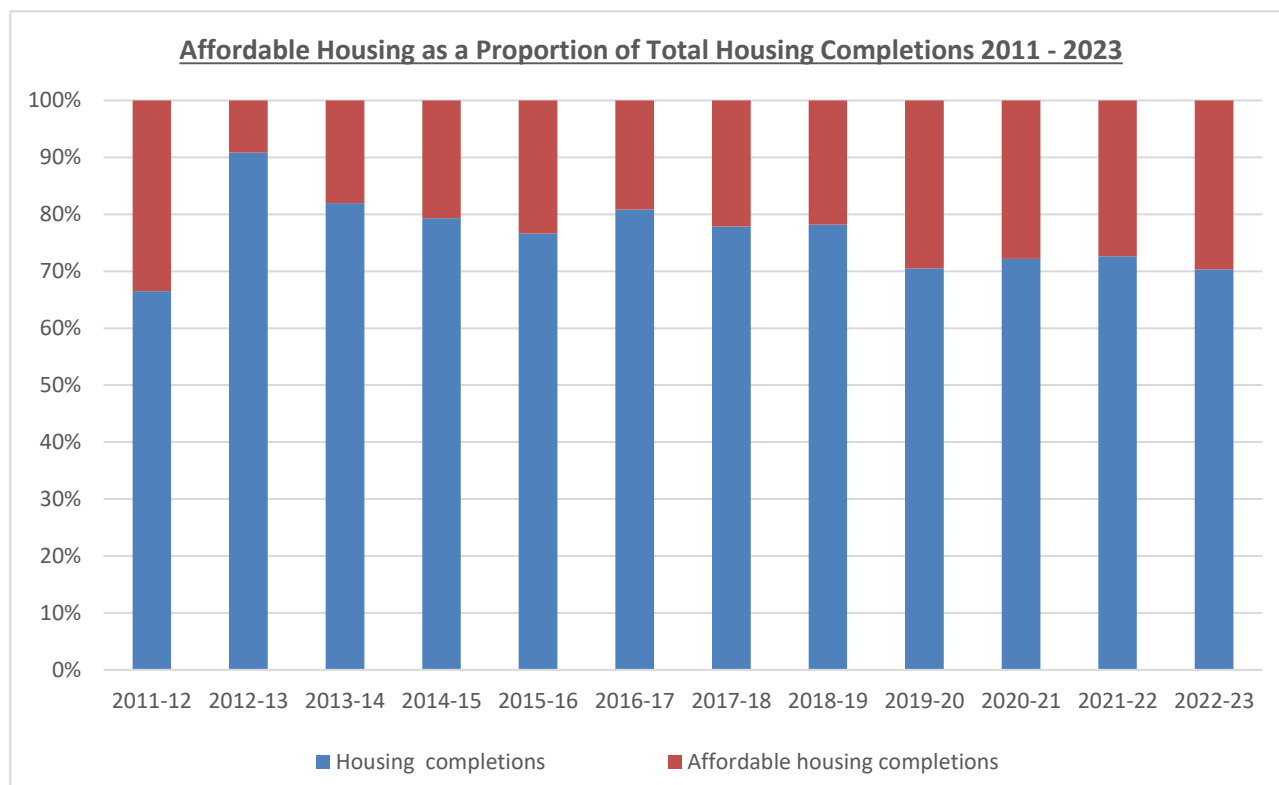
Table 10 - Affordable housing completions in West Oxfordshire 2021 - 2023

| Year | Affordable rented | Social rented | Shared ownership | First homes | Total |
|--------------|-------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------|------------|
| 2021 / 2022 | 241 | 0 | 137 | 0 | 378 |
| 2022 / 2023 | 175 | 49 | 81 | 4 | 309 |
| Total | 416 | 49 | 218 | 4 | 687 |

4.58 All affordable housing completions during the monitoring period were focused on larger development sites, reflecting Local Plan Policy H3 which only requires on-site delivery of affordable housing for developments of 11 units or more.

4.59 Overall, 40% of total housing completions during the monitoring period were classed as affordable which is broadly in line with Local Plan targets. Future developments in High and Medium Value zones, as indicated in the Local Plan are expected to increase the overall proportion of affordable housing delivered on-site.

Figure 13 - Proportion of affordable housing completions 2011 - 2023



4.60 In some instances, a financial contribution (commuted sum) may be sought in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision. Such contributions are then used to fund the delivery of affordable housing within the District.

4.61 A total of **£593,049** was collected towards the provision of affordable housing during the monitoring period.

Affordable Housing Permissions (links to Policy H3)

4.62 A total of 391 on-site affordable housing units were permitted in 2021/23 and will be delivered through future monitoring periods.

4.63 These affordable units will be focused within the main service centres of Witney and Carterton, the rural service centre of Long Hanborough and the larger villages of Ducklington and North Leigh

4.64 In the case of Milestone Road, Carterton, 100% of the on-site units will be classed as affordable.

Table 11 - Affordable Housing required from S106 planning obligations signed 2021-2023

| 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Reference | Location | Total Units |
| 20/02422/FUL | Land east of Swinbrook Road, Carterton | 25 |
| 20/02452/FUL | Land at Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney | 7 |
| 21/00228/FUL | Land at Milestone Road, Carterton | 200 |
| 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 | | |
| 21/02320/FUL | Land South of Giernalls Road, Hailey | 9 |
| 21/03405/OUT | Land East of Witney Road, Ducklington | 48 |
| 21/03716/FUL | Downs Road, Witney | 25 |
| 21/03720/FUL | 44 Common Road, North Leigh | 2 |
| 22/01330/OUT | Land North of Witney Road, Long Hanborough | 75 |
| Total | | 391 |

Type and mix of new homes provided (links to Policy H4)

- 4.65 The population of West Oxfordshire has continued to grow while the proportion of the population aged 65 and over remains higher than the Oxfordshire average.
- 4.66 West Oxfordshire has a higher dependency ratio than the Oxfordshire average. This is the ratio of non-working age people (those aged 0-15 and over 65) to working age population. It is therefore essential that an appropriate mix of housing types is delivered in district to meet the varied needs of the population.
- 4.67 The Local Plan provides a general guide to the size of properties required to meet the mixed needs of the population as follows;
- 4.8% 1 bed properties
 - 27.9% 2 bed properties
 - 43.4% 3 bed properties
 - 23.9% 4+ bed properties
- 4.68 Details of the new permissions granted over the monitoring period for different types and sizes of residential property are set out in the table below.

Table 12 - Proportion of residential types and sizes granted permission between 2021 and 2023

| Size | House | Flat | Overall |
|--------|-------|------|---------|
| 1 bed | 5% | 70% | 16% |
| 2 bed | 9% | 29% | 12% |
| 3 bed | 66% | 1% | 55% |
| 4+ bed | 20% | 0 | 17% |

- 4.69 It can be seen that the mix of housing types and sizes broadly aligns with the indicative guidelines set out in the Local Plan, although it is apparent that the provision of larger properties is skewed towards houses and smaller properties towards flats.

Meeting the needs of elderly (links to Policy H4)

4.70 The Local Plan indicates that particular support will be given to the provision of specialist housing for the elderly. There have been limited new permissions and completions for such accommodation during the monitoring period, but there has been some new provision of extra care housing and permissions granted for new care home accommodation as indicated in table 13 below.

Table 13 - Specialist elderly accommodation permissions and completions 2021 - 2023

| Reference | Description | Location | Status |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| 18/03035/RES | Residential development comprising 91 dwellings (50% affordable), 59 assisted living units (C2 use class) and a 64 bed care home (C2 use class) | Shilton Road, Burford | 25 assisted living units completed during monitoring period |
| 18/03673/FUL | Development of 80 extra care apartments comprising 40 no. 1 bedroom apartments and 40 no. 2 bedroom apartments | London Road and Russel Way, Chipping Norton | 80 units completed within the monitoring period |
| 21/02664/RES | Erection of a two storey sixty six bedroom care home for the elderly | East of Monahan Way, Brize Norton | Permission granted 15/12/2021 |

Provision for custom and self-build housing (links to Policy H5)

4.71 In order to address the need for custom and self-build housing, the Council requires that all housing developments of 100 or more dwellings should include 5% of the residential plots to be serviced and made available for self-build purposes.

4.72 Only one approved residential scheme exceeded the threshold for the delivery of on-site self-build residential plots during the monitoring period.

4.73 Development of land to the north of the A4095 at Long Hanborough (22/01330/OUT) will include the provision of 5% of the total number of dwellings as self-build plots which will equate to 8 dwellings.

4.74 Providing access to self-build housing opportunities can provide a more affordable path to home ownership to some people. Although the provision of such plots has been relatively low during the monitoring period, more opportunities will rise as the larger housing allocations of the Local Plan start to come forward.

Provision for travelling communities (links to Policy H7)

- 4.75 Two applications for gypsy and traveller accommodation were refused during the monitoring period. One of these was subsequently granted permission at appeal.

Table 14 - Planning applications for traveller accommodation 2021 - 2023

| Reference | Description | Location | Status |
|--------------|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 21/02181/FUL | Change of use of land to use as residential caravan site for extended gypsy family with total of 7 caravans, together with laying of hardstanding, erection of five amenity buildings and construction of access. | Moreton Road | Permission refused |
| 21/00801/FUL | Change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for four gypsy/travellers families, including the laying of hard standing, construction of access driveway and associated earthworks (part retrospective) | Over Norton Road, Chipping Norton | Permission granted at appeal |

- 4.76 WODC has jointly commissioned a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) with the other Oxfordshire local planning authorities. The findings of the study will be taken into account in the determination of any future planning applications and in developing the new Local Plan 2041.

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

SUMMARY

- The new permission rates for employment development have been relatively high during the monitoring period. The uptake of land for business uses, particularly in locations identified in the Local Plan serves to support economic growth and help to provide a balance between homes and jobs.
- The Local Plan identifies a need for at least 27 hectares of additional employment land to be delivered in the District by 2031. Much of the land required was identified within existing employment sites and urban extensions, which have been a focus for employment land provision during the monitoring period.
- The Local Plan continues to direct the majority of business development, particularly larger scale development to the main and rural service centres.
- There has been a range of new business development permitted in rural parts of the district during the monitoring period, although this has been relatively minor in nature. The West Oxfordshire local economy remains diverse, with professional, scientific and technical services the largest business sector in the district.
- Tourism development in West Oxfordshire has been primarily focused on the provision of visitor accommodation during the monitoring period.
- There have been a number of proposals during the monitoring period to increase the provision of community services and facilities in West Oxfordshire, although some existing community facilities have been lost to other uses.
- Barriers to housing and services remains the most significant deprivation domain in West Oxfordshire with almost half the population falling within the most 40% most deprived areas nationally. The availability of services and facilities in West Oxfordshire's settlements has remained fairly stable since the adoption of the Local Plan.
- There have been no changes to the extent of town centres during the monitoring period and only minor changes in terms of land use within town centres over the same period. Although there are some vacancies in town centre premises, the vacancy rates do not present too much cause for concern.
- The most significant changes to town centres have been in terms of vehicular access and parking provision.
- The overall health of town centres is considered to be good as they continue to meet a range of Local Plan and council Plan objectives.

4.77 The economic growth-related policies of the Local Plan cover a number of issues including the provision and protection of employment land, the rural economy, tourism, town centres and the provision and protection of community facilities.

4.78 Core objectives are as follows:

Core Objectives

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 support 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 enable a prosperous and sustainable tourism economy.

CO12 - Look to 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 - Plan for enhanced access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.

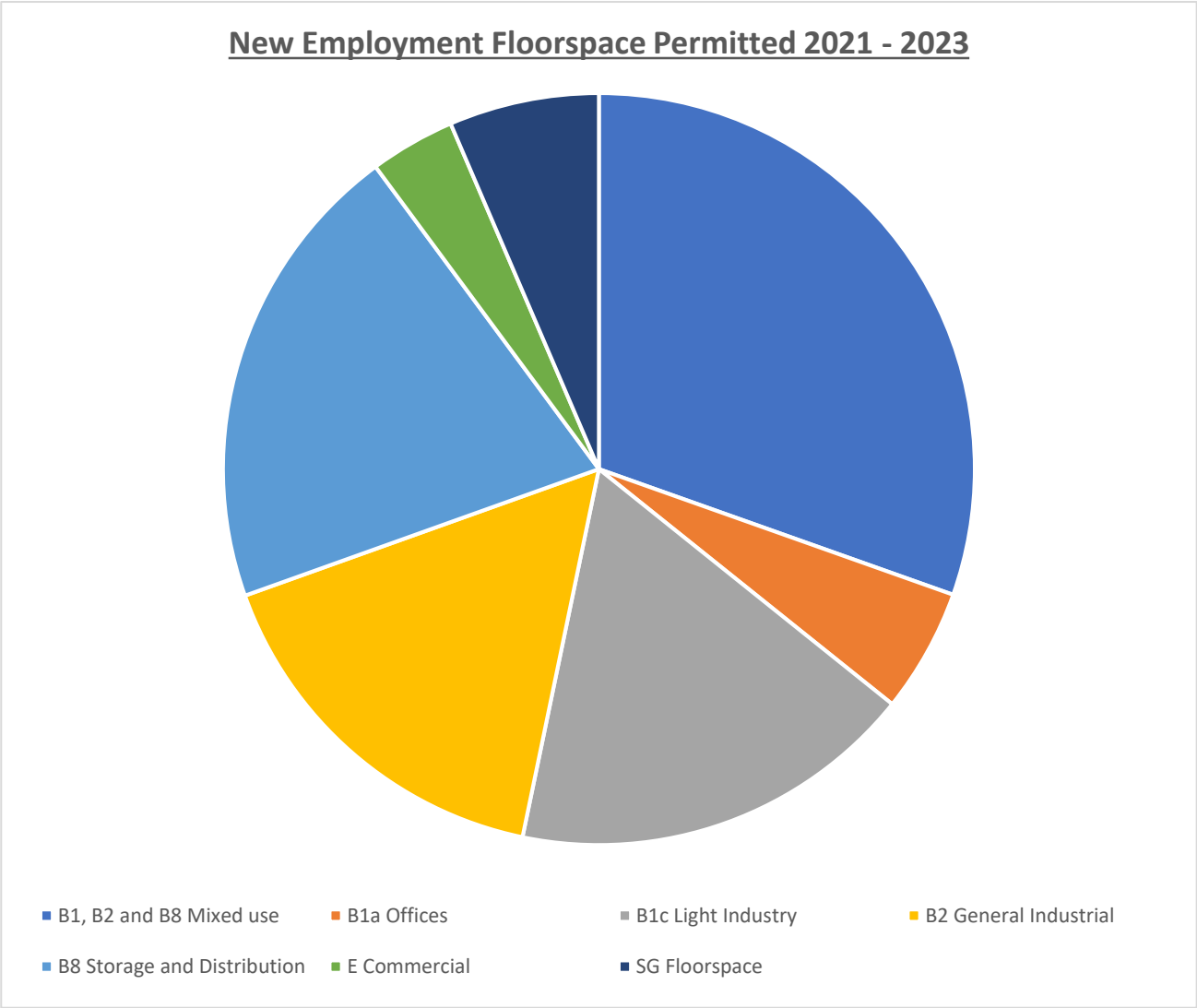
New Employment Permissions (links to Policy EI)

4.79 A total of 56,410m² of new employment floorspace was granted permission between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2023.

4.80 The largest proportion of new employment floorspace permitted was for mixed business development.

4.81 The largest individual proposal was for 4 new employment units at Downs Road in Witney.

Figure 14 - proportions of new employment floorspace permitted 2021 - 2023



4.82 The area of land illustrated on figure 15 below was identified to meet the employment needs of the Local Plan within the Witney sub-area.

Figure 15 - Location of new employment floorspace permitted, West Witney 2021 - 2023

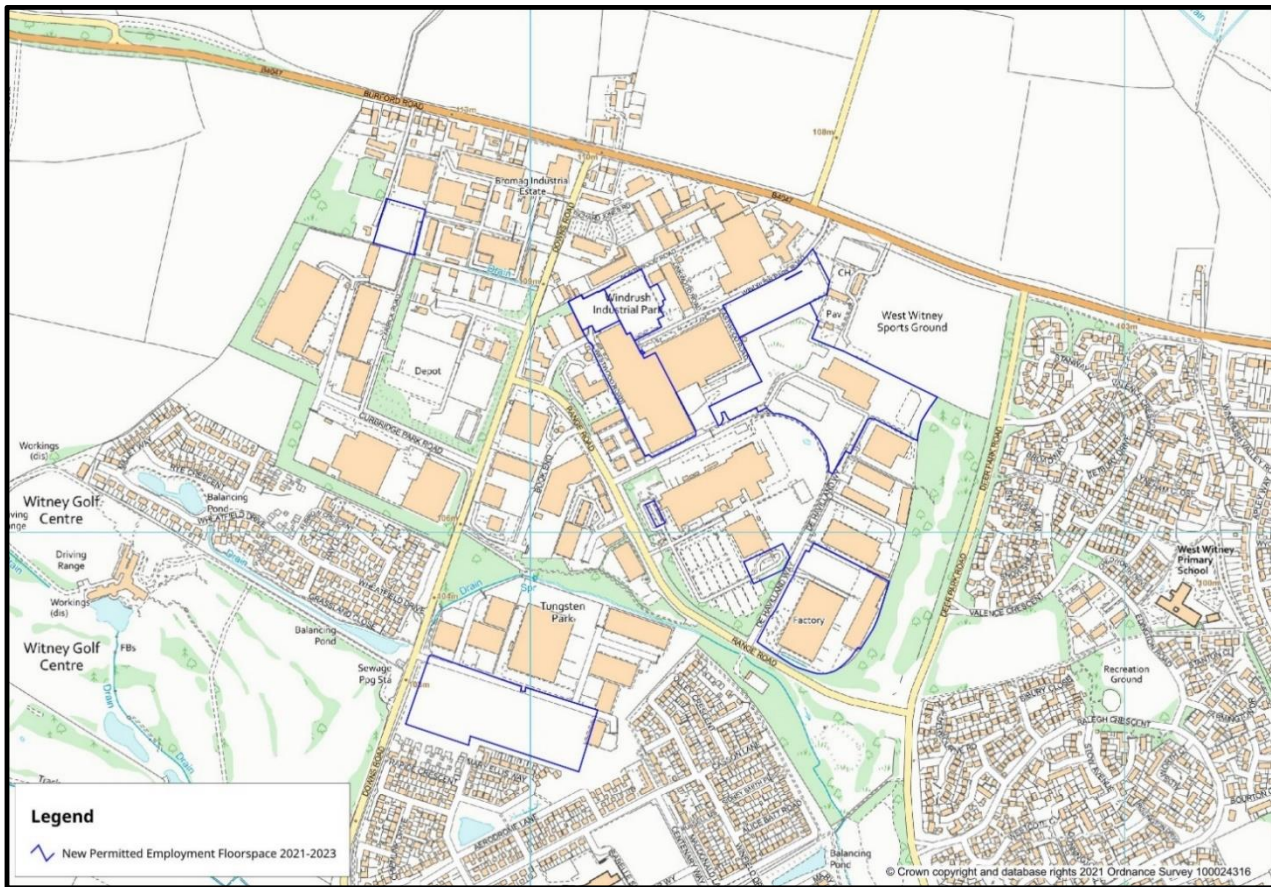


Table 15 - Approvals for new employment floorspace at West Witney

| Planning Reference | Description | Site Name |
|--------------------|---|---|
| 21/02364/FUL | Erection of 4 employment units (Class E (g iii), B2 and B8) with drainage, car parking and landscaping. (Amended plans) | Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney |
| 19/02503/FUL | Extension to existing building to provide additional B8 warehousing and ancillary offices with separate B8 storage warehouse to rear. | De Havilland Way Windrush Industrial Park |
| 21/02929/FUL | Erection of 2 industrial units (Use Class E(g)iii, B2 and B8), to include external ancillary service areas, car and cycle parking. | Windrush Industrial Park |

| | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 21/02248/FUL | Erection of nine industrial units, to include external ancillary service areas, car and cycle parking. | Windrush Industrial Park |
| 20/02391/FUL | Development of a new purpose-built facility comprising B1, B2 and B8 class uses together with landscaping, access road, car parking and other associated works (amended plan) | Land South of Burford Road |
| 21/02364/FUL | Erection of 4 employment units (Class E (g iii), B2 and B8) with drainage, car parking and landscaping. (Amended plans) | Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney |
| 22/03125/FUL | Change of use from class E (Offices) to class B (storage and distribution) along with alterations to fenestration | Witan Park Industrial Estate |

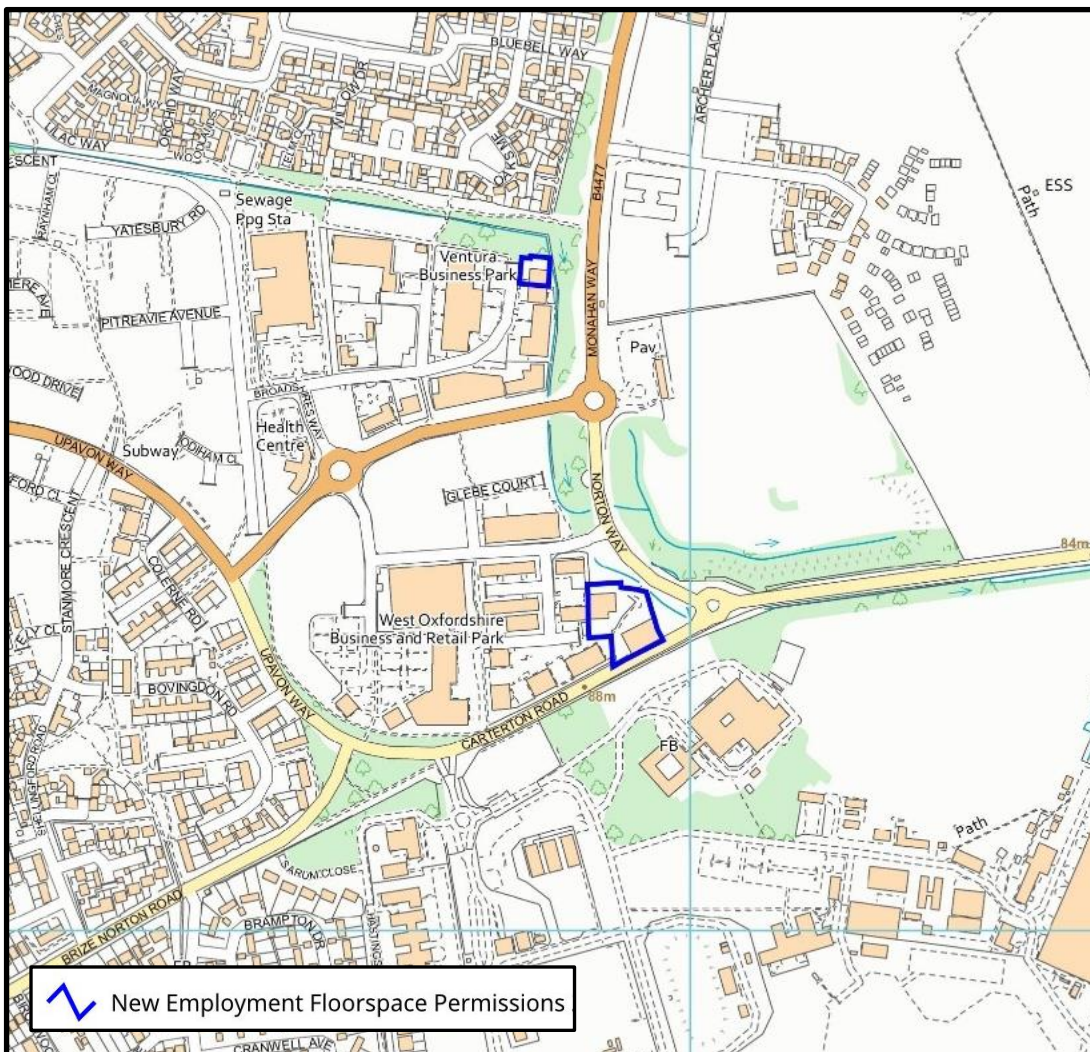
4.83 New business development at Carterton was planned to be focused primarily at the West Oxfordshire Business Park and Ventura Park.

4.84 There were two schemes approved in this area during the monitoring period as illustrated by table 16 and figure 16 below.

Table 16 - New approvals for employment floorspace at Carterton

| Site Name | Description |
|------------------------------|--|
| 11 Ventura Park | Construction of light industrial unit attached to existing unit. |
| Brize Norton Service Station | Demolition of Existing Car Showroom. Redevelopment of the site as an expansion of the existing service area, |

Figure 16 - New employment floorspace permitted at Carterton 2021 - 2023



Rural economy (links to Policies E2, E3 and E4)

4.85 Figure 17 below shows that the largest industry groups for businesses based in West Oxfordshire are professional, scientific and technical services followed by the construction sector and the retail industry.

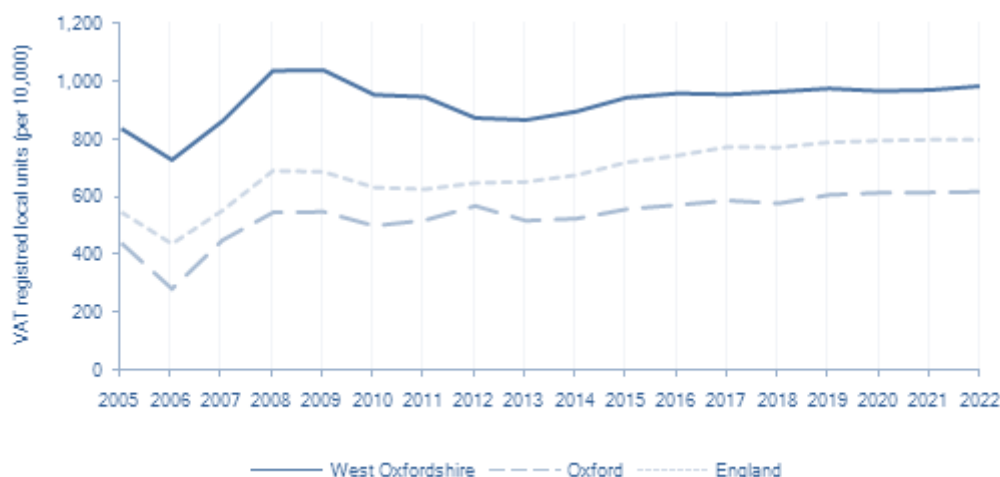
Figure 17 - West Oxfordshire largest business sectors, ONS 2022

| Largest business sector | Second largest business sector | Third largest business sector |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Professional, scientific & technical services | Construction | Retail industry |
| 18.7% of all local businesses | 13.7% of all local businesses | 7.9% of all local businesses |

Source: Office for National Statistics (2022)

Figure: Businesses (VAT based local units) per 10,000 working age population

Source: Office for National Statistics



- 4.86 The majority of businesses employ less than five people. Businesses employing less than 10 people represent approximately 86% of all local businesses.
- 4.87 Local Plan policy directs larger businesses and employers to the main service centres but seeks to support the rural economy by taking a positive approach to small rural business premises and diversifying the land-based sector.
- 4.88 The development of new small employment sites within and adjacent to rural service centres and villages are supported where commensurate with the scale and character of the area.
- 4.89 Outside of the main towns there were limited new permissions granted for new employment floor space at service centres and villages. The majority of permissions were relatively minor in nature and consistent with the requirements of Policy E2

Table 17 - New permissions for commercial and business development in service centres and larger villages

| Ref | Description | Address | Parish Name |
|--------------|--|--|-------------|
| 21/03758/FUL | Change of use and sub-division of building C to Class E (g)(unit 2) and B8 storage (unit 1 and unit 3) use (retrospective)(amended application) | Calais Farm Building Buckland Road Bampton | Bampton |
| 21/04089/FUL | Conversion of existing stable buildings to workshops/starter units (Use Class E) | Worton Park Worton | Cassington |
| 22/02951/FUL | Change of use of part of building from truck storage/workshop to an office and existing hardstanding to parking of vehicles, both in connection with a haulage business; and installation of a pedestrian door in building; and a native soft landscaping scheme | Station Road Kingham | Churchill |
| 21/02815/FUL | Change of use of agricultural building to a builders yard | Friars Court Farm | Clanfield |
| 21/03784/FUL | Construction of B8 Warehouse with ancillary three story office Service Area and Car Parking | Curbridge Business Park | Curbridge |
| 21/00879/FUL | Extension of existing aircraft maintenance hangar to form 'lean to' hangar for indoor aircraft maintenance. (Retrospective) | Enstone Airfield North | Enstone |
| 22/02111/FUL | Change of use of single storey Unit 3 from hobby/artists studio (20/00097/CLE) to flexible use Class B8 and Class E to support Cafe on site. | The Old Coal Yard Gagingwell | Enstone |
| 21/01445/FUL | Conversion of existing buildings for the use of repair and upgrading of motor vehicles, vehicle storage and coach building (retrospective) | Enstone Airfield North | Enstone |
| 21/01303/FUL | Erection of Hangar (Retrospective). | Enstone Airfield North | Enstone |
| 20/00140/FUL | Erection of a new office building, warehouse and starter units development in a mix of B1 (E(g)) and B8 use class, plus associated car parking, cycle parking landscaping and re-positioning of vehicular access into the site off Stanton Harcourt Road | Unit 2-3 Stanton Harcourt Road, Eynsham | Eynsham |
| 21/03087/FUL | Erection of a storage building | Cassington Road, Eynsham, | Eynsham |
| 21/03258/FUL | Erection of detached building for the garaging of heavy goods vehicles. | 3 Cuckoo Wood Caravan Park | Freeland |
| 22/02986/FUL | Demolition of existing garage and store building. Construction of a new detached garage/workshop/store building with self-contained annexe (for staff accommodation) above. | Goose Eye Farm Eynsham | Hanborough |
| 21/00812/FUL | Erection of Industrial building for storage (class B2 use) with offices. Associated works including landscaping and parking. | North Leigh Business Park | North Leigh |

| Ref | Description | Address | Parish Name |
|--------------|--|--------------------------|-------------|
| 22/00889/FUL | Erection of detached timber poultry house and store. | Firs Farm Over Norton | Over Norton |
| 21/00358/FUL | Construction of new storage building. | Chapel House Grounds | Over Norton |
| 21/03001/FUL | Change of use of first floor residential flat to commercial Class E (g(iii)). (Retrospective). | Woodstock Social Club | Woodstock |

4.90 As a rural district, much of the economic activity in West Oxfordshire relates to agriculture.

4.91 A total of approximately 6,787m² of new agricultural floorspace was permitted during the monitoring period, primarily relating to the formation of new storage for equipment and farm produce.

4.92 There were limited new permissions for other types of business development in the smaller villages and open countryside as illustrated in table 18 below.

Table 18 - New permissions for commercial and business development in smaller villages and open countryside

| Ref | Description | Address | Parish Name |
|--------------|--|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 21/00317/FUL | Erection of a workshop unit and storage building | Land At Hopcrofts Holt Garage | Steeple Barton |
| 21/01130/FUL | Erection of detached storage building. | Upper Close Farm Ledwell | Sandford St. Martin |
| 21/00997/FUL | Erection of new detached building to replace existing building used for pet grooming business. | Wychwood Grooming | Ramsden |

4.93 A limited number of change of use applications for business developments have been permitted during the monitoring period although nothing significant in nature.

4.94 Policy E3 supports the re-use of traditional and non-traditional buildings for employment, tourism and community uses to support the rural economy, but there have been few applications for such development during the monitoring period.

Table 19 - New permissions for change of use and re-use of non-residential buildings in West Oxfordshire 2021 – 2023

| Permission Reference | Description | Parish Name |
|----------------------|---|-----------------|
| 22/01956/FUL | Change of use to Class E (shop and cafe) and F2 (local community uses) | Freeland |
| 22/02807/FUL | Change of use from printers (Use Class B2) to hot food preparation and delivery centre (sui generis), external works including plant and ventilation equipment. | Chipping Norton |
| 22/02411/FUL | Change of Use of ground floor from retail to a wine/cocktail bar/public house. | Witney |

| Permission Reference | Description | Parish Name |
|----------------------|---|-----------------|
| 22/01068/FUL | Change of use from current mixed/warehouse to Sui Generis to allow the premises to be used as a live music and entertainment venue along with a bar serving alcohol, hot and cold food. | Witney |
| 21/04089/FUL | Conversion of existing stable buildings to workshops/starter units (Use Class E) | Cassington |
| 22/02951/FUL | Change of use of part of building from truck storage/workshop to an office and existing hardstanding to parking of vehicles, both in connection with a haulage business; and installation of a pedestrian door in building; and a native soft landscaping scheme | Churchill |
| 21/03758/FUL | Change of use and sub-division of building C to Class E (g)(unit 2) and B8 storage (unit 1 and unit 3) use (retrospective)(amended application) | Bampton |
| 21/03761/FUL | Change of use of Building B to Class E(g) (unit 1) and B8 storage (units 2 and 3) use. (retrospective)(amended application) | Bampton |
| 22/02111/FUL | Change of use of single storey Unit 3 from hobby/artists studio (20/00097/CLE) to flexible use Class B8 and Class E to support Cafe on site. | Enstone |
| 22/03125/FUL | Change of use from class E (Offices) to class B (storage and distribution) along with alterations to fenestration | Witney |
| 21/01408/FUL | Alterations and extension to existing hotel. Change of use of ground floor of 107 High Street to provide new entrance and reception area for use in connection with the existing hotel. | Burford |
| 21/01204/FUL | Proposed mixed-use conversion and redevelopment of existing retail and residential premises to form a 2-screen cinema, eight residential apartments (C3) plus five serviced short-term let apartment suites, with 14 spaced car park and shared bin and bicycle stores to rear. | Chipping Norton |
| 21/02815/FUL | Change of use of agricultural building to a builders yard (class use sui generis). | Clanfield |
| 22/00655/FUL | Conversion of existing grain store to provide holiday, event and tourism accommodation | Curbridge |
| 22/00664/FUL | Conversion of existing outbuilding to provide a self contained annex to Finstock Manor with the ability for it to be separately let out as a holiday home (amended plans) | Finstock |
| 22/00529/FUL | Change of use from indoor entertainment centre to garage for car repairs, servicing, MOT's and sale of new and used cars. (Retrospective) | Carterton |
| 21/01445/FUL | Conversion of existing buildings for the use of repair and upgrading of motor vehicles, vehicle storage and coach building (retrospective) | Enstone |
| 21/03001/FUL | Change of use of first floor residential flat to commercial Class E (g(iii)). (Retrospective). | Woodstock |

| Permission Reference | Description | Parish Name |
|----------------------|--|-------------|
| 22/03049/FUL | Change of use from hall/meeting room (class use F2(b) to local community museum (class use F1(c). | Eynsham |
| 21/00565/FUL | Change of use of workshop yard and associated buildings (Use Class B1) to community bus yard with associated office and storage (Sui Generis Use) | Witney |

- 4.95 There have been a number of holiday lets and other tourism related developments permitted during the monitoring period, supporting an increase in tourism accommodation and activity in the district.
- 4.96 The majority of the proposals are minor in nature, but others relate to the expansion and improvement of relatively tourist attractions and conference venues including Soho Farmhouse and Heythrop Park.
- 4.97 As the provision of short-term holiday accommodation increases, particularly through changes to existing dwellings, regard should be had to the impact on existing communities, the increase in temporary residence within settlements and the impact this can have on house prices and service provision.

Table 20 - New permissions for tourism development in West Oxfordshire 2022 2023

| Permission Reference | Description | Parish Name |
|----------------------|---|-------------|
| 22/00345/FUL | Conversion of existing garage block to form up to 2 holiday lets/accommodation ancillary to Priory Barn and associated works. (Retrospective). | Alvescot |
| 22/00840/FUL | Change of use of land to allow the siting of a Shepherds Hut for use as holiday let. | Bampton |
| 20/02600/FUL | The re-organisation and upgrade of the existing Caravan Club Site to include the removal of 92 touring caravan pitches and demolition of existing site buildings, construction of replacement facilities and maintenance/housekeeping buildings with provision of static accommodation in the form of 36 Holiday Lodges | Bladon |
| 21/01408/FUL | Alterations and extension to existing hotel. Change of use of ground floor of 107 High Street to provide new entrance and reception area for use in connection with the existing hotel. | Burford |
| 21/03611/FUL | Conversion of existing barns to enlarge existing dwelling and create two additional self-contained holiday let units (amended plans and description). | Burford |
| 22/03377/FUL | Change of use of a detached garage with self-contained accommodation above to form a flexible use involving ancillary accommodation or a holiday let. | Charlbury |

| Permission Reference | Description | Parish Name |
|----------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 21/02437/FUL | The siting of four shepherds huts (three for short-term holiday accommodation and one associated reception Shepherd hut) and associated landscaping | Chastleton |
| 21/01204/FUL | Proposed mixed-use conversion and redevelopment of existing retail and residential premises to form a 2-screen cinema, eight residential apartments (C3) plus five serviced short-term let apartment suites, with 14 spaced car park and shared bin and bicycle stores to rear. | Chipping Norton |
| 22/02610/FUL | Change of use of land to site one shepherd hut, one bell tent together with conversion of a chicken shed to a kitchen/shower room for short term holiday use - Retrospective | Chipping Norton |
| 22/00655/FUL | Conversion of existing grain store to provide holiday, event and tourism accommodation | Curbridge |
| 22/01486/FUL | Siting of 3 no. holiday pods together with associated decking, car parking and permeable pathways. | Enstone |
| 23/00195/FUL | Proposed siting of a shepherd hut for use as holiday accommodation together with associated landscaping and provision of parking. | Filkins and Broughton Poggs |
| 22/00664/FUL | Conversion of existing outbuilding to provide a self contained annex to Finstock Manor with the ability for it to be separately let out as a holiday home (amended plans) | Finstock |
| 22/02188/FUL | Construction of temporary staff accommodation, comprising 9 twin bedroom pods and 1 dining pod. | Freeland |
| 21/01764/FUL | Construction of five one bedroom guest cabins with associated landscaping scheme and alterations to existing drainage infrastructure. | Great Tew |
| 21/02799/FUL | Erection of twenty single bedroom farmhouse huts and associated landscaping works. | Great Tew |
| 21/03344/FUL | Provision of additional hotel health/wellness facilities to include three sauna pods, four hot tubs, enlargement of existing mill pond and conversion of existing building to provide new changing facilities within existing ice house. Associated soft and hard landscaping works. | Great Tew |
| 21/02445/FUL | Replacement building to provide ancillary accommodation to be used as a holiday let/staff accommodation. (Amended). | Hailey |
| 21/00508/FUL | Phase I works including partial refurbishment of, and works to, the main building complex, landscaping, removal of marquee, provision of Arrivals Lodges and all incidental works. Development part of overall upgrading of Heythrop Park Hotel and estate (Use Class C1). | Heythrop |

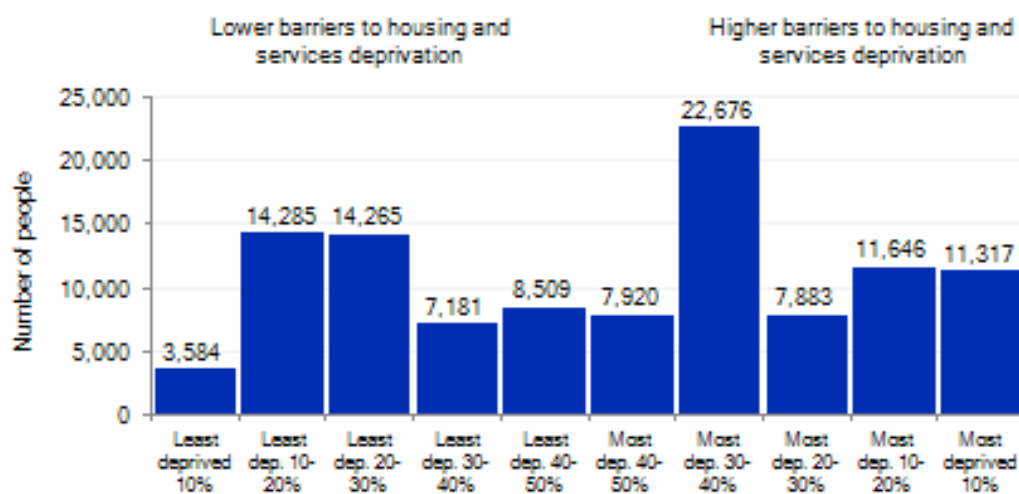
| Permission Reference | Description | Parish Name |
|----------------------|---|------------------------|
| 21/03450/FUL | Phase 2B works including demolition works and redevelopment of existing maintenance area to provide new bedroom accommodation block, enclosed walkway, landscaping and all incidental works. Development part of overall upgrading of Heythrop Park Hotel and estate (Use Class C1). | Heythrop |
| 21/03464/FUL | Phase 2A works including demolition works, partial refurbishment of, and works to, the main building complex, provision of new car park, refurbishment of and extension to existing spa/leisure building, construction of new ancillary buildings/structures, landscaping and all incidental works. Development part of overall upgrading of Heythrop Park Hotel and estate (Use Class C1). | Heythrop |
| 22/03524/FUL | Change of use from annexe to holiday let | Kingham |
| 22/01434/FUL | The siting of 8 no. shepherds huts together with hard and soft landscaping to include provision of a pond, access track, external lighting and associated services. | Minster Lovell |
| 22/03254/FUL | Erection of a Coach House for hotel guest accommodation | North Leigh |
| 22/01208/FUL | Siting of 10 additional holiday lodges (static caravans) and associated infrastructure, to replace touring caravans. | Over Norton |
| 22/03473/FUL | Removal of existing agricultural shed. Siting of 3 holiday glamping pods (static caravans) with associated infrastructure | Over Norton |
| 22/01197/FUL | Demolition of existing agricultural building and erection of new building to form coffee shop with associated car parking. | Over Norton |
| 22/01460/FUL | Proposed siting of 10 holiday lodges in lieu of 18 touring caravans with alternative site access, extension to pub car park and landscaping throughout. | Salford |
| 22/02772/FUL | Change of use of the store over the existing garage to a holiday let. (Retrospective). | Sandford St. Martin |
| 22/01587/FUL | Construction of first floor extension above existing garages to create self contained living accommodation. | Shilton |
| 22/02805/FUL | Conversion of existing barn, together with erection of a single storey extension to form five accommodation lets, with associated works | Shilton |
| 22/01301/FUL | Conversion of outbuilding to create two holiday lets and associated works. | Shipton-under-Wychwood |
| 22/02091/FUL | Conversion of barn to holiday let. Amendment to extant scheme 10/0086/P/FP to enable extension to provide a plant room and battery store for storage of electricity generated PV panels along with PV panels | Spelsbury |
| 22/00646/FUL | Conversion of ground floor of existing garage to a self contained holiday let, works to include the installation of an array of solar panels | Tackley |

Local services and community facilities (links to Policy E5)

- 4.98 The 'Barriers to Housing and Services' deprivation domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: geographical barriers, which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and wider barriers which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability.
- 4.99 Figure 18 below shows that a significant proportion of West Oxfordshire's population falls into the most deprived areas nationally for this measure of deprivation when combined for physical accessibility and affordability.

Figure 18 - Number of West Oxfordshire residents in areas with higher barriers to housing and services deprivation

Figure: Number of people in each deprivation decile, ID 2019 Barriers to Housing and Services domain
Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Indices of Deprivation 2019)



- 4.100 The District Council supports 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. This is reflected in Local Plan Policy E5.
- 4.101 Records indicate that there have been a number of proposals relating to the expansion and improvement of community services and facilities during the monitoring period.
- 4.102 These will help to ensure the continued integrity of community uses and support activity of communities in West Oxfordshire.

Table 21 - Planning permission for new community services and facilities 2021 - 2023

| Proposal | | Address |
|--|---|---|
| Construction of coffee shop/bakery with ancillary drive through (use class Ea/b) and associated works. | A1 Shops | Monahan Way, Carterton |
| Change of use to Class E (shop and cafe) and F2 (local community uses) | A1 Shops | Freeland Methodist Church |
| Conversion of garage creating seating area in connection with neighbouring café/coffee shop | A3 Restaurants and cafes | Market Street, Charlbury |
| Construction of an adventure golf course, bar and outdoor seating area. | A4 Drinking establishments | Witney Lakes Golf Centre |
| Demolition of existing, and construction of new clubhouse. | A4 Drinking establishments | Heyford Lakes |
| Change of Use of ground floor from retail to a wine/cocktail bar/public house. | A4 Drinking establishments | Market Square, Witney |
| Change of use from mixed/warehouse to allow the premises to be used as a live music and entertainment venue along with a bar serving alcohol, hot and cold food. | A4 Drinking establishments | Avenue Three, Station Lane, Witney |
| Proposed mixed-use conversion and redevelopment of existing retail and residential premises to form a 2-screen cinema, | D2 Assembly and leisure | 29 - 30 High Street, Chipping Norton |
| Erection of a detached cabin building to provide changing room/viewing area for use by Lower Windrush Tennis Club (LWTC). | D2 Assembly and leisure | Rack End, Standlake |
| Erection of a new single storey kitchen and dining hall building (amended plans) | F.1 Learning and Non-Residential Institutions | Kitebrook House, Little Compton |
| Erection of a single storey extension to the North West facing elevation to form a new main entrance and reception office. | F.1 Learning and Non-Residential Institutions | St Christopher's Church Of England School, Langford |
| Erection of three external canopies | F.1 Learning and Non-Residential Institutions | Henry Box School, Witney |
| Erection of a children's nursery and associated works. | F.1 Learning and Non-Residential Institutions | Land East Of Woodstock |
| Change of use from hall/meeting room (class use F2(b) to local community museum (class use F1(c)). | F.2 Local Community | The Bartholomew Building Eynsham |
| Erection of single storey bakery building | F.2 Local Community | Over Norton Park |
| Change of use of former bank to provide a new community hub incorporating a community hall, meeting rooms, lettable office space and administrative offices. | F.2 Local Community | Chipping Norton |

4.103 There have been relatively few losses of community uses to other forms of development during the monitoring period suggesting that Policy E5 is acting effectively.

Table 22 - Loss of community services and facilities 2021 - 2023

| Permission Reference | Address | Description |
|----------------------|--|--|
| 20/03381/FUL | Old School House, Main Street, Over Norton | Change of use of chapel to form residential annexe. Demolition of existing single-storey extension, erection of single-storey extension and raising pitch of main chapel roof (amended plans and proposal) |
| 21/01497/FUL | The Bell Inn, Standlake | Conversion of former pub into 4 bedroom dwelling and erection of two new 5 bedroom dwellings and carport to the rear with associated landscaping and parking areas. |
| 21/03224/FUL | Chadlington Methodist Church | Change of use from place of worship to single dwelling with new vehicular access |

Town Centre Vitality and Viability (links to Policy E6)

4.104 There are 5 designated town centres in West Oxfordshire in the main and rural service centres as follows:

- Witney
- Carterton
- Chipping Norton
- Burford
- Woodstock

4.105 There were 112 new permissions granted within or on the edge of these town centres within the monitoring period.

Table 23 - Planning approvals within town centres 2021 - 2023

| Town Centre | Number of new approvals | Proposals of note |
|-------------|-------------------------|--|
| Witney | 45 | A mixture of full planning consents, listed building consents and advertisement consent approved in Witney town centre during the monitoring period. These included changes of use from retail to hospitality uses, residential development and new office provision. |

| Town Centre | Number of new approvals | Proposals of note |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---|
| Carterton | 5 | New permissions include the construction of a new pavilion to the north west of the town centre at Carterton recreation ground and improvements to expand the capacity of a public house. |
| Chipping Norton | 25 | Majority of approvals minor in nature comprising alterations to listed buildings and advertisement consents. Some existing retail uses were permitted to be redeveloped as a mixed use cinema and residential development comprising 2 screens. The change of use of former bank was also allowed to provide a new community hub, incorporating a community hall, meeting rooms, lettable office space and administrative offices. |
| Burford | 18 | The majority of new permissions granted within Burford town centre were Listed Building consents for alterations and extensions to listed buildings. The town centre information centre was permitted to change to a jewellers and extension to the Highway Hotel was permitted to allow an additional 2 bedrooms. |
| Woodstock | 19 | The majority of new permissions granted within Woodstock town centre were Listed Building consents for alterations and extensions to listed buildings. There was a minor loss of residential use in the town centre with the conversion of a first floor flat to commercial use. |

4.106 There has been no change to the total area designated as town centre space during the monitoring period and only limited changes to land use and premises within these town centres.

4.107 Town centre surveys were undertaken in March 2023 to quantify the number of vacant units. Chipping Norton had a total of 16 empty units, with the closure of the Barclays bank possibly the most significant loss to the town. Carterton had a total of 4 empty units and Witney a total of 34 across a number of locations including Corn Street, Market Square, High Street and Marriot's Walk.

4.108 The health of the District's Town Centres is key to meeting a number of Local Plan and Council Plan objectives as these are often to focal point of communities and the most accessible locations for residents to access services and facilities. Although there are some vacancies within town centres, they remain healthy, vibrant and active.

4.109 There have been some changes to accessibility in Town Centres, including restricted access to motor vehicles in Witney and the introduction of parking permits in Woodstock. Such changes have been introduced to improve the town centre environment while keeping them accessible for residents, vulnerable road users and people with disabilities.

TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

SUMMARY

- The majority of new residential and commercial development is located in the most accessible locations at town centres and rural service centres.
- Limited public transport improvements and enhanced opportunities for walking and cycling have been delivered in rural areas.
- Car ownership and distances travelled to access key services and facilities remain higher than the Oxfordshire average.
- Some limited funding has been secured towards highways improvements and monitoring of travel plans during the monitoring period.
- There has been good progress on a number of strategic highway schemes including the Access to Witney project (Shores Green Slip Roads) and the A40 smart corridor project, with the new Eynsham Park and Ride site now under construction.
- There were no applications for an increase public car parking approved during the monitoring period. All applications for increased car parking provision related to private properties or commercial enterprises.
- The council holds £251,564 towards car parking, secured through developer contributions that is yet to be allocated.

4.110 The transport and movement policies of the Local Plan cover a number of issues including the location of development, improvements to the highway network, public transport, walking and cycling and parking provision.

4.111 Core objectives are as follows:

Core Objectives

CO1 - Enable 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 - Plan for enhanced access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.

CO15 - Contribute to reducing the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.

CO16 - Enable improvements in water and air quality.

CO17 - Minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.

Location of Development (links to Policies T1 and T3)

4.112 The Local Plan gives priority 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.

4.113 The Local Plan identifies 3 Main Service Centres and 7 Rural Service Centres which offer the widest range of services and facilities, are accessible by a choice of transport modes and offer a range of job opportunities.

Main Service Centres

- Witney
- Carterton
- Chipping Norton

Rural Service Centres

- Bampton
- Burford
- Charlbury
- Eynsham
- Long Hanborough
- Woodstock
- Salt Cross Garden Village

4.114 Planning permission was granted for 51 residential schemes at the service centres during the monitoring period totalling 515 dwellings, so the majority of residential development is being directed to the most sustainable locations in accessibility terms⁹.

4.115 The District Council has secured funding towards public transport improvements from developments commercial developments and developments that have been approved outside of the service centres.

4.116 The council currently holds £15,651 that is yet to be allocated towards highways and sustainable transport projects.

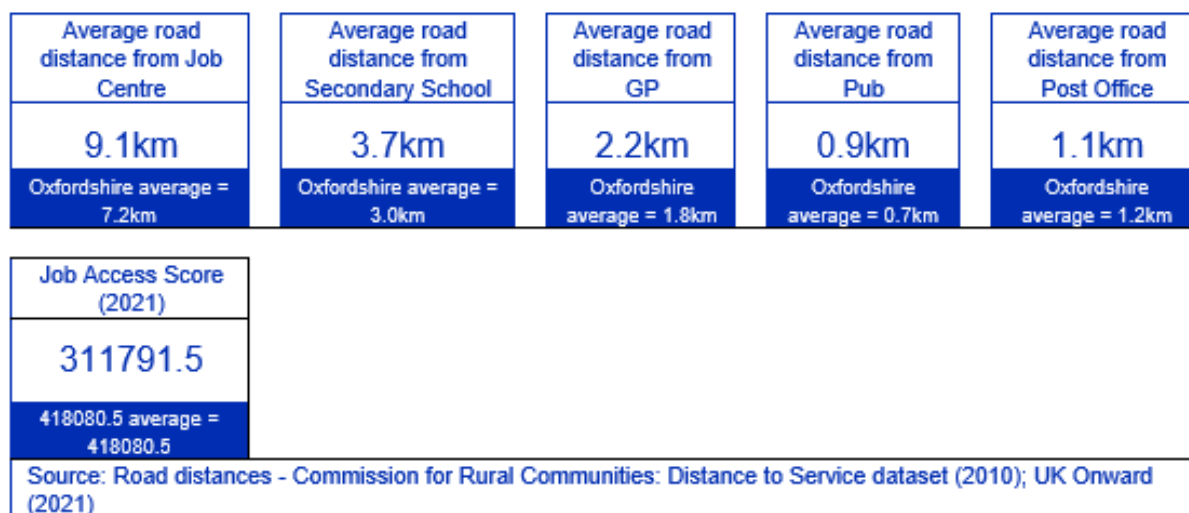
Table 24 - Section 106 contributions towards public transport in West Oxfordshire 2021 - 2023

| Year | Public Transport contributions secured / collected / spent |
|-----------|---|
| 2021/2022 | £7,942 (Stanton Harcourt Road, Eynsham) £25,000 (Windrush Industrial Park) £9,000 (London Road, Chipping Norton) Contribution to Villager Community Bus |
| 2022/2023 | None |

⁹ See Policies OS2 and H2 for further information

4.117 Notwithstanding the fact that the majority of developments is directed towards service centres, the rural nature of the district and fact that many settlements in the district have limited or no services at all, accessibility to key services and facilities in West Oxfordshire is relatively poor, resulting in relatively high car dependency.

Figure 19 - West Oxfordshire accessibility to key services and facilities 2021



Source – Oxfordshire Insight – Local Insight profile for West Oxfordshire. OCSI 2022

Highway Improvements (links to Policy T2)

4.118 All development in West Oxfordshire is required to demonstrate safe access and an acceptable degree of impact on the local highway network.

4.119 Development proposals that are likely to generate significant amounts of traffic should be supported by a transport assessment and travel plan.

4.120 The tables below indicate the level of financial contributions towards highway improvements and monitoring fees secured during the monitoring period.

Table 25 - Travel Plans submitted and monitored during monitoring period

| Year | Proposal | Contribution / Spend |
|---------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 2021/22 | 20/00140/FUL - Erection of a new office building, warehouse and starter units | £1,426 Travel Plan monitoring fee |
| 2022/23 | 16/02369/FUL - Extension to existing manufacturing building, erection of two storey manufacturing and office building, two storey research and development building and two storey office building. | £1,666 Travel Plan monitoring fee |
| | | £177,185 Highway Improvements |

| | | |
|---------|---|------------------------|
| 2022/23 | 17/01758/FUL - Erection of a three-storey extension to the existing hotel for use as 20 self-catering apartments, | £1,162 Highway signage |
|---------|---|------------------------|

4.121 The Local Plan also identifies a number of strategic highway infrastructure schemes, the latest position in relation to which is summarised below.

Table 26 - Local Plan 2031 identified highway infrastructure schemes.

| Scheme Name | Status |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Downs Road Junction, Witney | Complete - New roundabout providing access to the A40 from Downs Road was delivered via development contributions at North Curbridge |
| Shores Green Slip Roads | Not Started - This scheme proposes adding westbound slip roads at the A40/B4022 Shores Green junction to improve access to Witney. The scheme now has planning permission and construction is anticipated to commence mid/late 2024. It will be funded by a combination of Housing and Growth Deal funding and developer contributions. |
| West End Link Road | Not Started – This scheme is associated with the allocated strategic development area at North Witney which is yet to come forward. |
| Northern Distributor Road | Not Started – This scheme is associated with the allocated strategic development area at North Witney which is yet to come forward. |
| Eastern Link Road | Not Started – This scheme is associated with the allocated strategic development area at East Chipping Norton which is yet to come forward. |
| Western Spine Road | Not Started – This scheme is associated with the allocated strategic development area at West Eynsham which is yet to come forward. |
| A40 improvements | <p>Planning permission in place for new Eynsham Park and Ride with development under construction. Wider A40 improvements being progressed by Oxfordshire County Council under the Homes England Homes from Infrastructure (HIF) fund.</p> <p>In July 2022, Oxfordshire County Council approved the preferred option proposals for the A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor (Duke's Cut, integrated bus lanes and the extension of the dual carriageway).</p> <p>However, in light of global inflationary pressures, the A40 improvements programme was extensively reviewed between November 2022 and June 2023 and in July 2023, the County Council approved a new plan to build the programme in phases.</p> <p>The initial phase includes dedicated bus lanes between Eynsham Park and Ride and Oxford, as well as the addition of controlled crossings and upgraded shared-use paths to make walking and cycling safer along the historically congested A40</p> |

| Scheme Name | Status |
|-------------|---|
| | between Witney and Oxford. Later phases of work will be planned and delivered as funding becomes available. |

ENVIRONMENTAL AND HERITAGE ASSETS

SUMMARY

- No major residential development was approved in the Cotswolds National Landscape during the monitoring period. Larger residential schemes were approved in a limited number of service centres and villages.
- A number of single dwellings and minor schemes were approved elsewhere in the protected landscape including small villages and open countryside.
- There are 100 Local Wildlife Sites in West Oxfordshire, totalling 1582.65 hectares. The area of these LWS has decreased by 17.51ha since 2021. The area of Local Geological Sites has not changed.
- There are 4996.93 hectares of NERC S41 habitats in West Oxfordshire. This has increased by 3.63ha since 2021.
- There were 78 surveys for water voles in 2021, with 56 positive sightings. This is a success rate of 72%.
- There have been records of 132 priority species in West Oxfordshire within the last 10 years. We have not received records from two priority species in the last 10 years.
- The farmland bird index for West Oxfordshire is 0.85, which shows the index fell by 0.01 from 2020.
- The number of heritage assets on the Historic England assets at risk register decreased from 9 to 8 to the end of the monitoring period.
- There were approximately 45 applications for new residential development approved within or on the edge of conservation areas in West Oxfordshire, totalling approximately 253 dwellings during the monitoring period..
- Of the 274 planning applications that were refused in 2021/23, 114 of these were located within Conservation Areas
- There were 448 applications for Listed Building consent determined during the monitoring period. Of these, 398 were approved.

4.122 The environmental and heritage section of the Local Plan covers a broad range of issues relating to the natural and built environment including the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly AONB) landscape character, biodiversity, green infrastructure, sport and recreation, renewable energy, flood risk, pollution and heritage.

4.123 Core objectives are as follows:

Core Objectives

CO9 - Promote inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free communities.

CO14 - Conserve and enhance the character and significance of West Oxfordshire's high quality natural, historic and cultural environment – including its geodiversity, landscape, biodiversity, heritage and arts – recognising and promoting their wider contribution to people's quality of life and social and economic well-being both within the District and beyond.

CO15 - Contribute to reducing the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.

CO16 - Enable improvements in water and air quality.

CO17 - Minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.

Development within the Cotswolds National Landscape (links to Policy EH1)

4.124 The Local Plan has a generally restrictive policy against major development within the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly known as the Cotswolds AONB), with great weight applied to conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty, landscape and countryside including wildlife and heritage.

4.125 The Local Plan allocates no land for residential development within the Cotswolds National Landscape, but planning permission was granted for approximately 57 new dwellings during the monitoring period.

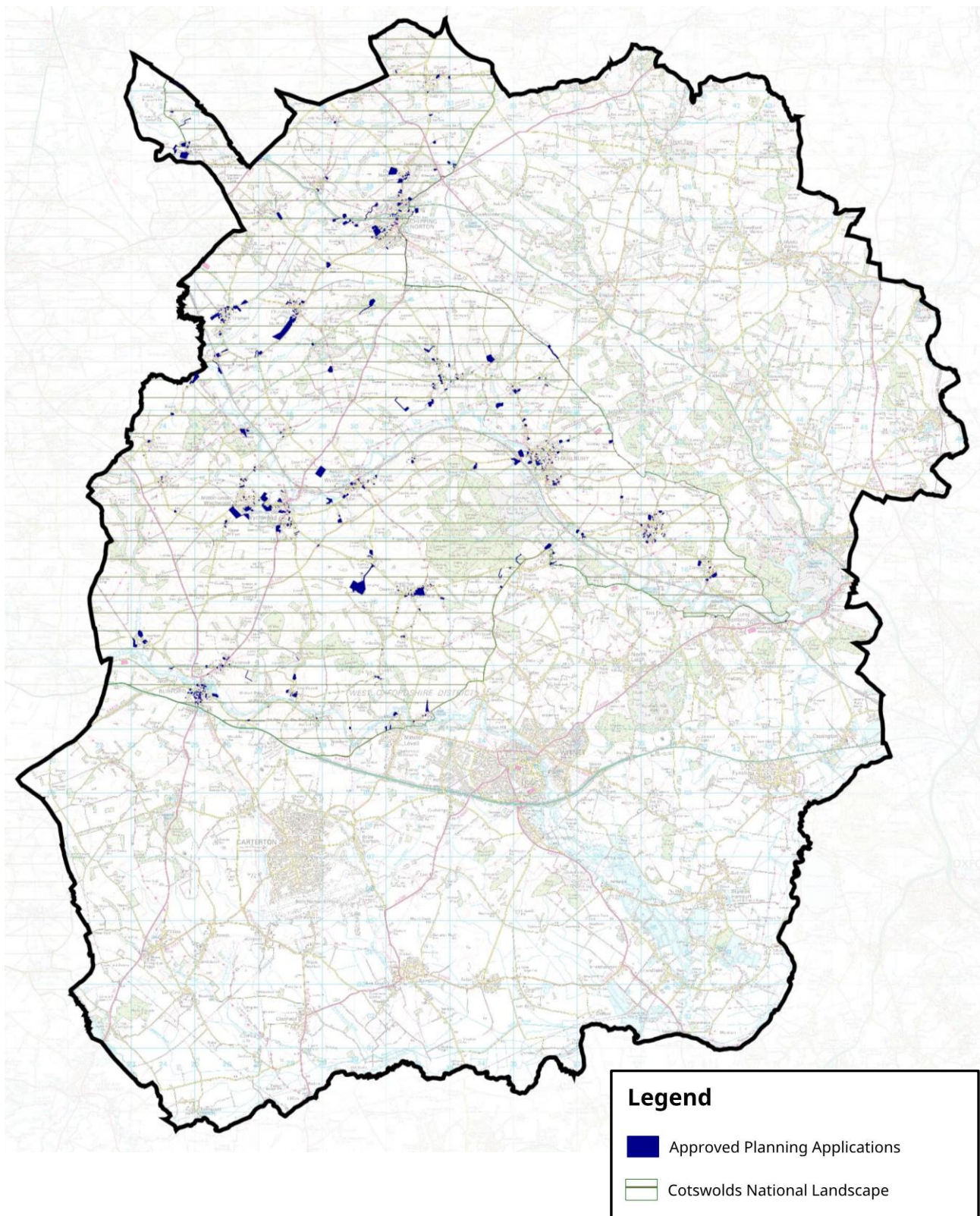
4.126 None of these proposals are major in nature and relate predominantly to the development of single dwellings.

4.127 There were a few slightly larger schemes approved within Chipping Norton (8 dwellings), Stonesfield (6 dwellings and 4 dwellings) and near to Kingham (4 dwellings).

4.128 There were however 536 new permissions granted for a mix of development types and land uses within the Cotswolds during the monitoring period, including:

- 538 householder applications approved
- 160 Full Planning approvals granted
- 157 applications for listed building consent granted

Figure 20 - Location of planning applications approved within Cotswolds National Landscape 2021 - 2023



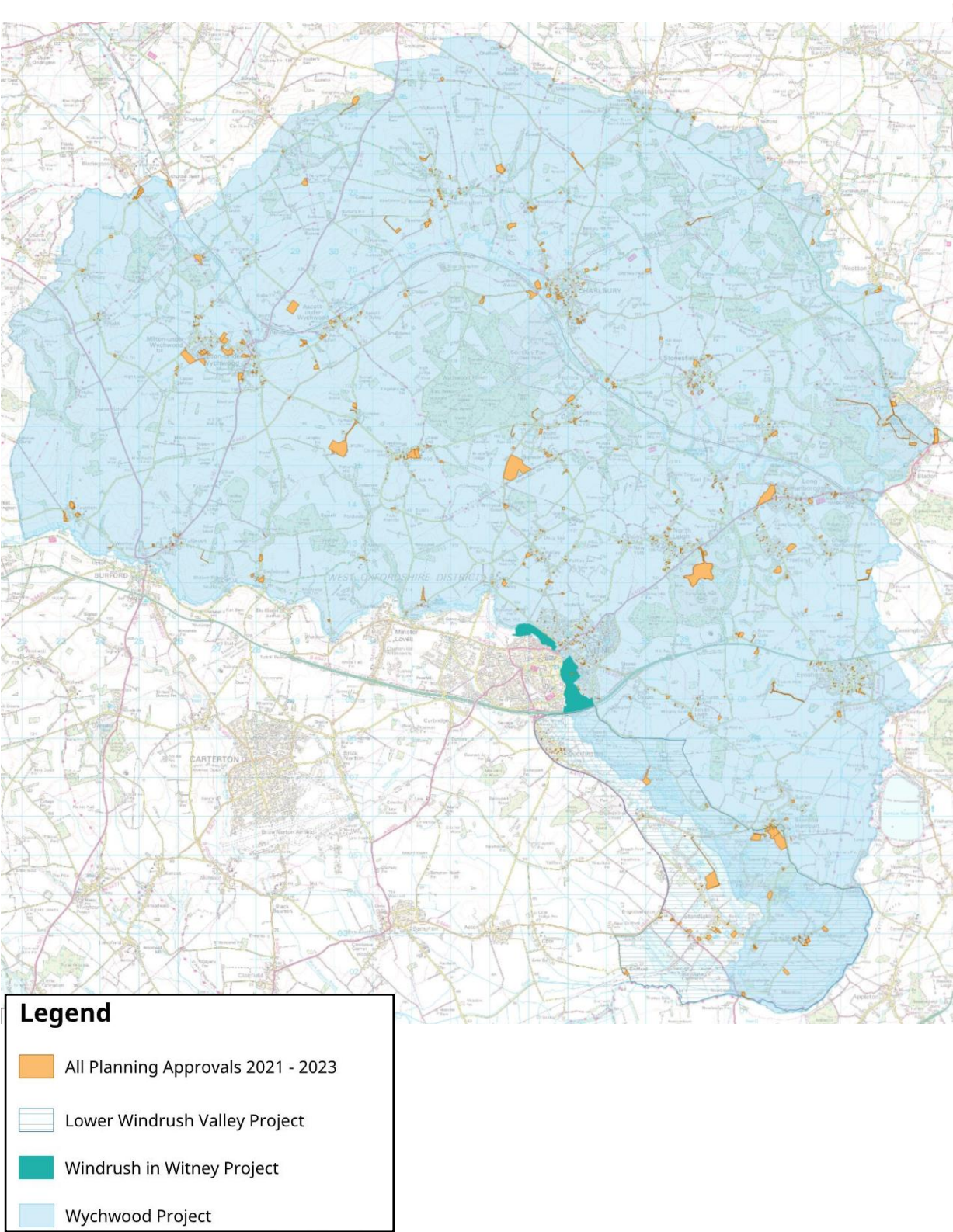
4.129 In addition to the Cotswolds National Landscape, the Local Plan identifies a further three special policy areas, that have been identified for special landscape protection, conservation and enhancement:

- 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.
- Windrush in Witney Project Area – A fundamental component of the town's attractive character.
- Wychwood Project Area – A project that aims to restore the landscape character and mix of habitats associated with the Royal Hunting Forest of Wychwood.

4.130 A total of 1,330 planning approvals were granted within these various landscape project areas during the monitoring period.

4.131 £25,153 was spent in 2022 on the purchase of land at Langel Common in Witney. This area of land is situated within the Windrush in Witney Project Area. The purchase of this land will protect it from development and preserve it for public amenity use.

Figure 21 - Location of planning approvals in landscape project areas 2021 - 2023



Biodiversity (links to Policy EH3)

4.132 Local Plan Policy EH3 aims to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity in West Oxfordshire, with a focus on protected sites and species and ensuring that development contributes towards the aims and objectives of Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) within the District.

4.133 Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) produce a Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which provides useful information on areas of biodiversity importance, priority habitats, priority species and the distribution and status of farmland birds.

4.134 The information from the TVERC AMR is reproduced below for information.

Table 27 - Areas of sites designated for Intrinsic Environmental Value in West Oxfordshire

| Designation | 2021 | 2022 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|
| Local Geological Site | 333.32 | 333.32 |
| Local Wildlife Site | 1600.16 | 1582.65 |

4.135 Records indicate that there has been a slight decrease in the area of land designated as a Local Wildlife site in West Oxfordshire between this and the last monitoring periods.

4.136 There are 100 Local Wildlife Sites in West Oxfordshire. The area of Local Wildlife Sites has changed by 17.51 hectares since last year. The area of Local Geological sites has not changed since last year.

4.137 Figures for changes in area are derived from an analysis of site boundary data following a site selection panel meeting during the analysis year. Counts in this report are based on the number of sites, rather than polygons, thus counts may differ from previous reports aside from any changes arising from panel decisions.

Changes in area of UK priority habitat

4.138 This indicator identifies the UK NERC Act section 41 habitats of principal importance (priority habitats) within West Oxfordshire

4.139 Table 28 below provides details of the UK priority habitats which have been identified within West Oxfordshire. The changes in the UK priority habitats are mostly attributable to new information such as confirmation of boundaries of habitat types. For example, for 2021/2022 there has been a reclassification of 'Ponds' to 'Eutrophic Standing Waters' which is reflected in the numbers.

4.140 The changes largely represent an improved understanding of the habitat resource in West Oxfordshire, rather than the creation or loss of habitat.

Table 28 - Changes in area of UK priority habitat

| S4I Habitat | 2021 (area in ha) | 2022 (area in ha) |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| Coastal And Floodplain Grazing Marsh | 1518.67 | 1516.84 |
| Eutrophic Standing Waters | 263.95 | 264.30 |
| Lowland Beech And Yew Woodland | 14.36 | 14.36 |
| Lowland Calcareous Grassland | 187.12 | 184.49 |
| Lowland Dry Acid Grassland | 8.70 | 7.94 |
| Lowland Fens | 56.93 | 60.57 |
| Lowland Meadows | 240.44 | 241.77 |
| Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland | 1528.93 | 1532.61 |
| Lowland Wood Pasture And Parkland | 748.34 | 748.34 |
| Mesotrophic Lakes | 256.62 | 256.62 |
| Open Mosaic Habitats On Previously Developed Land | 27.77 | 27.77 |
| Possible Priority Grassland Habitat | 40.19 | 40.19 |
| Purple Moor Grass And Rush Pasture | 1.24 | 1.24 |
| Reedbeds | 1.71 | 1.71 |
| Rivers | 8.75 | 8.75 |
| Traditional Orchards | 58.11 | 58.11 |
| Wet Woodland | 31.47 | 31.47 |
| Total | 4993.30 | 4996.93 |

Changes in number of UK priority species

4.141 The number of priority species in West Oxfordshire Council is 139. Two species have been removed from the list, as no new records have been made within the last ten years.

Table 29 - Changes in number of UK priority species

| | 2011-2021 | 2012-2022 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Number of UK Priority species | 134 | 132 |

4.142 Priority species removed from the list—no new records since 2011. This does not mean that they are not present, only that no records have been added to the TVERC database since 2011.

4.143 Planning permission was granted in 2021 for improvements to the Chimney Meadow Nature Reserve in the south of the district, as part of the Chimney Meadows Wetland Restoration Project. The main drivers for the project are to improve opportunities for fish passage, enable a healthier and more active floodplain, restore river and floodplain habitats, tackle non-native species and combat rural pollution. Details of the approval are set in table 30.

Table 30 - Planning applications for environmental improvement schemes, 2021 - 2023

| Application Reference | Proposal Details |
|-----------------------|--|
| 20/03409/FUL | Construction of Shifford Weir Fish Bypass, comprising excavation of a new approx 450m long naturalised fish bypass channel, including one culvert under existing flood embankment, wooden handrails to edge of culvert, use of excavated materials to improve BBOWT access for future management of the reserve, together with temporary construction accesses and temporary construction compound on land near public highway in Duxford, and reinstatement of land following completion of the construction works. |

Sport and recreation (links to Policy EH5)

4.144 There have been a number of minor improvements and proposed enhancements to sports, recreation and children's play secured during the monitoring period which should support the integrity and ongoing use of community services and facilities in West Oxfordshire.

Table 31 - Planning approvals for sport and recreation developments, 2021 - 2023

| Proposal | Location |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Erection of a single storey rear extension to clubhouse | Witney Rugby Football Club |
| Construction of new pavilion. | Carterton Recreation Ground |
| Installation of a new cricket ECB approved non-turf cricket practice facility. | Charlbury Cricket Club |
| Construction of a new adventure play area and new visitor building together with associated works and landscaping. | Blenheim Palace |
| Single storey extensions to existing bowls club house | Charlbury Bowls Club |
| Replacement of existing sports pavilion and storage building with the erection of a two storey pavilion building | Oxford Road, Eynsham |
| Replacement and relocation of cricket nets | Pavilion at Langford |
| Creation of an All-Weather sports pitch | Burford School |
| Demolition of existing, and construction of new clubhouse. | Heyford Lakes |
| Erection of a detached cabin building to provide changing room/viewing area for use by Lower Windrush Tennis Club | Lower Windrush Tennis Club |

| Proposal | Location |
|---|---------------------------|
| Removal of existing grass surface to pitch, replacement with artificial 3G surface for community use together with associated releveling ground and drainage works. | North Leigh Football Club |

Renewable Energy Provision (links to Policy EH6)

4.145 There was one approval for larger, utility scale solar scheme in West Oxfordshire during the monitoring period.

Table 32 - Planning approvals for utility scale solar development 2021 - 2023

| Planning Reference | Description | Location |
|--------------------|---|-------------|
| 21/01236/FUL | Installation and operation of solar farm including associated engineering and infrastructure works. | Ducklington |

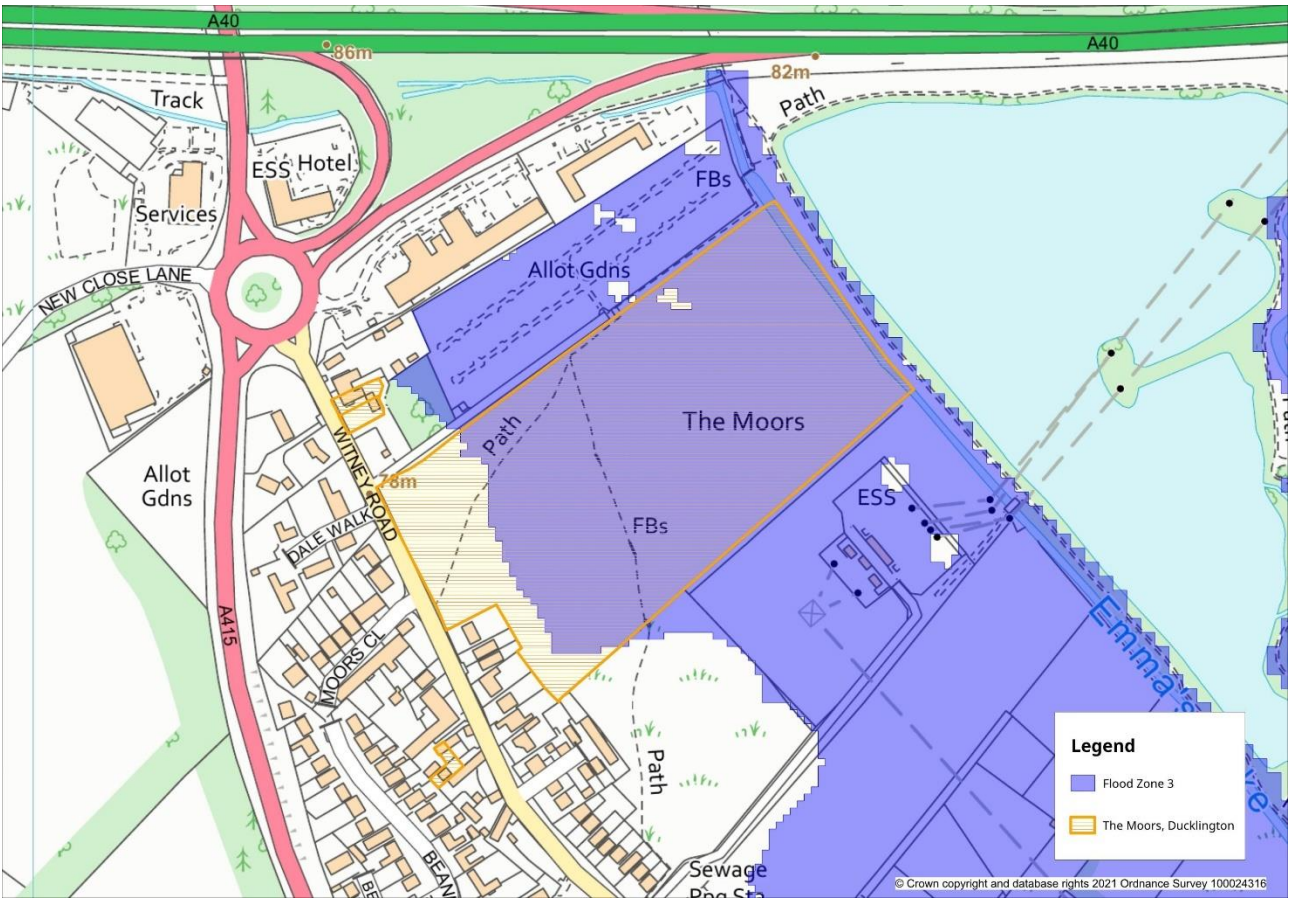
Flood Risk (links to Policy EH7)

4.146 There were few approvals for residential development approved in areas at risk of flooding during the monitoring period.

4.147 Where planning application boundaries overlap with flood risk areas, these are often access points or form part of the residential curtilage or garden, rather than buildings being proposed in flood risk areas.

4.148 One significant proposal for 120 dwellings was approved however, at the Moors in Ducklington. Permission was granted at appeal for the development which is predominantly located within flood zone 3, which is an area at high risk of flooding. The Environment Agency Flood Zones have been updated since the granting of permission, subsequently indicating that a larger proportion of the site is at risk of flooding than was previously understood.

Table 33 - The Moors, Ducklington development and flood risk area



Heritage (links to Policy EH9)

- 4.149 There were approximately 45 applications for new residential development approved within or on the edge of conservation areas in West Oxfordshire, totalling approximately 253 dwellings during the monitoring period.
- 4.150 Of the 274 planning applications that were refused in 2021/23, 114 of these were located within Conservation Areas
- 4.151 There were 448 applications for Listed Building consent determined during the monitoring period. Of these, 398 were approved.
- 4.152 Historic England maintain a list of heritage assets¹⁰ that are at risk to help understand the overall state of England's historic sites. The programme identifies those sites that are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. There are 8 heritage assets on the heritage risk register in 2023. There is one listed building and 7 scheduled monuments. The number of assets at risk has declined since 2009 when there were 9 assets at risk in West Oxfordshire.

Table 34 - West Oxfordshire Heritage at Risk

| Designated Name | Heritage Category | Condition | Principal Vulnerability | Trend |
|--|---------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Church of St Nicholas | Listed Building grade II* | Poor | | |
| Rectangular enclosures 1100yds (1010m) NW of Mount Owen Farm | Scheduled Monument | Extensive significant problems | Arable ploughing | Declining |
| Waterman's Lodge bowl barrow, one of a pair of Bronze Age barrows on the western edge of Wychwood Forest | Scheduled Monument | Extensive significant problems | Animal burrowing - Badger - extensive | Declining |
| Medieval settlement and church of Asterleigh | Scheduled Monument | Generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems | Deterioration - in need of management | Declining |
| Pair of bowl barrows immediately south of Blindwell Wood | Scheduled Monument | Extensive significant problems | Animal burrowing - Badger - extensive | Declining |

¹⁰ <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/results/?advsearch=1&county=Oxfordshire&searchtype=harsearch>

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Pump Copse earthwork | Scheduled Monument | Extensive significant problems | Arable ploughing | Declining |
| Linear earthworks east of Callow Hill Roman villa forming part of the north Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch | Scheduled Monument | Extensive significant problems | Arable ploughing | Declining |
| 145m section of the north Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch situated 200m west of Grimsdyke Farm | Scheduled Monument | Extensive significant problems | Arable ploughing | Declining |

Executive response to a recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Committee relating to item 8 on the agenda for the 17 January 2024

Executive meeting: Draft Budget 2024/25

Recommendation arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 10 January 2024.

Context

The Committee noted that the provisional local government finance settlement for the financial year was announced on 18 December 2023. The lateness of the announcement each year, just before the Christmas break, makes the budget setting process more difficult not only because the funding is not known until this late stage, but also because the budget scrutiny and review process then must be fitted into a matter of weeks in the first few months of the year.

Earlier, ideally multi-year, settlements would allow councils to plan in a more considered manner.

| Recommendation | Agree (Y / N) | Comment | Responsible Executive Member | Lead Officer |
|---|------------------|---------|---|--|
| Recommendation I – That the Cabinet Member for Finance writes to the Minister for Local Government requesting that local government finance settlements be announced earlier in future. | Y | | Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance | Madhu Richards, Director of Finance |

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 30 JANUARY 2024 – 2 MAY 2024

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Council currently operates the Strong Leader and Executive form of governance. The Council has appointed one Overview and Scrutiny Committee which has the power to investigate Executive decisions and any other matters relevant to the district and its people, making recommendations to the Council, Executive or any other Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council. Overview and Scrutiny has an important role in holding the Executive to account and in contributing to policy development.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee operates a work plan which is agreed annually but provides for flexibility to enable the Committee to respond to emerging issues or priorities. The work plan will include a mix of Executive reports that have been selected for pre-decision scrutiny, and reports on other Council services, topics or issues which have been specifically requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In setting and reviewing its work plan, the Committee will be mindful of the constraints of the organisation and may prioritise based on the following considerations (TOPIC criteria):

Timeliness: Is it timely to consider this issue?

Organisational priority: Is it a Council priority?

Public Interest: Is it of significant public interest?

Influence: Can Scrutiny have meaningful influence?

Cost: Does it involve a high level of expenditure, income or savings?

Call in

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider any “call-in” of an executive decision that has been made but not yet implemented. This enables the Committee to consider whether the decision made is appropriate given all relevant information (but not because it would have made a different decision). It may recommend that the Executive, an Executive Member or the Council should reconsider the decision.

| Item | Executive Member | Lead Officer |
|---|---|---|
| Wednesday 7 February 2024 | | |
| Community Safety Partnership | Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities - Cllr Joy Aitman | Emmylou Brossard, Safer Communities Officer Emmylou.Brossard@publicagroup.uk |
| Safer Streets | Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare - Cllr Geoff Saul | Emmylou Brossard, Safer Communities Officer Emmylou.Brossard@publicagroup.uk |
| Nature Recovery Plan and Nature Recovery Officer | Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Annual Monitoring Report (2021 – 2023) | Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Charlie Maynard | Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk |
| Thursday 29 February 2024 | | |
| Carbon Action Plan | Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Approval of Upgrade to WODC Public Space CCTV Provision and Monitoring Arrangements | Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare | Andy Barge, Assistant Director for Communities andy.barge@publicagroup.uk |
| Community Infrastructure Levey (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule | Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Charlie Maynard | Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk |
| Publica Transition Plan | Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham | Giles Hughes, Chief Executive giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Financial Performance Report – 2023/24 Quarter Three | Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith | Madhu Richards, Director of Finance madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Wednesday 10 April 2024 | | |
| Climate Change Strategy | Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Mobile Network Coverage | Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham | Phil Martin, Assistant Director for Business Support phil.martin@publicagroup.uk |
| Items to be scheduled for future meetings | | |
| Waste Service Update | Executive Member for Environment - Cllr Lidia Arciszewska | Simon Anthony, Business Manager - Environmental Services Simon.Anthony@publicagroup.uk |
| Development Management Improvement Programme | Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Charlie Maynard | Phil Shaw, Business Manager - Development Management phil.shaw@publicagroup.uk |
| Affordable Housing Delivery | Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare - Cllr Geoff Saul | Charlie Jackson, Assistant Director - Planning and Sustainability charlie.jackson@publicagroup.uk |
| Community Grants | Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities - Cllr Joy Aitman | Andy Barge, Assistant Director for Communities andy.barge@publicagroup.uk |
| Consultation | Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham | Giles Hughes, Chief Executive giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Supporting market town and village centres | Deputy Leader - Economic Development - Cllr Duncan Enright | Philippa Lowe, Business Manager Localities philippa.lowe@publicagroup.uk |
| Leisure Strategy - Strategic Outcomes Planning Model | Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects - Tim Sumner | Jacqueline Wright, Business Manager - Leisure and Wellbeing jacqueline.wright@publicagroup.uk |

EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME
INCORPORATING NOTICE OF DECISIONS PROPOSED TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE
SESSION AND NOTICE OF INTENTION TO MAKE A KEY DECISION
1 FEBRUARY 2024 – 31 MAY 2024

By virtue of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, local authorities are required to publish a notice setting out the key executive decisions that will be taken at least 28 days before such decisions are to be taken. The Regulations also require notice to be given of any matter where it is proposed that the public will be excluded during consideration of the matter.

This Forward Plan incorporates both of these requirements. In the interests of transparency, it also aims to include details of those items to be debated by the Executive that relate to either policy/budget formulation, matters which will be subject to a recommendation to the Council, and other matters due to be considered by the Executive. This programme covers a period of four months, and will be updated on a monthly basis. The timings of items may be subject to change.

It should be noted that although a date not less than 28 clear days after the date of this notice is given in each case, it is possible that matters may be rescheduled to a date which is different from that given provided, in the cases of key decisions and matters to be considered in private, that the 28 day notice has been given. In this regard, please note that agendas and reports for meetings of the Executive are made available on the Council's website at www.westoxon.gov.uk/meetings five working days in advance of the meeting in question. Please also note that the agendas for meetings of the Executive will also incorporate a necessary further notice which is required to be given in relation to matters likely to be considered with the public excluded.

There are circumstances where a key decision can be taken, or a matter may be considered in private, even though the 28 clear days' notice has not been given. If that happens, notice of the matter and the reasons will be published on the council's website, and available from the Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxon, OX28 1NB.

Key Decisions

The Regulations define a key decision as an executive decision which is likely –

- (a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or*
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the authority".*

The Council has decided that a cost or saving of an amount greater than £150,000 is necessary to constitute expenditure or savings which are significant for the purposes of this definition.

Please note that if a matter is approved by the Council following a recommendation from the Executive, that decision will not be a key decision.

Matters To Be Considered in Private

The great majority of matters considered by the Council's Executive are considered in 'open session' when the public have the right to attend.

However, some matters are considered with the public excluded. The public may only be excluded if a resolution is passed to exclude them. The grounds for exclusion are limited to situations where confidential or exempt information may be disclosed to the public if present and, in most cases involving exempt information, where in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. The definitions of these are set out in the Council's Constitution.

Documents and Queries

Copies of, or extracts from, documents listed in the programme and any which subsequently become available are (subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure), obtainable from the following, and this contact information may also be used for any queries.

Democratic Services – Email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk Tel: 01993 861000.

West Oxfordshire District Council: Executive Members 2023/24

| Name of Councillor | Title and Areas of Responsibility |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Andy Graham (Leader) | Leader of the Council: Policy Framework; Town and Parish Council engagement, Council Plan; Strategic Partnerships including Pan regional Partnership, Future Oxfordshire, South East Councils and OXLEP; Oxfordshire Leaders; Publica and partnership authorities and Ubico, Democratic Services; Communications; Legal Services; Counter Fraud; Emergency Planning; and Customer Services |
| Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader) | Economic Development: Business Development; Visitor Economy; Town and Village regeneration; and Customer Services. |
| Alaric Smith | Finance: Finance & Management; Council Tax and Benefits; Asset Management, South West Audit Partnership; Performance management; Capital Investment strategy; Strategic Housing Investment; and Customer Services |
| Charlie Maynard | Planning and Sustainable Development: Local Plan; Government planning policies and guidance; Conservation and Historic Environment; Landscape and Biodiversity; Development Management; and Ensuring planning policies meet 2030 requirement; and Customer Services |
| Tim Sumner | Leisure and Major Projects: Leisure provision including swimming pools; Culture and Heritage; Public Art; Agile Working, Car Parking and Customer Services |
| Joy Aitman | Stronger Healthy Communities: Voluntary sector engagement; Health and Safety; Community and Public Health; Refugee Resettlement Programme; Young People; Equality and diversity; and Customer Services |
| Geoff Saul | Housing and Social Welfare: Housing Allocations; Homelessness; Provision of affordable homes; Sheltered Housing Accommodation; Safeguarding – Community Safety Partnership; Crime and Disorder; Neighbourhood Policing; Scrutiny of Police and Crime Commissioner; and Assets of Community Value. |
| Lidia Arciszewska | Environment: Flood alleviation and sewage; Environmental Partnerships – WASP and Evenlode, North East Cotswold Cluster; Waste collection and recycling; Street Scene (cleansing, litter and grounds maintenance); Air Quality; and Land, food, farming and Customer Services Delivery |
| Andrew Prosser | Climate Change: Energy Advice; Renewable energy and retrofit investment; Biodiversity across the District; Carbon neutral by 2030; Fossil fuel dependence reduction; Local, national and county wide liaison on climate; EV Charging Rollout. and Customer Service |

For further information about the above and all members of the Council please see www.westoxon.gov.uk/councillors

| Item for Decision | Key Decision (Yes / No) | Open or Exempt | Decision – Maker | Date of Decision | Executive Member | Lead Officer |
|---|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------------|---|--|
| Local Plan 2041 Update (including Local Development Scheme (LDS)) | No | Open | Executive | 14 Feb 2024 | Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Charlie Maynard | Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk |
| Nature Recovery Plan and Nature Recovery Officer | Yes | Open | Executive | 14 Feb 2024 | Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Climate Change Officer | No | Open | Executive | 14 Feb 2024 | Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Improving Youth Participation and Development | No | Open | Executive | 14 Feb 2024 | Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities - Cllr Joy Aitman | Heather McCulloch, Community Wellbeing Manager heather.mcculloch@publicagroup.uk |
| Waste Fleet Purchase Strategy | Yes | Open | Executive | 14 Feb 2024 | Executive Member for Environment - Cllr Lidia Arciszewska | Simon Anthony, Business Manager - Environmental Services Simon.Anthony@publicagroup.uk |
| Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy | Yes | Part exempt | Executive Council | 14 Feb 2024 28 Feb 2024 | Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith | Madhu Richards, Director of Finance madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP) | Yes | Open | Executive Council | 6 Mar 2024 13 Mar 2024 | Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Charlie Maynard | Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----|------|-------------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| Community Infrastructure Levey (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule | No | Open | Executive | 6 Mar 2024 | Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Charlie Maynard | Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk |
| Carbon Action Plan | Yes | Open | Executive | 6 Mar 2024 | Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Publica Transition Plan | Yes | Open | Executive Council | 6 Mar 2024 13 Mar 2024 | Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham | Giles Hughes, Chief Executive giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Approval of Upgrade to WODC Public Space CCTV Provision and Monitoring Arrangements | Yes | Open | Executive | 6 Mar 2024 | Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare | Andy Barge, Assistant Director for Communities andy.barge@publicagroup.uk |
| Retail Relief – Business Rates | No | Open | Executive | 6 Mar 2024 | Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith | Mandy Fathers, Business Manager - Environmental, Welfare & Revenue Service mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk |
| Road Closure Policy | No | Open | Executive | 6 Mar 2024 | Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Environment - Cllr Lidia Arciszewska | Mandy Fathers, Business Manager - Environmental, Welfare & Revenue Service mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk |
| Fixed Penalty Notice Policy | No | Open | Executive | 6 Mar 2024 | Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith | Mandy Fathers, Business Manager - Environmental, Welfare & Revenue Service mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk |
| Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund Phase 2 | Yes | Open | Executive | 6 Mar 2024 | Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects - Tim Sumner | Jacqueline Wright, Business Manager - Leisure and Wellbeing jacqueline.wright@publicagroup.uk |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----|------|-----------|-------------|---|---|
| West Oxfordshire Food Action Plan | No | Open | Executive | 6 Mar 2024 | Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities - Cllr Joy Aitman | Heather McCulloch, Community Wellbeing Manager heather.mcculloch@publicagroup.uk |
| West Oxfordshire District Council Policy Review - Phase Two | No | Open | Executive | 6 Mar 2024 | Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham | Zoe Campbell, Assistant Director for Organisational Effectiveness zoe.campbell@publicagroup.uk |
| Financial Performance Report – 2023/24 Quarter Three | No | Open | Executive | 6 Mar 2024 | Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith | Madhu Richards, Director of Finance madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Service Performance Report 2023-24 Quarter Three | No | Open | Executive | 6 Mar 2024 | Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham | Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst Alison.Borrett@publicagroup.uk |
| Climate Change Strategy | Yes | Open | Executive | 17 Apr 2024 | Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Endorsement of the Oxfordshire Town and Parish Charter | No | Open | Executive | 17 Apr 2024 | Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham | Giles Hughes, Chief Executive giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan | No | Open | Executive | 12 Jun 2024 | Deputy Leader - Economic Development - Cllr Duncan Enright | Will Barton, Business Development Officer william.barton@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Customer Services Telephone Report (Trial of Telephone Opening Hours Closure - 2.00pm to 5.00pm) | No | Open | Executive | 12 Jun 2024 | Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects - Tim Sumner | Michelle Clifford, Business Manager - Customer Experience & Resources michelle.clifford@publicagroup.uk |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----|------|---|--------------------|--|---|
| Knights Court Business Case | No | Open | Executive | 12 Jun 2024 | Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare - Cllr Geoff Saul | Business Manager Assets & Council Priorities - Andrew Turner andrew.turner@publicagroup.uk |
| Key Decisions Delegated to Officers | | | | | | |
| Windrush Leisure Centre - PSDS 3c Funding Bid | Yes | Open | Chief Executive & Head of Paid Service - Giles Hughes | Before 29 Feb 2024 | Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Allocate Funding from the Project Contingency Earmarked Reserve | Yes | Open | Director of Finance - Madhu Richards | Before 31 Mar 2024 | Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith | Madhu Richards, Director of Finance madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Allocation of New Initiatives Funding | Yes | Open | Chief Executive & Head of Paid Service - Giles Hughes | Before 31 Mar 2024 | Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham | Giles Hughes, Chief Executive giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Standing Delegation: Settlement of Legal Claims | Yes | Open | Interim Head of Legal Services - Helen Blundell | Before 31 Dec 2024 | Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham, Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith | Helen Blundell, Principal Solicitor, Land, Legal and Property helen.blundell@publicagroup.uk |
| Other Business for Council Meetings | | | | | | |
| West Oxfordshire District Council Programme of Meetings 2024 – 2025 | No | Open | Council | 31 Jan 2024 | Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham | Max Thompson, Senior Democratic Services Officer max.thompson@westoxon.gov.uk |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----|------|---------|-------------|--|--|
| Committee Appointments Made under Delegated Authority | No | Open | Council | 31 Jan 2024 | Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham | Andrew Brown, Democratic Services Business Manager andrew.brown@publicagroup.uk |
| Council Tax Support Scheme 2024 | Yes | Open | Council | 31 Jan 2024 | Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith | Mandy Fathers, Business Manager - Environmental, Welfare & Revenue Service mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk |
| 2024-2025 Budget Update | No | Open | Council | 31 Jan 2024 | Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith | Madhu Richards, Director of Finance madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Polling District and Places Review | No | Open | Council | 13 Mar 2024 | | Giles Hughes, Chief Executive giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk |