WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Tuesday, 14 July 2026
Republished Wednesday, 15 July 2026

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COUNCIL

You are summoned to a meeting of the Council which will be held in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 22 July 2026 at 2.15 pm.**

Phil Martin
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Council

Councillors: Carl Rylett (Chair), Joy Aitman (Vice-Chair), Tammy Abarno, Thomas Ashby, Andrew Beaney, Adam Clements, Sandra Coleman, Andrew Coles, Sandra Cosier, Steve Cosier, Rachel Crouch, Jane Doughty, Genny Early, Duncan Enright, Sarah Evans, Roger Faulkner, Nick Field-Johnson, Phil Godfrey, Andy Goodwin, Andy Graham, David Jackson, Edward James, Liz Leffman, Dan Levy, Jan Lund, Andrew Lyon, Liam Mackenzie, Stuart McCarroll, Paul Marsh, Hannah Massie, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Toby Morris, Rosie Pearson, Elizabeth Poskitt, Andrew Prosser, Nigel Ridpath, James Robertshaw, Geoff Saul, Sandra Simpson, Alaric Smith, Tim Sumner, Jack Treloar, Sarah Veasey, Liam Walker, Mark Walker, Simon Watson, Alex Wilson and Alistair Wray

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**
   To receive any apologies for absence.

2. **Declarations of Interest**
   To receive any declarations from Members of Council on any items to be considered at the meeting.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 9 - 20)
   To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2026.

4. **Receipt of Announcements**
   To receive any announcements from The Chair, Leader, Members of the Executive, Head of Paid Service, Director of Finance or Director of Governance.

5. **Participation of the Public**
   To receive any submissions from members of the public, in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules.

   The deadline for submission is 2.00pm, two clear working days before the meeting.

6. **Questions by Members**
   The following questions have been submitted by Members of Council to Members of the Executive, in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules (Constitution Part 5A, Rule 12).

   Written responses will be circulated to Members and published on the Council's website at least one working day prior to the meeting. A Member submitting a question is entitled to ask one supplementary question at the meeting which must arise directly from the question or the response to it.

   The supplementary questions and answers will be detailed in the minutes of the meeting.

   Question 1: From Councillor Michele Mead to Councillor Liz Leffman, Executive Member for Planning:

   How much has been spent on each individual external consultants used for the local plan?

   Question 2: From Councillor Michele Mead to Councillor Alistair Wray, Executive Member for Environment:

   Can you give us an accurate waiting time on replacement requests for garden waste bins as many residents have been waiting 3 months which exceeds the advised 30 working days?

   Question 3: From Councillor Simon Watson to Councillor Alistair Wray, Executive Member for Environment:

Fly-tipping enforcement is a contracted Publica service, and West Oxfordshire's Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) rate has previously been reported at 1.15%, compared to 4.04% in the Vale of White Horse over the same period.

Since the change to the household waste recycling centre booking system, a number of residents and Cllrs have raised concerns that fly-tipping may have increased or remained persistently high, as some residents struggle to book tip slots or are deterred from using sites legitimately.

Could the Portfolio Holder please provide:

a) The total number of recorded fly-tipping incidents in West Oxfordshire for the 12 months to June 2026 (by month), compared with the same 12-month period the previous year;
b) The number of FPNs issued and the resulting FPN rate for each of these two periods, by month;
c) Whether officers have identified any correlation between the introduction of the tip booking system and fly-tipping incident levels; and
d) What steps, if any, are being taken to address fly-tipping where it may be linked to booking system access issues.

Recommendations from the Executive

7. **2025/26 Quarterly Finance Review Q4** (Pages 21 - 50)

Purpose

To report the financial performance of the Council in 2025/26.

Recommendation

That Council resolves to:

1. Agree to carry forward the capital budget of £4,395,180. (Paragraph 5.2);
2. Approve the transfers to and between Earmarked Reserves as detailed in the report (Section 4);
3. Approve the necessary budget virements related to Publica Phase 2. (Paragraph 2.27).

8. **Appointments to Outside Bodies 2026-27** (Pages 51 - 58)

Purpose

To provide a list of appointments to Outside Bodies for the civic year 2026/27.

Recommendation

That Council resolves to:

1. Note the appointments to outside bodies as set out in Annex A.

9. **Allocation of Capital Funding For Lift Replacement at Marriotts Walk** (Pages 59 - 64)

Purpose

To request approval of the allocation of part of the building maintenance earmarked reserves for the replacement of the lifts at Marriotts Walk, Witney

Recommendation

Subject to the resolutions of the Executive on 15 July 2026, Council is recommended to resolve to:

1. Agree to allocate funding from earmarked reserves to replace the lifts at Marriotts Walk.

10. **Approval of Regulation 19 Draft Submission Local Plan for Public Consultation** (Pages 65 - 596)

Purpose

For Members to consider the proposed pre-submission draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 including the timetable for formally publishing the draft plan in accordance with legislative requirements.

Recommendation

Subject to the resolutions of the Executive on 15 July 2026, Council is recommended to resolve to:

1. Approve the pre-submission draft Local Plan attached at Annex A for the purposes of formal publication for a statutory period of at least 6-weeks in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
2. Delegate authority to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure, to make any necessary minor textual and presentational amendments, and any amendments necessary to reflect any agreed Overview and Scrutiny recommendations, to the pre-submission draft Local Plan, prior to formal publication.

Reports from committees

11. **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2025/26** (Pages 597 - 628)

Purpose

To receive a report highlighting the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the 2025/26 civic year.

Recommendation

That Council resolves to:

1. Note the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2025/26.

Reports from officers

12. **National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions** (Pages 629 - 650)

Purpose

To provide Members with a detailed overview of forthcoming changes to the functioning of Planning Committees in England which will come into effect on 31 October 2026 through The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026.

Recommendation

1. Note the report;
2. Request that the Constitution Working Group further consider the implications of the new Regulations and how they need to be reflected in any changes to the Council's Constitution, prior to the Regulations coming into effect on 31st October 2026.

Motions

13. **Motion A: Protecting precious habitats in West Oxfordshire; Proposed by Cllr Alistair Wray, seconded by Cllr Rosie Pearson**

This Council notes:

- The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world; with only about 50% of its biodiversity remaining, it ranks in the bottom 10% globally. It is therefore of utmost importance that the remaining areas of high ecological value are preserved, as they may serve as nucleation sites for the wider nature recovery.
- This is also a matter of urgency. The new Planning and Infrastructure Bill has been created to fast-track the delivery of the government's ambition to build 1.5 million homes by the end of this parliament. This bill allows developers to meet their environmental obligations by making payments to the Nature Restoration Fund to promote nature restoration elsewhere.
- Scientists, wildlife trusts and ecologists are deeply concerned that this new strategy will encourage developers to damage the environment locally and simply 'make up for it miles away'. According to legal analysis of the legislation, more than 5,000 of England's most sensitive and rare natural habitats are at high risk.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are areas of exceptional ecological or geological value that have legal protection. Their designation is one of the most important tools available for protecting the UK's most valuable habitats and species. Designation and management of SSSIs is one of Natural England's key statutory duties, which the Agency seems to be failing to fulfil. The rate of SSSI designations has slowed dramatically in recent years; the average time it takes to designate sites is getting longer. According to experts familiar with the matter, it takes up to 10 years to obtain an SSSI status. Moreover, it now appears that the Agency has suspended processing further designations altogether.
- We have some sites with extraordinary habitats, such as floodplain meadows and ancient woodlands in West Oxfordshire. Our SSSIs include: Alvescot Meadows, Cassington Meadows, Ditchley Road Quarry, Glyme Valley and Middle Barton Fen. They require legal protection. The Council has a legal duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity, and one of our priorities is to "create a better environment for people and wildlife".
- Given the rapid pace of housing development and the current shortcomings of the Natural England watchdog, the Council should stand up for the local environment and demand answers and actions from the Agency.

The council resolves to:

1. Ask the Leader of the Council to write to Tony Juniper, the head of Natural England, to ask:

    a) Why the SSSi designation process has been suspended
    b) When the SSSi designation will be reinstated
    c) Request that Natural England adopt a temporary approach to commenting on planning applications, which takes into account available local environmental evidence to protect the sites that would otherwise have been designated as SSSIs if the designation process worked as intended.
    d) Request that Natural England use this approach until the backlog in the SSSI designation is cleared.

2. Send a copy of the letter to Emma Reynolds MP, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

14. **Motion B : ANPR Assessment of Woodford Way and Witan Way Car Park Usage; Proposed by Cllr Liam Walker, seconded by Cllr Jack Treloar**

Council notes that:

1. West Oxfordshire District Council is progressing proposals that could result in the redevelopment of part of the Woodford Way car park in Witney.
2. Woodford Way and Witan Way are two of the town's principal public car parks and play an important role in supporting local businesses, visitors, commuters and the town centre economy.
3. Decisions regarding the future of public parking should be based on robust, comprehensive and up-to-date evidence rather than limited occupancy surveys undertaken over a small number of days or at specific times.
4. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology is widely used by local authorities to provide detailed information on vehicle movements, duration of stay, occupancy levels and peak demand over an extended period.
5. Collecting data over a minimum five-week period would ensure weekday, weekend, school holiday and event-related parking patterns are properly understood before any irreversible decisions are taken.
6. Residents, businesses, and town centre stakeholders rightly expect major planning decisions affecting public infrastructure to be supported by transparent and reliable evidence.

Council believes that:

1. Any proposal that could reduce public parking capacity should only proceed once there is a clear and independently verifiable understanding of existing demand.
2. A minimum five-week ANPR survey would provide a far more accurate picture of parking usage than short-term manual surveys and would improve confidence in any subsequent planning application.
3. Better evidence will lead to better decision-making and help ensure that the economic vitality of Witney town centre is not inadvertently harmed.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Request that the Executive Member for Environment commissions the installation of temporary ANPR cameras at both the Woodford Way and Witan Way public car parks.
2. Ensure that the monitoring is undertaken continuously for a minimum period of five weeks before any planning application relating to the redevelopment of Woodford Way car park is submitted.
3. Publish the resulting occupancy, including existing data from Marriott's Walk car park, turnover and parking duration data for the three car parks in full, together with an accompanying analysis, so that councillors, residents, and businesses can properly scrutinise the evidence.

15. **Motion C: Ending the "Double Taxation" of Managed Housing Estates; Proposed by Cllr Thomas Ashby, seconded by Cllr Liam MacKenzie**

The Council Notes That:

- Many residents across West Oxfordshire, including those in newer developments in my area, are subject to a system of 'double taxation'
- These residents are legally required to pay their full council tax to local authorities, whilst simultaneously paying mandatory, escalating estate management fees to private companies to maintain public green spaces
- This creates an unfair, two-tier system where residents on unadopted estates pay significantly more for the same or lesser council services than those living on traditionally adopted council-maintained estates
- The current model of leaving public open spaces in perpetuity under private management companies leads to poor accountability, high administration charges, and a lack of democratic oversight

The Council Believes That:

- Public spaces on new housing developments should be viewed as community assets for all residents, and their maintenance should be the democratically accountable to local authorities
- It is fundamentally unjust to charge residents full Council Tax if a local authority is not adopting or maintaining the immediate public open space surrounding their homes

The Council Resolves To:

Adopt a Default Adoption Policy:

1. Ask the Executive and Planning Department to review local planning frameworks, including the Local Plan, to ensure that, moving forward, all new housing estates in the district are adopted by the local authority as a matter of default, provided they meet the standard adoption criteria

Explorer Adoption of Existing Facilities:

2. Set up a cross-party working group to investigate the financial and legal mechanisms required for the Council to adopt existing managed estates, freeing residents from private maintenance contracts

Lobby for Council Tax Relief

3. Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and local Members of Parliament, calling for a change in national policy to allow local authorities to legally offer a Council Tax discount or rebate to residents who are forced to pay private estate management fees for unadopted public infrastructure.

Investigate Interim Discretionary Relief:

4. Ask the Executive to request that officers to produce a report on whether any temporary, local discretionary Council Tax relief or hardship schemes can be applied under existing legislation to mitigate the financial burden on affected residents in the interim.

16. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

If Council wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for Council to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Council may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

17. **Exempt Annex A for item 9: Allocation of Capital Funding for Lift Replacement at Marriotts Walk** (Pages 651 - 652)

(END)

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the
Council
Held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB
at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 20 May 2026**

PRESENT

Councillors: , , Carl Rylett, Joy Aitman, Thomas Ashby, Andrew Beaney, Adam Clements, Sandra Coleman, Andrew Coles, Sandra Cosier, Steve Cosier, Rachel Crouch, Jane Doughty, Sarah Evans, Roger Faulkner, Nick Field-Johnson, Phil Godfrey, Andy Goodwin, Andy Graham, David Jackson, Edward James, Liz Leffman, Dan Levy, Andrew Lyon, Jan Lund, Liam Mackenzie, Stuart McCarroll, Hannah Massie, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Toby Morris, Rosie Pearson, Elizabeth Poskitt, Andrew Prosser, Nigel Ridpath, James Robertshaw, Geoff Saul, Sandra Simpson, Alaric Smith, Tim Sumner, Jack Treloar, Sarah Veasey, Liam Walker, Mark Walker, Simon Watson, Alex Wilson and Alistair Wray

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive Officer), Madhu Richards (Director of Finance), Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance and Regulatory Services), Phil Martin (Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service), Frank Wilson (Managing Director - Publica), Andrew Brown (Head of Democratic and Electoral Services), Anne Learmonth (Democratic Services Officer), Maria Harper (Democratic Services Assistant), Ana Prelici (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Mathew Taylor (Democratic Services Officer)

Other Councillors in attendance:

CL.101 Election of Chair 2026/27

The retiring Chair, Councillor Andrew Coles, opened the meeting to preside over the election of the new Chair for 2026/27. Before doing so, the Chair welcomed the new members to the chamber and reminded all members that the Council's committees would also be meeting immediately after the full Council meeting.

Councillor Andy Graham proposed that Cllr Carl Rylett be elected Chair for 2026/27.

Councillor Joy Aitman seconded the proposal, which was put to the vote and agreed by Council.

The Council resolved to:

1. Elect Councillor Carl Rylett as Chair for 2026/27

Voting record – For 44, Against 0, Abstentions 0

Councillor Carl Rylett took the Chair, signed his declaration of acceptance of office and presided over the remaining business of the meeting.

CL.102 Appointment of Vice Chair 2026/27

The Chair invited nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of Council for 2026/27. Councillor Andy Graham proposed that Councillor Joy Aitman be appointed Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Carl Rylett, put to the vote and agreed by Council.

The Council resolved to:

1. Appoint Councillor Joy Aitman as Vice-Chair for 2026/27

Voting record – For 44, Against 0, Abstentions 0

The Chair congratulated the Vice-Chair on the appointment. The Vice-Chair signed their declaration of acceptance of office.

CL.103 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Cllr Tammy Abarno
- Cllr Duncan Enright

Cllr Paul Marsh

CL.104 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

The Chair reminded Members that there was a dispensation in place for all members under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011, to allow members to participate in the consideration of member allowances.

CL.105 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Council considered the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2026.

Councillor Andy Graham proposed accepting the minutes, this was seconded by Councillor Alaric Smith.

This proposal was voted on and agreed.

Council

20/May2026

Voting record – For 35, Abstentions 9, Against 0

The Council Resolved to:

1. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2026.

CL.106 Vote of thanks for Chair and Vice-Chair 2025/26

Councillor Rylett, the incoming Chair, thanked Councillor Andrew Coles, the outgoing Chair, for his work, and asked him to speak on his year as Chair.

The outgoing Chair reflected on his term of office, describing it as a great honour and highlighting his extensive community engagement, support for local charities and fundraising efforts, which raised almost £8,000 over two years. He thanked Members and officers, in particular the Executive support team, Mandy Smith and Ella Gray.

Members paid tribute to Councillor Coles' leadership, commending his fairness, integrity, inclusivity, good humour and commitment to the community. Particular reference was made to his charitable fundraising, civic events and positive representation of the Council. Councillor Coles also thanked Councillor Carl Rylett for his support as Vice-Chair during the year and wished him well in his new role as Chair. The Chair presented Councillor Coles with a Past Chair's medal in recognition of his service.

Councillor Coles thanked Cllr Rylett for his support as Vice-Chair, wished him the best as Chair and affirmed his confidence in Councillor Rylett’s election as Chair

CL.107 Report of the Leader

The Leader of the Council presented his annual report, highlighting progress against the Council Plan priorities, including service delivery, housing provision, leisure services, environmental initiatives, climate action, support for local businesses and partnership working. He outlined future priorities, including adoption of the Local Plan, delivery of the Carterton Area Strategy, investment in leisure facilities, affordable housing projects, environmental improvements and preparations for local government reorganisation. The Leader also announced the Executive appointments and portfolio responsibilities for 2025/26, thanked outgoing Executive Members for their contributions, and confirmed appointments to the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee.

Upon being proposed by Councillor Graham and seconded by Councillor Aitman, Council resolved to note the report.

Council

20/May2026

Voting record - For 35, Against 2, Abstentions 0.

Council resolved to:

1. Note the report of the Leader.

CL.108 Report on Special Urgency Key Decisions

Council noted that no key decisions had been taken under the special urgency provisions during the previous municipal year.

CL.109 Return of the Returning Officer

The Returning Officer's report on the recent elections was received and noted. Thanks were recorded to the Elections Team and officers involved in the administration of the elections for their work in delivering the electoral process.

Council resolved to:

1. Note the return of the Returning Officer.

Voting record – For 40, Against 0, Abstentions 0, Did not vote 4

CL.110 Establishment and Appointment of Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups, including Substitute Members

Council considered a report on the establishment of committees and the appointment of members for the 2026/27 municipal year. The Leader introduced the report and proposed the recommendations as set out in the agenda papers. Following consideration, Council approved the committee structure and appointments as recommended.

Councillor Coles, seconded the recommendations, which were put to a vote.

Voting record - For 44, Against 0, Abstentions 0

Council resolved to:

1. Agree to establish the Council's Committees as defined in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution (version 2.18), for the Civic Year 2026/27;
2. Determine that, in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 ("the Act"), the Council shall apply the political balance provisions under the Act to committees as shown in Annex A;

3. Agree to re-establish the Constitution Working Group (with 7 Members), agree the Terms of Reference (Annex B) and in doing so agree to apply the principles of political proportionality.
4. Agree to re-establish the Carterton Area Strategy Working Group (with 6 Members plus the Executive Member with responsibility for Carterton Area Strategy as ex officio Chair), agree the Terms of Reference (Annex C) and in doing so agree to apply the principles of political proportionality, subject to all political groups being represented on the working group.
5. Appoint councillors to serve on the Council's committees, working groups and external committees, as set out in Annex D for a term of office expiring at the next Annual Meeting of the Council;
6. Note the arrangements for substitute members set out in part 5 of the report.

CL.111 Adoption of the Council's Constitution

Council considered a report on the adoption of the Constitution, including the Scheme of Delegation for non-executive functions and revised Financial Procedure Rules. The Executive Member for Finance advised that the revised Financial Procedure Rules had been updated to reflect organisational changes, including the Publica transition, and had been considered by both the Constitution Working Group and the Audit and Governance Committee. Council was also asked to approve a change to exclude Strategic Planning Committee and Development Management Sub-Committee meetings from the constitutional rule limiting meeting duration at 3 hours, following the move to a single district-wide planning committee structure. During debate, comments were made regarding the implementation of the planning committee arrangements and the potential impact of removing meeting time limits. It was noted that the Constitution Working Group could review the arrangements if required.

Councillor Field-Johnson let the chamber midway through the debate and therefore did not vote.

Upon being proposed and seconded the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed by Council.

Voting record – For 44, Against 0, Abstentions 0, Not eligible to vote 1

Council resolved to:

1. Adopt the Council's Constitution and agree the Scheme of Officer Delegations, other than those relating to Executive functions, as set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.
2. Approve the updated Financial Procedure Rules attached as Annex A.
3. Agree to exclude the Strategic Planning Committee and Development Management Sub-Committee from the duration of meeting rule, as shown in Annex B.

CL.112 Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Council considered the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, which had reviewed the implications of the revised planning committee structure on Members' Special Responsibility Allowances. The Panel concluded that the impact of the new arrangements should be reviewed after they had been in operation for a period and once proposed national planning reforms were clearer. In the interim, it recommended that the Vice-Chair of the Development Management Sub-Committee receive a Special Responsibility Allowance equivalent to 0.25 of the basic allowance, reflecting the increased responsibilities associated with the new committee structure. The Panel also noted that Members' allowances were now pensionable, and that members could opt into this.

Voting record - For 44, Against 0, Abstentions 1,

Council resolved to:

1. Agree to introduce a 0.25x Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice-Chair of the Development Management Sub-Committee;
2. Note that the Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chairs of Strategic Planning Committee and Development Management Sub-Committee will be reviewed in the autumn as part of the full review of allowances;
3. Note that the amount paid as the Vice-Chair's Special Responsibility Allowances will be reviewed in the autumn as part of the full review of allowances, in respect to the amount.
4. Note that following changes at national level, from the 11 May 2026, Councillors have been able to opt into the Local Government Pensions Scheme, and that pensions may be payable on a member's basic and/or special responsibility allowance. The members allowances scheme will be updated accordingly.

CL.113 Strategic Partnerships Update

The Leader presented an update on the Council's strategic partnerships and external representation. He highlighted the Council's continued engagement with national and regional bodies, including the Local Council Network (formerly the Local Government Association for district councils) and South East Councils, emphasising the importance of ensuring West Oxfordshire is represented in national discussions and decision-making. An update was provided on ongoing local government reorganisation work, the Oxford Growth Commission, and the Council's involvement with Ubico in delivering waste and recycling services. The Leader noted the value of these partnerships in promoting the interests of West Oxfordshire and influencing policy and investment opportunities. Council noted the report.

Voting record – For 41, Against 0, Abstentions 0Council resolved to:

1. Note the contents of the Strategic Partnerships Report

CL.114 Audit and Governance Committee Annual Council Report

Councillor Nigel Ridpath, as prospective Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, presented the Committee's annual report, highlighting its work during the year in maintaining high standards of governance, overseeing internal and external audit activity, monitoring risk management, treasury management, counter-fraud arrangements and value for money. He noted that the Committee had undertaken a substantial programme of work and concluded that the Council was well managed, whilst continuing to identify opportunities for improvement. Thanks were expressed to officers, Committee members, independent persons and the Finance Team for their support and contributions throughout the year.

Voting record – For 41, Against 0, Abstentions 1

Council resolved to:

1. Note the report.

CL.115 Director of Place appointment

Council considered a report seeking approval of the appointment of Daniel Taylor as Director of Place. The Leader outlined Mr Taylor's experience in housing, regeneration, development and community services, including his recent role as Acting Managing Director of Essex Housing. It was noted that Council approval was required as the post attracted a salary in excess of £100,000. A member who had participated in the recruitment process expressed confidence in Mr Taylor's suitability for the role and welcomed his appointment.

The appointment was seconded by Councillor Andrew Coles, put to the vote and approved.

Voting record – For 43, Against 0, Abstentions 1

Council Resolved to:

1. Confirm the salary for the Director of Place as £104,722 per annum, plus the applicable pending pay award.

CL.116 Appointment of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer

Council considered a report on the appointment of the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer. The Leader propose the recommendations and advised that, following consideration by the Performance and Appointments Committee, it was recommended that Andrea McCaskie, Director of Governance and Regulatory Services, be appointed to both statutory roles with effect from 1 June 2026.

Andrea McCaskie left the room at this point.

The Leader proposed and Councillor Coles seconded the appointment, noting that the Director of Governance and Regulatory Service's attention to detail which would be an asset to the role.

Voting record – For 43, Against 0, Abstentions 0

Council resolved to:

1. Appoint the Director of Governance and Regulatory Services, Andrea McCaskie, as Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer, with effect from 1 June 2026.

CL.117 Motion to hold an Extraordinary meeting to Confer an Honorary Title

Council considered a motion proposing that an Extraordinary Meeting of Council be convened on 22 July 2026 to consider conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Julian Cooper, in recognition of his outstanding and long-standing service to West Oxfordshire District Council and the residents of Woodstock. During debate, a query was raised as to whether Julian Cooper had been consulted regarding the proposed honour. In response, it was noted that any conferment would be subject to his willingness to accept the title. Members spoke in support of the proposal, recognising Julian Cooper's significant contribution to the Council over many years.

Voting record – For 35, Against 2, Abstentions 6

Council resolved to:

1. Convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council to take place at 2pm on 22nd July 2026 for the purpose of considering conferring on Mr Julian Cooper the title of Honorary Alderman, as allowed by s249 of the Local Government Act 1972; and
2. Note that the ordinary meeting of the Council scheduled for that date shall commence at 2.15pm, or at the conclusion of the extraordinary meeting, whichever is the later.

CL.118 Dates of Future Meetings

The Chair noted that the dates of future meetings were set out in the agenda and advised that the next meeting of Council would be held on 22 July 2026. Following the earlier decision of Council, an Extraordinary Meeting would take place at 2.00pm to consider conferring the title of Honorary Alderman, followed by the Ordinary Meeting of Council at 2.15pm, or at the conclusion of the Extraordinary Meeting if later. The Chair then closed the meeting before the commencement of the remaining committee meetings.

CL.119 Receipt of Announcements

The Chair of the Council explained that this would be Giles Hughes's last meeting as Chief Executive and thanked him before asking the Leader to comment.

The Leader of the Council paid tribute to the Chief Executive, Giles Hughes, thanking him for his outstanding service, strategic leadership, integrity, dedication and support to the Council. Group Leaders on behalf of the Labour, Conservative and Green Groups also expressed their appreciation for his calm leadership, guidance and contribution to the Council over many years, particularly during significant challenges including Covid-19, Publica disaggregation and local government reorganisation, and wished him well for the future.

The Chair also made the following announcements;

- Members could now opt into the Local Government Pension Scheme
- There were a number of forthcoming training sessions, including mandatory planning training and cyber security and data protection training.
- Members were reminded to update their Register of Interests before the end of June where applicable and advised of changes relating to the publication of home addresses on the Register of Interests.

No announcements were made by the Chief Executive, Director of Finance or Director of Governance and Regulatory Services.

The Meeting closed at Time Not Specified

CHAIR

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West Oxfordshire District Council: Executive Members 2026/27

Name of Councillor	Title and Areas of Responsibility
Andy Graham (**Leader**)	**Leader of the Council:**. Overview of all Executive Portfolio; Policy Framework; Council Plan; Governance; Legal and Communications; Local Government Reorganisation (Strategy, Governance, Transition Planning, Partnership Working, Service delivery, Locality Model); Devolution; Strategic Partnerships; Oxfordshire Joint Leaders; Thames Valley; Publica & Ubico; LGA, LCN & SE Councils; Emergency Planning
Duncan Enright **Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development**	**Economic Development:** Economic and Business Development, including visitor economy, farming and town centres; Inward investment for growth in emerging industries; Business grants – strategic overview; Training skills and apprenticeships, delivery partnerships; Witney High Street; Mullin Museum
Alaric Smith **Executive Member for Finance**	**Finance:** Budget setting; Council Tax and Benefits; Asset and Investment Management; Performance and Financial Management; Counter Fraud; Internal and External Audit; Health and Safety
Liz Leffman **Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure**	**Planning and Infrastructure**: Local Plan; Strategic Planning; Development Management – strategic overview; Landscape Management; Infrastructure requirements and delivery – planning overview; Section 106 & CIL requirements and overview; Carterton Area Strategy; Salt Cross Garden Village Delivery.
Tim Sumner **Executive Member for Arts, Culture and Sports**	**Arts, Culture and Sports:**; Leisure provision including swimming pools, including maintenance and investment plans; Leisure contract renewal; Sports hub provision in strategic areas of the district for developed and emerging sports; Playing Pitch Strategy & Provision; Developing in partnership – play areas (indoor and outdoor), parks, open spaces & footpaths, walking & fitness initiatives; Arts & cultural provision and development in theatre, music, arts, dance and arts/crafts; Conservation and Historical Environment; Promotion of investment grants support through platform partnership funding (Joint)
Sandra Coleman **Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities**	**Stronger, Healthy Communities:** Community and public health; Community provision of community space/hubs with town & parish partnerships; Promotion of investment grants support through platform partnership funding (Joint); Assets of community value – strategic overview; Refugee Resettlement Programme; Young people; Equality and diversity; Voluntary sector engagement; Safeguarding

Geoff Saul **Executive Member for Housing and Community Safety**	**Housing and Community Safety:** Housing (Homelessness, Housing allocations – strategic overview, Provision of affordable/social rented homes, Sheltered housing and emergency accommodation, Woodford Way, Weavers Fold); Community Safety (Community Safety Partnership, Crime and Disorder, Neighbourhood Policing, Scrutiny of Police and Crime Commissioner)
Alistair Wray **Executive Member for Environment**	**Environment:** Waste & recycling collection; Flood alleviation/natural flood management and sewage management; Food production and farming; Environmental Partnerships (WASP, Evenlode CP, North-East Cotswold Cluster); Street Cleaning & Grounds Maintenance; Environmental Protection and Food Safety; Air Quality; Car Parking and Toilets
Andrew Prosser **Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery**	**Climate Action and Nature Recovery:** Climate Action; Energy advice, Renewable Energy, EV Charging Nature Recovery Partnerships & Plans; Landscape & Biodiversity Project Management; Partnership liaison & promotion (local, county & regional)

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Name and date of Committee	**EXECUTIVE – WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2026**
Subject	**FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2025/26 YEAR END**
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance Email: alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Madhu Richards, Director of Finance Email: madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Georgina Dyer, Head of Finance Email: georgina.dyer@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To report the financial performance of the Council in 2025/26
Annexes	Annex A – Revenue Outturn Annex B – Capital Outturn and Capital Slippage
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive 1. Note the 2025/26 financial performance. 2. Recommend to Council to carry forward the capital budget of £4,395,180. (Paragraph 5.2) 3. Recommend to Council to approve the transfers to and between Earmarked Reserves as detailed in the report. (Section 4) 4. Recommend to Council to approve the necessary budget virements related to Publica Phase 2. (Paragraph 2.27)
Corporate priorities	Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No

Consultees/ Consultation	None

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 In February 2025, the Council set a balanced budget with a contribution to general fund reserves of £91,280. The in-year quarterly reporting has consistently forecast a cost of service underspend driven by Trade Waste & Development Management income and a significant overachievement of interest on Treasury Management investment activities.

1.2 At year end the underspend on cost of services is £251,433. This is driven by the strong performance of some fee generating services, the lower than anticipated one off costs of the Publica Review (£112,000 underspend) and the contract refunds returned to the Council by both Publica (£162,000) and Ubico (£200,000).

1.3 Combined with the funding elements of the revenue account i.e. Interest on external borrowing, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) which is the charge that must be made to revenue to pay off the principal amount of borrowing taken out to fund the capital programme, similar to depreciation in the private sector, disposal of fixed assets and Government Grants, the final outturn position is a contribution to general fund reserves of £203,155.

1.4 The Council's Treasury Management activity generated an additional £800,768 of investment income, benefitting from higher than expected interest rates for the full financial year in both our Money Market accounts and our Pooled funds. At the beginning of 2026 our Treasury Management advisors were predicting that interest rates would begin to fall this year, but this has not materialised due to the effect of the conflict in Iran on the global economy and the Bank of England's need to curb inflation.

1.5 The £800,000 of additional Treasury Management income has been moved to Earmarked Reserves to help fund the cost of Local Government Re-Organisation (LGR).

1.6 Throughout the year it has been reported that both Trade Waste and Development Management have generated significantly higher income than budgeted in 2025/26. This additional income enables the Council to fund priority projects without the need to take out external borrowing. The additional Trade Waste income has been moved to an earmarked reserve to fund the Waste and Environmental Services Programme (WESP) and the additional Development Management income has been moved to an earmarked reserves to fund the Woodford Way project to the planning application stage.

1.7 Publica returned a net refund to the Council of £162,000 relating to Phase 2 of the Publica Review and early delivery against savings targets.

1.8 The Capital Programme for the year was approved at £16.165m and expenditure at year end is £8.24m. The first phase of the replacement of the Waste Vehicle fleet was budgeted to be funded by external borrowing with the resulting interest costs and MRP included in the 2025/26 budget. Waste Vehicle replacement is now an integral part of the County wide WESP. This programme is a co-ordinated approach allowing for shared planning, joint procurement and the optimisation of both fleet and associated infrastructure. This approach will allow for the rationalisation of depots and transfer stations to better reflect overall County wide need.

1.9 The remaining capital slippage relates to investment Property repairs at Unit 1-3 Carterton Industrial Estate, The works to replace the roof, are underway and are expected to be completed in Q2 2026/27.

1.10 The reduced capital expenditure meant that the Council did not need to take out external borrowing in the year, saving £81,968 in budgeted interest costs and correspondingly, without additional assets, the MRP is £44,036 below budget.

1.11 The budget for 2026/27 assumes a lower rate of interest returns for Treasury Management investments which should reduce the variance throughout the year. However, the budget was set before the Iran conflict started and now the global economic landscape is very different. It is unlikely that interest rates will fall as anticipated during 2026/27 as the Bank of England will need to manage inflation. Capital slippage, if agreed, will increase the Capital Programme to £13.4m with a corresponding increase in MRP of £44,000.

There are a number of budget variances identified in the report across a range of service areas, commentary for the most significant of these is set out below. A full list of variances by cost centre is listed in Annex A.

These figures are still subject to External Audit review; however, no material change is expected to the figures reported here.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - Budget Monitoring

Revenue Budget Monitoring 2025/26 - 1st April to 31st March 2026

Service Area	Original Budget 2025/26 £	Current Budget £	Actual Exp £	Variance (under) / over spend £
Democratic and Committee Services	1,412,297	1,447,977	1,429,823	(18,154)
Environmental & Regulatory Services	784,557	698,731	729,758	31,028
Environmental Services	8,285,567	8,173,529	7,997,566	(175,963)
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	1,062,851	1,183,180	1,202,137	18,957
ICT, Change & Customer Services	2,230,097	1,867,755	1,853,109	(14,646)
Land, Legal & Property	841,492	1,605,742	1,588,095	(17,647)
Leisure & Communities	555,410	595,786	301,192	(294,594)
Planning & Strategic Housing	1,383,153	1,280,375	1,162,599	(117,776)
Revenues & Housing Support	1,592,014	665,724	1,270,026	604,302
Investment Property and Retained Services	682,434	1,034,001	767,061	(266,940)
Total cost of services	**18,829,872**	**18,552,799**	**18,301,366**	**(251,433)**
Plus:				
Investment income receipts	(1,156,228)	(1,956,228)	(1,956,996)	(768)
Cost of services before financing:	**17,673,644**	**16,596,571**	**16,344,370**	**(252,201)**
General Government Grants	(5,183,440)	(5,851,154)	(5,839,905)	11,249
Retained Business Rates	(6,987,360)	(6,987,360)	(6,987,360)	(0)
Interest Payable	84,875	217,581	135,613	(81,968)
MRP	581,166	581,166	563,320	(17,846)
Revenue Contribution to Capital	540,000	540,000	569,624	29,624
Earmarked Reserves	1,444,735	3,265,122	3,481,160	216,038
Disposal of fixed assets	0	0	(16,770)	(16,770)
Capital Charges	(1,804,700)	(2,013,007)	(2,013,007)	0
Council Tax	(6,440,199)	(6,440,199)	(6,440,199)	0
Budgeted Contribution to General Fund	91,280	91,280	0	(91,280)
Contribution to General Fund	**0**	**(0)**	**(203,155)**	**(203,155)**

2. FINANCIAL REPORTING – REVENUE

Environmental and Regulatory Services

2.1 Building Control

Building Control has exceeded the income target for the year by £13,000 but is overspent by £11,851 in staff overtime and £6,963 in mileage that were not budgeted for in 2025/26, following the TUPE of staff from Publica back to the Council. This issue has been addressed in the 2026/27 budget. We have also been subject to charges of £12,000 from the Health &

Safety Executive for an audit of our Building Control function that is required under a new monitoring regime. The next audit is expected to take place in 2029/30.

2.2 Markets

As reported in the year, a commercial operator now manages the markets in Witney & Chipping Norton. The outsourcing is designed to revitalise the markets with income to the Council increasing over time. At the end of Q4 the overspend is £33,509, consistent with the reporting in the year. The 2026/27 budget has been adjusted to allow the operator time to deliver their improvement plans.

Land, Legal and Property

2.3 Marriotts

Marriotts was purchased by the Council in January 2023 for regeneration and to support a vibrant High Street in Witney and serve the whole District. This move away from commercial investments was a departure for the Council, with its portfolio of investment properties that had been built up over the last 15 years but demonstrated the Council's commitment to develop the local economy.

A commercial agent manages lettings and it has become apparent that retail lettings are not achieved at speed. Despite the general market conditions, during 2025/26 new tenants have begun trading at Marriotts, such as Vorwerk, Scarlett Brewery, Hotter Shoes and Opera Cafe, and existing tenants have renewed their leases. The current occupancy for the scheme is 96.89% with negotiations underway with a potential tenant for the single remaining vacant unit.

Overall Marriotts has made a net contribution to the Council's finances of £454,890 in 2025/26.

2.4 Legal

In May 2024, the Council signed up to a new Legal Shared Services agreement with Cotswold District Council and Forest of Dean District Council. The shared service offers advantages in terms of shared knowledge and resilience and the new SLA arrangement fairly apportions the cost of the service across the Councils based on the amount of resource each Council uses. For the 2025/26 financial year there is an underspend of £27,000, due to a vacant post. This post has now been recruited to and it is likely that in 2026/27 the service will be on budget.

Leisure & Communities

2.5 Leisure Contract

Overall, the leisure contract is underspent by £294,940 in 2025/26.

Of this underspend £83,000 relates to the budgeted amount for legal advice and procurement support for the negotiation of the new leisure contract for 2027-2033. This legal advice has been instructed in Q1 2026/27, with procurement support to follow.

Contract income is £176,000 above target for the year due to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase in the contract sum. This excess income has been moved to earmarked reserves to help offset the £1.39m reduction in leisure income expected from 2027/28 following the negotiation of the new contract
In addition, £229,000 of bad debt provision has been released back to the General Fund following the annual review of bad debt as part of the year end process, creating an additional underspend against the Leisure Contract.

Environmental Services

2.6 Ubico Contract

The Ubico contract is £200,000 underspent for the year against a budget of £8,604,053. The underspend has been split across the contract and has offset overspends for bins and boxes, recycling costs, repairs and maintenance at the Depots and trash screen clearance.

2.7 Grounds Maintenance

This is a charged for service to Parish and Town Councils to undertake grass cutting, litter clearance, hedge cutting and litter bin emptying. The service has grown over the last two years from an overspend of £30,000 in 2023/24 to an underspend of £39,000 in 2025/26. The service is provided via the Ubico contract but remits income directly to the Council. However, the budget does not include any allocation for the Council's costs in managing the service, therefore the real cost of providing this service is under represented.

2.8 Dog Warden

This is a statutory service and is not income generating, therefore 100% of the cost is borne by the Council for the collection and kennelling of stray dogs. At Q3 it was reported that there was an underspend of £24,000, a 58% reduction in demand compared to the same period last year. At year end, the underspend has increased to £36,000. By its nature, this service is subject to demand volatility.

2.9 Green Waste

Income from Green Waste licences is £68,000 behind target for the year but has achieved 96% of the £1.66m budget, a contribution to support Council services of £268,274. The cost

of a green waste licence in 2026/27 has been kept at £52.50, the lowest licence fee compared to our 14 closest neighbouring Councils.

2.10 Trade Waste

Trade Waste performance in 2025/26 has been very positive. The Publica Trade Waste team achieved additional income of £341,000 compared to budget in conjunction with an underspend on tipping charges paid to the County Council of £63,000.

The additional income (£341,000) has been moved to earmarked reserves to help fund the Waste & Environmental Services Programme (WESP).

2.11 Household Waste

After the proportionate application of the Ubico contract underspend, Household Waste is on budget for the year. However, in the year there was unbudgeted for expenditure of £65,000 on Alloy Licences which is being used in the Waste Vehicles to better understand and plan routes and to manage resources more flexibly.

2.12 Bulky Waste

Fees for Bulky Waste were increased in 2025/26 from £34 to £40 and have generated a very similar volume of collections as 2024/25, resulting in an underspend of £24,000.

Planning & Strategic Housing

2.13 Development Management

Throughout the year Planning Application income has been reported as being well ahead of budget due to the receipt of major applications. At the end of Q4, income is £433,000 above target, partially offset by £123,000 of expenditure on agency staff. This income is an increase of 20% on last year, an indication of the volatility of application income and the difficulty in setting an accurate budget. Of this excess income, £299,000 has been moved to earmarked reserves to fund the Woodford Way project to the Planning Application stage.

2.14 Development Management Appeals

External legal spend on Planning Appeals is £87,805 underspent. It is difficult to predict when appeals will be lodged but we have seen significant underspends in the last two financial years. The budget has therefore been reduced by £50,000 for 2026/27.

Retained Services

2.15 Publica Review

On 1st July 2025 the second phase of Publica employees were TUPE transferred back to the Council. This transfer included the Waste, Leisure, Assets and Project Management teams. The 2025/26 budget included £300,000 for any one-off costs incurred by the Council relating to this Phase 2 transfer. The actual one-off costs were significantly lower than budgeted, resulting in a £111,891 underspend.

2.16 Publica Contract

Due to Phase 2 of the Publica Review, Publica has remitted a net refund to the Council against the 2025/26 contract sum of £162,570. This figure includes a return of £189,997 relating to staffing and the corresponding reduction of £27,427 charged by the Council to Publica for the use of our buildings. This figure includes the reduction in the contract sum from 1st July 2025 relating to the staff transfer back to the Council, new posts in Homelessness and HR and a saving in Car Parking enforcement.

2.17 Investment Property

The Investment Property portfolio has had a mixed year in 2025/26, with the overall outturn being an overspend of £59,000. Town Centre Properties, Talisman and Des Roches have returned a combined underspend of £191,000, whilst Between Towns Road, Elmfield and Carterton Industrial Estate have returned a combined overspend of £250,000.

2.18 Elmfield

Elmfield is now part of the Council's Investment Property portfolio, however we retain liability for landlord works. Income is £32,000 behind budget for the year, linked to the landlord works on the building insulation that have been undertaken over the course of 2025/26 which reduced the area of rentable space.

2.19 Between Towns Road

The £50,172 overspend results from additional business rates liability and costs to secure the site in advance of it being sold. The sale completed at the end of January 2026 with the capital receipt included in the MTFS to fund the Leisure Centre Improvement Programme over the next two years.

2.20 Carterton Industrial Estate

Units 1-3 are currently vacant with roof replacement work underway which is due to be completed at the end of Q2 2026/27. The overspend for the year is £162,793, the majority of which is made up of Business Rates liability (£74,000), costs to keep the site secure

(£22,000), repairs to the roller shutters to access the building and restore the electrical connection (£30,147). A mandated Asbestos survey and professional fees for the condition surveys and specialist consultancy on the technical specification were also needed before going out to tender for the roof repairs (£30,927).

2.21 Town Centre Properties

Our Town Centre Properties are made up of 5 properties in Witney that include the Woolgate, Barclays Bank, Mill Walk and 35/37 High Street. Combined they have delivered a modest underspend of £17,462 relating to professional fees and service charges related to 2024/25 invoiced in the year.

2.22 Talisman

As reported throughout the year, the rental income for one of the units was missed out of the base budget in error, resulting in a £110,000 underspend for Talisman in addition to a £30,000 underspend on professional fees. The budget has been corrected for 2026/27.

2.23 Des Roches

The commencement of a new lease in July 2025, which due to timing was not included in the base budget, has provided the Council with an additional £37,000 of rental income.

A detailed report on our Investment Property portfolio, including current valuations, yield and 2025/26 outturn is the subject of a report from the Head of Assets which will go to Overview & Scrutiny Committee in June 2026.

2.24 Non-Distributed Costs

There are two elements to the pension contributions the Council makes for employees. Firstly, there is the amount paid monthly through payroll which is balanced by a secondary cash element paid direct to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) that keeps the payroll contribution at a steady rate and funds historic pension liability. The primary contribution rate has been 17.6% for the last six years, but the secondary cash contribution this year is higher than the budget and is £18,812 overspent at year end.

The pension scheme triennial revaluation was undertaken by the pension scheme actuaries and administrators in 2025 resulting in an increase in the primary contribution rate to 20% from the 1st April 2026 and the removal of the secondary contribution. This change is solely related to the way the pension scheme is funded and there is no impact on the amount of pension an employee will receive when they reach retirement. Pension payments are calculated on the basis of career average earnings (from April 2014), length of service and age. The contribution rate fluctuates over time in line with the performance of pension scheme assets.

Revenues & Housing Support

2.25 Housing Benefits

There are currently 73 households in temporary accommodation across the district. Over the course of the year this number has averaged at 76. Capacity in Council owned properties is for 22 single people with the remaining households in Bed & Breakfast or Hotel accommodation.

The reliance on Bed & Breakfast and Hotels to house an average of 54 clients cost the Council £924,000 in lost Housing Benefit Subsidy in 2025/26, partially offset by Housing Benefit overpayment income and a reduction in the contribution to Bad Debt to bring the outturn position to an overspend of £533,795.

For temporary accommodation not owned by the Council, we are only able to claw back around 27% of the average weekly cost we pay out. The 2025/26 Capital Programme included £3m to buy more properties to provide an additional 30 beds of accommodation to relieve the unsustainable pressure on revenue.

At full occupancy, the additional Council owned emergency accommodation would prevent the loss of an estimated £361,000 of Housing Benefit subsidy per year based on the current cost of B&Bs and Hotels used by the Council and the Local Authority Housing rates in place for 2026/27.

2.26 Acquisition of Temporary Accommodation

The Council completed the acquisition of a property in Corn Street Witney in the first week of November 2025 which will provide 5 beds, the first property completion of the programme. The renovation works have now been largely completed with only some minor snagging works to be undertaken although there is a national delay with equipment needed to install the security system.

The purchase of a second property in North Leigh was completed at the beginning of January 2026 and will provide accommodation for four families. The design work and specification has been finalised with the work currently being tendered through the procurement process.

The programme is on track to deliver 29 beds in total with the completion of the transfer of 6 vacant properties from Cottsway Housing due to take place on 22nd May.

All the properties have been surveyed and roof replacement in 3 of the properties will be required. This gives the Council the opportunity to upgrade the insulation in the properties which concurs with advice provided by the Climate Change Manager and supports climate emergency goals for WODC.

The capital expenditure against the original £3m approved is £1.335m. Part of the remainder is requested as slippage into 2026/27.

2.27 Budget Virements

As a result of the Publica Review it has been necessary to post a number of budget virements between employee costs and the Publica contract sum. This has not resulted in any change to the base budget, just a re-allocation of the approved budget between budget codes to remove the variances caused by the TUPE transfer of staff.

3. FUNDING

3.1 Retained Business Rates and Pooling

The accounting arrangements for Business Rates are complex and statute requires recognition of items charged in one financial year to be resolved in the following year i.e. the deficit arising in 2025/26 (the shortfall in collectable rates versus expected due to the Government reliefs) will be repaid to the Collection Fund in 2026/27. This deficit will be funded by the Business Rates deficit earmarked reserve set up specifically for this purpose.

As the Billing Authority the Council collects 100% of the 'payable' income but distributes 50% of the 'budgeted' income (regardless of whether the actual cash collected has reduced significantly due to Government reliefs) to Central Government and 10% to the County Council on a monthly basis.

The table below shows the calculation of the budgeted Business Rate income for the Council versus the Actual.

	Budget 2025/26	Actual 2025/26	
	£m	£m	
Total BR Income	48.376	46.851	Expected vs Collectable
WODC share	19.350	19.350	Fixed at Budget Setting/NNDR 1
Less Tariff	-14.461	-14.461	This is a Govt specified adjustment to reduce our collected rates to the baseline funding level they determine.
Deficit Payable	-0.001	-0.001	Fixed at Budget Setting
S31 Grant	4.571	4.735	Grant received to compensate for lost business rates income due to Central Gov policy.
Renewables	0.302	0.339	Income retained by WODC for renewable energy schemes
BR Income	9.761	9.962	
Less Levy	-2.774	-1.517	The budgeted figure is reduced by the Gain achieved from being a member of a Business Rates Pool.
Net Business Rates	**6.987**	**8.445**	
Deficit Payable		-0.687	Actual deficit submitted via the NNDR 3 form to be repaid in 2026/27
Movement to Reserves		-0.771	Pool Gain moved to earmarked reserves to pay the 25/26 deficit
Retained Income	**6.987**	**6.987**	

4. TRANSFERS TO EARMARKED RESERVES

At the Executive meeting on 11th March 2026, delegated authority was granted to the Portfolio holder for Finance and the Director of Finance to review Earmarked Reserves and re-align them with current Council priorities. This exercise has been done and has resulted in a reduction in the number of earmarked reserves from 54 to 45.

Of these 20 are ringfenced reserves of grant and Council funding for specific projects i.e. Afghan Resettlement, Extended Producer Responsibility, Homes for Ukraine and the Local Plan.

Other reserves are the result of a timing difference between the receipt and the expenditure of funding i.e. Biodiversity Net Gain, Botley PPA, Planning Skills Delivery.

The Council also has reserves set up to ameliorate specific risks i.e. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), Investment Property Repairs, Ubico fuel contingency, Woodford Way and repayment of the Business Rates Deficit.

Specific reserves set up in 2025/26 are shown in the table below.

Specific Reserves	**To £**	**Purpose**
WESP	900,000	WESP Project
Maintenance of Open Spaces (Council Funded)	275,000	Ad hoc costs of repairing fences, footbridges, Play Parks, Kilkenny Country Park etc
Property Repairs & Maintenance Fund (Revenue)	150,000	Funding reactive building repairs that do not qualify as capital and are charge to the revenue budget
LGR	1,000,000	LGR costs before Vesting Day
Hardship Fund	440,000	Funding for the Council Tax and Housing Benefit Hardship schemes
Ubico Fuel Contingency	250,000	To fund the additional costs of diesel caused by the Iran war
Building Maintenance Fund	500,000	To fund the planned building maintenance of Council properties
Woodford Way Social Housing Scheme	200,000	To advance the scheme to the Planning stage
Total	**3,715,000**	

Reserves are reviewed at least annually with authority sought from the Executive to move funding between reserves as risks change over time.

The table below shows the proposed movements to earmarked reserves. After the proposed movements the final outturn position will be a £203,155 surplus which will go to the General Fund.

	Transfers		
Reserve	**To**	**From**	
	£	**£**	
Budget Deficit	1,457,845		Transfer of S31 Grant to fund the Business Rates deficits in 25/26 & 26/27
Afghan Resettlement	391,891		Afghan Resettlement Grant to be spent in 2026/27
Budget Deficit	1,687,057		Funding transferred from earmarked reserves that have been closed
Biodiversity Net Gain	27,142		Grant funding to be spent in 2026/27
Botley West PPA	36,585		Ringfenced income from the Planning Performance Agreement
Hardship Fund	440,000		Funding for discretionary hardship award scheme administered by Revenues & Benefits
Renters Rights Act New Burdens	32,354		Grant funding to be spent in 2026/27
Ubico Fuel Contingency	250,000		Set up to fund increase in diesel costs due to the Iran conflict
Building Condition Surveys		99,625	Funding for building condition surveys and the Asset Management Plan
Investment Property		451,872	Dilapidations expenditure for Newman Court & Chawley Park in 2025/26
New Initiatives		109,258	Funding for Strategic Housing Delivery Manager and an Ecologist
Project Contingency		24,500	Set up costs for Lendology scheme
Maintenance of Open Spaces		72,991	Repairs & Maintenance for playgrounds and Kilkenny Country Park
Budget Deficit		196,406	One off costs for the Publica Review phase 2
Total	**4,322,874**	**954,652**	

5. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

5.1 The capital programme approved by Council as part of the budget for 2025/26 totalled £16,165,000. At year end £8,242,280 had been spent against this budget.

5.2 Of the underspend £4,395,180 is requested to be carried forward into 2026/27 as slippage as it concerns timing differences in the Waste Fleet Replacement, the acquisition of Temporary Accommodation and the re-roofing works underway at Units 1-3 Carterton Industrial Estate and Station Lane which are due to be completed at the end of Q2 2026/27.

5.3 A full breakdown of the schemes for the year and expenditure as at 31st March 2026 is attached at Annex B.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The net cost of service outturn position for 2025/26, before movements to earmarked reserves is in line with the forecast reported throughout the year. Better than anticipated interest returns from Treasury Management investments, significant over performance of Trade Waste, Development Management and the Leisure contract and the gain from the Business Rates Pool has allowed for higher than budgeted transfers to the Budget Deficit Earmarked Reserve and the setting up of reserves to combat specific and significant risks e.g. LGR, WESP, Building Maintenance and Woodford Way.

6.2 The Budget Deficit reserve was set up in 2023/24 using general fund surpluses and transfers from existing reserves to mitigate the impact of the Business Rates reset which is in effect from 1st April 2026, uncertainty around Government funding and the revenue impact of the end of the Leisure Contract in 2027. With a three year funding settlement, we have more certainty around government funding, but the Business Rates reset removes the benefit for anyone to be in a Business Rates Pool and our retained Business Rates will drop to £2.4m in 2026/27 from £6.987m in 2025/26 (after movements to reserves to repay the 25/26 deficit).

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Council set a balanced budget for 2025/26 with a contribution to General Fund of £91,280 and the final outturn position is a contribution to General Fund of £203,155.

7.2 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) identifies a revenue funding gap of £3.28m over the next three years and a gap of £10.5m over the next 5 years from the reduction in income from the Leisure Contract and an overall drop in government & Business Rates funding. The Council will therefore need to rely on the General Fund and Earmarked Reserve balances to set a balanced budget over the life of the existing MTFS.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None

9. RISK ASSESSMENT

9.1 Not applicable

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT

10.1 None

11. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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	Q4 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
Democratic Services			
DRM001-Democratic Representation	375,968	392,813	16,845
DRM002-Support To Elected Bodies	528,350	532,136	3,786
ELE001-Registration of Electors	308,667	296,510	(12,157)
ELE002-District Elections	75,700	52,493	(23,207)
ELE004-Parliamentary Elections	0	0	0
ELE005-Parish Elections	0	(237)	(237)
ELE006-County Elections	42	0	(42)
ELE007-European Elections	0	0	0
ELE008-Police & Crime Commissioner Elections	0	0	0
ELE011-Referendum	4,631	4,631	0
SUP001-Administration	154,619	151,477	(3,142)
Total - Democratic Services	**1,447,977**	**1,429,823**	**(18,154)**

DRM001 - the overspend relates to the webcasting licence for the committee rooms and Council Chamber that have not been budgeted for in 2025/26. This has been remedied in 2026/27.

Elections - Registration of Electors and District Elections have an underspend on postage costs and canvassing fees. The Referendum refers to a Neighbourhood Referendum funded through Neighbourhood Planning Grant.

	Q4 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
Environmental & Regulatory Services			
BUC001-Building Control - Fee Earning Work	61,503	83,425	21,922
BUC002-Building Control - Non Fee Earning Work	3,336	4,459	1,123
EMP001-Emergency Planning	30,607	25,214	(5,393)
ESM001-Environment - Service Mgmt & Supp Serv	102,069	102,470	401
PSH002-Private Sector Housing-Condition of Dwellings	3,000	0	(3,000)
REG001-Environmental Health General	0	0	0
REG002-Licensing	22,508	(689)	(23,197)
REG009-Environmental Protection	209,357	214,814	5,457
REG011-Authorised Process	(11,890)	(7,669)	4,221
REG013-Pollution Control	130,137	131,070	933
REG016-Food Safety	144,039	141,029	(3,009)
REG021-Statutory Burials	5,000	4,645	(355)
STC011 - Abandoned Vehicles	0	(2,839)	(2,839)
TAC309-Other Trading Services - Markets	(1,375)	32,134	33,509
Total - Environmental & Regulatory Services	**698,731**	**729,758**	**31,028**

BUC001 - the overspend comprises £12,000 of overtime and £7,000 of mileage that is not budgeted for in 2025/26, following the TUPE of staff from Publica back to the Council. This budget has been reviewed for 2026/27 to ensure all employee costs are included.

REG002 - £14,000 of the underspend relates to higher than budgeted income for Taxi licences and Knowledge tests with the remaining underspend made up of small variances across the other licence types.

TAC309 - The markets in Witney and Chipping Norton are now managed by a commercial operator. As the new model develops and attracts more traders to the revitalised markets, income is expected to grow over time. Whilst income is £33,000 behind target for 2025/26, the move to the new operator provides a saving of £62,000 a year from 1st April 2026 on waste collection as Ubico are no longer employed to undertake this work.

	Q4 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement			
SUP003-Human Resources	302,032	310,784	8,752
SUP009-Accountancy	367,707	367,883	176
SUP010-Internal Audit	232,873	239,218	6,345
SUP011-Creditors	45,216	44,913	(303)
SUP012-Debtors	62,354	59,494	(2,860)
SUP013-Payroll	60,408	61,412	1,004
SUP019-Health & Safety	34,135	34,219	84
SUP020-Training & Development	29,658	29,658	0
SUP033-Central Purchasing	38,836	39,494	658
SUP035-Insurances	9,961	9,961	(0)
Total - Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	**1,183,180**	**1,202,137**	**18,957**

	Q4 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
ICT, Change & Customer Services			
SUP005-ICT	1,281,368	1,258,795	(22,573)
SUP008-Reception/Customer Services	603,561	603,527	(34)
SUP014-Cashiers	110	0	(110)
TMR001-Street Naming & Numbering	0	(543)	(543)
TMR002-Street Furniture & Equipment	(17,284)	(8,670)	8,614
Total - ICT, Change & Customer Services	**1,867,755**	**1,853,109**	**(14,646)**

SUP005 - The Council has received a £22,000 refund on 3rd party Forest ICT charges, putting the service into an underspend.

	Q4 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
Land, Legal & Property			
ADB301-3 Welch Way (Town Centre Shop)	10,240	12,061	1,821
ADB302-Guildhall	12,537	12,243	(294)
ADB303-Woodgreen	370,721	375,234	4,513
ADB304-Elmfield	(103,028)	(70,969)	32,059
ADB305-Corporate Buildings	1,101,538	1,080,672	(20,866)
ADB306-Depot	133,950	139,080	5,130
FIE346-Marriotts	(451,372)	(454,889)	(3,517)
LLC001-Local Land Charges	(49,583)	(45,261)	4,322
SUP004-Legal	337,957	310,874	(27,083)
TAC303-Swain Court	290,068	286,335	(3,733)
Total - Land, Legal & Property	**1,653,028**	**1,645,381**	**(7,647)**

ADB304 - Elmfield is now part of the Council's Investment Property portfolio, but we retain the liability to undertake Landlord's works. The impact of these works in 2025/26 is represented by the overspend of £32,000.

ADB305 - this cost centre is includes the Property & Assets team employee costs and repairs and maintenance of the Council's operational buildings. The underspend is a collection of small variances across reactive maintenance budget lines.

SUP004 - the shared legal service has been carrying a vacancy this financial year, resulting in the underspend shown.

	Q4 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
Leisure & Communities			
CCR001-Community Safety (Crime Reduction)	355,323	357,265	1,942
CCR002-Building Safer Communities	(6,770)	(9,689)	(2,919)
CCR301 - Communities Revenue Grant	325,525	329,423	3,898
CCT001-CCTV	107,105	102,878	(4,227)
CSM001-Cultural Strategy	88,235	85,506	(2,729)
COV022-Lockdown Grants	0	1,301	1,301
COV023-COMF	46,938	46,938	(0)
CUL001-Arts Development	53,851	53,851	(0)
ECD001-Economic Development	155,127	157,034	1,907
ECD010 – SPF Community and Place	0	559	559
ECD012-Skills and People	37,968	37,968	0
REC001-Sports Development	175,881	174,424	(1,457)
REC002-Recreational Facilities Development	55,838	63,545	7,707
REC003-Play	63,299	64,757	1,458
REC301-Village Halls	14,883	15,196	313
REC302-Contract Management	(1,099,335)	(1,394,275)	(294,940)
SUP016-Finance - Performance Review	110,796	110,836	40
TOU001-Tourism Strategy and Promotion	111,122	103,676	(7,446)
Total - Leisure & Communities	**595,786**	**301,192**	**(294,594)**

REC302 - The budget includes £83,000 for external legal advice and procurement support related to the negotiation of the new leisure contract for 2027. This advice is being taken in the first part of 2026/27. Unbudgeted spend of £18,000 for repairs & maintenance includes £9,975 for the installation of energy saving showers at Carterton LC. There are also number of minor overspends for the appraisal of Carterton LC roof repairs and professional advice on the specification of Solar PV installed. Income is £229,000 more than budget for the year.

	Q4 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
Environmental Services			
CCC001-Climate Change	186,862	191,261	4,399
COR301-Policy Initiatives - Shopmobility	16,340	16,340	(0)
CPK001-Car Parks - Off Street	511,396	505,447	(5,949)
ENI002-Grounds Maintenance	624,767	585,725	(39,042)
ENI303-Landscape Maintenance	48,499	51,961	3,462
FLD001-Flood Defence and Land Drainage	195,812	190,730	(5,082)
REG004-Dog Warden	72,567	36,200	(36,367)
REG019-Public Conveniences	259,138	264,958	5,820
REG023-Environmental Strategy	81,300	80,264	(1,036)
RYC001-Recycling	2,180,412	2,177,500	(2,912)
RYC002-Green Waste	(285,736)	(268,274)	17,462
RYC003-Food Waste	1,076,674	1,066,344	(10,330)
STC004-Environmental Cleansing	947,009	950,256	3,247
TRW001-Trade Waste	(290,971)	(351,991)	(61,020)
TRW002-Clinical Waste	(500)	0	500
WST001-Household Waste	2,242,557	2,246,119	3,562
WST004-Bulky Household Waste	17,856	(6,793)	(24,649)
WST301-Env. Services Depot, Downs Rd, Witney	376,108	380,618	4,510
WST005-WESP	59,030	58,947	(83)
Total - Environmental Services	**8,319,120**	**8,175,612**	**(143,508)**

CCC001- The Council has contributed £10,000 for the Better Housing Better Health (BHBH) project that is not included in the base budget. This overspend has been partially offset by other small underspends. The 2026/27 budget has been updated to include the BHBH contribution.

ENI002 - this service provides Grounds Maintenance and Grass Cutting to Parish and Town Councils in the District. Income for the year is £35,000 ahead of budget and the Ubico contract is £4,000 underspent. Whilst this is a good news story, there are no Council overheads charged to Grounds Maintenance to manage the service in the budget, therefore the real cost of providing this service is under represented.

REG004 - the Council has a responsibility to collect and kennel stray dogs until their owners can be found. The cost for 2025/26 is a 59% reduction compared to 2024/25. Clearly this statutory service is subject to volatility of demand.

RYC002 -the service has achieved 96% of the income target in 2025/26 equivalent to £68,000 behind target for the year. This has been offset by underspends of £19,000 on new bins and boxes, £22,000 for printing and postage of garden waste licences and £10,000 against the Ubico contract sum.

RYC003 - the underspend relates to the underspend against the Ubico contract sum

TRW001 - Trade Waste income was £341,000 ahead of target in 2025/26 and tipping charges, paid to the County Council are £63,000 underspent. The additional income of £341,000 has been moved to earmarked reserves to fund the Waste & Environmental Services Programme (WESP) over the next 3 years.

WST004 - Bulky Waste income has ended the 2025/26 financial year £24,000 above target.

	Q4 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
Planning & Strategic Housing			
DEV001-Development Control - Applications	(632,258)	(636,931)	(4,673)
DEV002-Development Control - Appeals	215,241	127,436	(87,805)
DEV003-Development Control - Enforcement	770	0	(770)
ENA001-Housing Enabling	192,115	197,437	5,322
ENI301-Landscape Initiatives	57,505	57,565	60
HLD315-Growth Board Project (Planning)	39,258	28,016	(11,242)
PLP001-Planning Policy	1,073,333	1,076,519	3,186
PLP003-Implementation	0	0	0
PLP004-Conservation	191,091	194,212	3,121
PSM001-Planning Service Mgmt & Support Serv	143,320	118,345	(24,975)
Total - Planning & Strategic Housing	**1,280,375**	**1,162,599**	**(117,776)**

DEV001 - Planning Application income is £433,000 above target for the year due mainly to major applications while Pre Application Advice income is £15,675 below target. This additional income is offset by £123,000 of agency staff, £13,000 to the County Council for the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre and a number of small under and overspends. £299,000 of the additional income has been transferred to Earmarked Reserves to fund getting the Woodford Way housing project through to the Planning permission stage. If it transpires that this reserve is not required, the balance will be released back into the General Fund.

DEV002 - it is difficult to predict when planning appeals will be lodged or to forecast whether the full budget will be exhausted by the end of the year. The budget for 2026/27 has been reduced by £50,000.

HLD315 - this cost centre is concerned with expenditure related to the advancement of the Salt Cross programme. The underspend is in professional fees.

PSM001 - there is an underspend of £11,000 on printing and £13,000 on professional fees.

	Q4 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
Retained Services			
COR002-Chief Executive	510,282	523,697	13,415
COR003-Corporate Policy Making	74,844	76,894	2,050
COR004-Public Relations	436,821	438,647	1,826
COR005-Corporate Finance	727,812	718,869	(8,943)
COR006-Treasury Management	26,700	20,333	(6,367)
COR007-External Audit Fees	208,312	200,123	(8,189)
COR008-Bank Charges	78,500	59,207	(19,293)
COR012 - Publica Review	309,232	197,341	(111,891)
COR013-LGR	196,406	196,406	0
COR302-Publica Group	193,667	31,097	(162,570)
FIE341-Town Centre Properties	(407,998)	(425,460)	(17,462)
FIE342-Miscellaneous Properties	(135,512)	(85,340)	50,172
FIE343-Talisman	(1,223,324)	(1,357,343)	(134,019)
FIE344-Des Roches Square	(431,490)	(470,518)	(39,028)
FIE345-Gables at Elmfield	0	5,415	5,415
NDC001-Non Distributed Costs	816,000	834,812	18,812
TAC304-Witney Industrial Estate	(169,660)	(170,443)	(783)
TAC305-Carterton Industrial Estate	(176,425)	(13,632)	162,793
TAC306-Greystones Industrial Estate	(9,667)	(10,383)	(716)
TAC308-Other Trading Services - Fairs	9,501	(2,662)	(12,163)
Total - Retained Services	**1,034,001**	**767,061**	**(266,940)**

COR002 - The majority of the overspend relates to the £11,000 contribution to the Cotswold Conservation Board which was unbudgeted for in 2025/26. This has been adjusted for 2026/27.

COR008 - costs related to the processing of debit & credit card payments to the Council are lower than anticipated, combined with a £5,000 underspend on bank charges

COR012 - this cost centre represents the budgeted one off costs for the second phase of the Publica Review where staff were TUPE transferred back to the Council on 1st July 2025.

COR302 - This cost centre represents the underspend on the Publica contract that has been returned to the Council for 2025/26.

FIE341 - income is on budget for the year with underspends of £4,000 on premises costs and £12,000 on professional fees.

FIE342 - rental income is on budget but there has been £50,000 of unbudgeted expenditure relating to Between Towns Road before it was sold i.e. Business Rates and costs to secure the site.

FIE343 - Rental income for Unit 13 has been incorrectly excluded from the base budget for 2025/26, this error has been corrected for the 2026/27 budget but has caused a £110,000 underspend in the current financial year in addition to an underspend on professional fees.

FIE344 - rental income achieved in 2025/26 is £37,000 above target due to the commencement of a new lease in July 2025.

NDC001 - there is an overspend of £18,000 for the Council's secondary pension contribution. For the triennial valuation period beginning 1st April 2026 the Council will cease to make secondary pension contributions and will increase the primary contribution rate from 17.6% to 20%. This represents a change to the funding of the pension scheme, not a change to the pension benefits payable to retirees.

TAC305 - the overspend relates to business rates (£74,000) and expenditure to secure the vacant units 1 - 3 in advance of the construction of the new roof, including repairs to the rolling shutters, electricity supply works, surveys and inspections.

	Q4 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
Revenues & Housing Support			
HBP001-Rent Allowances	626,141	1,159,936	533,795
HOM001-Homelessness	139,988	136,659	(3,329)
HOM004-Refugees	0	0	0
HOM005-Homelessness Hostel Accommodation	8,408	13,993	5,585
HOM006 - The Old Court	37,447	40,823	3,376
HOM007-Afghan Resettlement Programme	(391,891)	(391,891)	0
HOM008-Homes for Ukraine	18,190	18,190	(0)
HOM010-North Leigh Hostel	0	1,503	1,503
HOM011-108 Corn Street	0	1,789	1,789
LTC001-Council Tax Collection	277,917	275,930	(1,987)
LTC011-NNDR Collection	(46,755)	(41,387)	5,368
PSH001-Private Sector Housing Grants	51,566	51,986	420
PSH004-Home Improvement Service	(55,287)	2,609	57,896
Total - Revenues & Housing Support	**665,724**	**1,270,026**	**604,302**

HBP001 - The number of households in temporary emergency accommodation has remained high during 2025/26, resulting in a loss of Housing Benefit Subsidy of £924,000. This is partially offset by Housing Benefit overpayment income and a reduction in bad debt provision.

PSH004 - The Home Improvement Service carries out, through external contractors, minor adaptations to people's homes i.e. installing hand rails, ramps and key safes. The cost of external contractors is £60,000 over budget, due to inflationary increases and the volume of work increasing from 121 jobs in 2024/25 to 275 in 2025/26. The budget has been increased for 2026/27.

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ANNEX B

Capital Programme 2025/26

Scheme	Funded By	2025/26 Total Budget	Q4 Actual	Slippage	2026/27 Budget	2026/27 Budget With Slippage	
Asset Repairs - Carterton Ind Est/Station Lane	Borrowing	1,500,000	17,600	1,482,400		1,482,400	a
Investment Property Repairs	Earmarked Reserve/Borrowing				1,000,000	1,000,000	
SOHA Housing Project	Grant		1,465,500				
Ubico Fleet Replacement Programme	Borrowing	4,721,266		1,598,734	3,401,266	5,000,000	b
Replacement Sweepers	Borrowing	850,000		850,000		850,000	c
In Cab Technology	Borrowing	100,000					
Public Conveniences Refurbishmnet	Borrowing				532,000	532,000	
Witney ATP Refurbishment	Revenue Contribution	200,000					
Purchase of Temporary Accommodation	Capital Receipts	3,000,000	1,335,954	464,046	1,200,000	1,664,046	d
CCTV - Upgrading	Capital Receipts	255,635	247,180				
Leisure Centre Improvement Programme	Capital Receipts				1,501,550	1,501,550	
Improvement Grants (DFG)	Grant	880,000	1,054,780		880,000	880,000	
UK Rural Prosperity Fund	Grant		204,527				
Witney Leisure Centre PSDS	Grant/Borrowing	1,584,841	1,383,087				e
Carterton Leisure Centre Solar PV Installation	Grant		321,000				f
Chipping Norton Leisure Centre PSDS	Grant/Borrowing	2,643,926					
IT Provision - Systems & Strategy	Revenue Contribution	100,000	55,356		100,000	100,000	
Council Buildings Maintenance Programme	Revenue Contribution	250,000	469,741		300,000	300,000	
IT Equipment - PCs, Copiers etc	Revenue Contribution	40,000	28,926		40,000	40,000	
Shopmobility	Revenue Contribution				10,000	10,000	
Guildenford Car Park Lighting	Revenue Contribution				100,000	100,000	
Chipping Norton Creative	S106		21,805				
Windrust Place Public Art	S106		3,626				
Carterton Connects Creative (Swinbrook s106)	S106	39,500	984				
Developer Capital Contributions	S106		1,632,213				g
		16,165,168	**8,242,281**	**4,395,180**	**9,064,816**	**13,459,996**	

a. The re-roofing works at Unit 1-3 Carterton Industrial Estate is currently underway with an expected completion at the end of Q2.

b. A full waste vehicle strategy will be coming forward from the Waste Transformation Programme for Member consideration. This strategy will look to maximise the efficiencies attainable through partnership working across the County, that the Council could never achieve through unilateral action. With the LGR decision coming in July 2026 this partnership is particularly important.

c. A paper will be coming forward for Member consideration on the replacement of the street sweepers in early 2026/27.

d. The Council has completed the acquisition of two properties in 2025/26 - in Corn Street Witney, providing 5 bedrooms for single households and accommodation for four families in North Leigh. The refurbishment of the Corn Street property is mostly complete with only snagging to be resolved. The completion of the transfer of 6 vacant properties suitable for temporary emergency accommodation from Cottsway Housing is expected to be completed on 22nd May. These properties will require refurbishment but all have been surveyed and specification work is underway.

e. The decarbonisation works at Witney Leisure Centre were completed in March 2026, funded through a combination of grant and Council contribution. We are waiting for SSEN is make live the permanent electrical supply which has a current estimated date of late June/early July.

f. The Leisure Team were successful in bidding for Sports England grant funding to install additional Solar PV on the roof at Carterton Leisure Centre at no cost to the Council.

g. Developer Capital Contributions are the amount of S106 monies paid out to Town/Parishes during the year.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Name and Date of Committee	**EXECUTIVE – 10 JUNE 2026** **COUNCIL – 22 JULY 2026**
Subject	**APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**
Wards Affected	All
Accountable Member	Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Andrea McCaskie, Director of Governance and Regulatory Services Email: andrea.mccaskie@westoxon.gov.uk
Report Author	Ana Prelici – Senior Democratic Services Officer Email: ana.prelici@westoxon.gov.uk
Purpose	To provide a list of appointments to Outside Bodies for the civic year 2026/27.
Annexes	Annex A – Appointments to Outside Bodies
Recommendation	That the Executive resolves to: 1. Note the appointments to outside bodies as set out in Annex A; 2. Recommend to Council to note the appointments to outside bodies as set out in Annex A;
Corporate Priorities	• Putting Residents First • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees	Head of Democratic and Electoral Services

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

1.1 This report sets out the appointments to outside bodies for the 2026/27 civic year.

1.2 Appointments to most outside bodies are a responsibility of the Leader of the Council, who makes such appointments annually following the Annual Council meeting.

1.3 The appointments for 2026/27 have been confirmed by the Leader and are included in Annex A to this report. Executive and Council are asked to note the report.

2. MAIN POINTS

2.1 Members may be appointed to a wide range of outside bodies. Most appointments are made by the Leader. Members may also be appointed directly by the outside body itself to serve in a private capacity (for instance as a member of the community) rather than as an elected member of the Council, or they may be serving as a member of that body before being elected as a Councillor.

2.2 Many of the appointments reflect specific Executive responsibilities so it may be the wish of the Leader to appoint to these in accordance with Executive roles.

2.3 Each year the Council is invited to make one non-executive appointment to an outside body. This is to one seat on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and was appointed at the Annual Council meeting.

2.4 The Council has produced guidance for Members who are appointed to outside bodies. This includes guidance on Members' responsibilities on different types of outside bodies, dealing with interests, and issues of bias and predetermination. The guidance will be circulated to the Members appointed to outside bodies.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1 The Leader is free to make such appointments as they consider appropriate in respect of executive functions.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Travel and subsistence allowances will be payable in respect of the majority of appointments made, if claimed. Provision for this is included in the Council's budget.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council's Constitution (Part 3C) includes the following as a responsibility of full Council:

To appoint or nominate individuals to outside bodies in respect of non-Executive Functions and revoke or withdraw such appointment or nomination where there is no Group Leader consensus on the decision to be taken. To note the Leader's appointments to outside bodies in respect of Executive Functions, as advised.

5.2 Legal implications for Members appointed to outside bodies are covered in the guidance document. For example, any Member appointed as a director of a company will owe a fiduciary duty to the company.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 Guidance has been produced for Members who are appointed to serve on outside bodies by outlining their responsibilities and obligations in that role. The guidance does not attempt to provide definitive answers to every particular set of circumstances but rather to provide a framework against which Members can exercise judgement when faced with potential conflicts.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

7.1 None.

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There may be climate change implications arising from car travel to meetings of the outside bodies.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

(END)

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Outside Bodies Appointments 2026/27

Appointment by office

Outside Body	Number of reps	Councillor appointed 2026/27
LGA General Assembly	1	Andy Graham Sub: Duncan Enright
Oxfordshire Environment Partnership	1	Andy Graham Sub: Duncan Enright
Oxfordshire Leaders Group	1	Andy Graham Sub: Duncan Enright
Oxfordshire Partnership Board	1	Andy Graham Sub: Duncan Enright
South East England Councils (SEEC)	1	Andy Graham Sub: Duncan Enright
West Oxfordshire Local Advisory Board (GLL Better)	1	Tim Sumner
South West Audit Partnership Board - Member Representative	1	Nigel Ridpath

Other appointments by Leader

Outside Body	Number of reps	Councillor appointed 2026/27
Burford School Foundation	1	Andrew Beaney (4-year term to 2028)

Burford Traffic Advisory Committee	2	Rosie Pearson 1x vacancy
Charlbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee	2	Andy Graham Liz Leffman
Chipping Norton Theatre – Council of Management	1	Sandra Coleman
Chipping Norton Traffic Advisory Committee	2	Geoff Saul Sandra Coleman
Cotswold National Landscape	1	Rosie Pearson
Oxford Airport Consultative Committee	2	Tim Sumner Hannah Massie
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	1	Jan Lund
Oxfordshire Buildings Trust	1	Elizabeth Poskitt
Oxfordshire Food Network	1	Sandra Coleman
Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board	1	Rachel Crouch
Oxfordshire Health Improvement Board	1	Rachel Crouch
Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	1	Elizabeth Poskitt
PATROL Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London Joint Committee	1	Alistair Wray

Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel	1	Geoff Saul
Traffic Penalty Tribunal Joint Committee	1	Alaric Smith
Volunteer Link-Up	1	David Melvin
West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership	2	Sandra Simpson Geoff Saul
Witney Educational Foundation (4 year term of office as Trustee)	1	Duncan Enright
Witney Traffic Advisory Committee	2	Stuart McCarroll Andrew Prosser
Woodstock Traffic Advisory Committee	2	Hannah Massie Elizabeth Poskitt
World Heritage UK	1	Steve Cosier

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Name and date of Committee	**EXECUTIVE - 15 JULY 2026**
Subject	**ALLOCATION OF CAPITAL FUNDING FOR LIFT REPLACEMENT AT MARRIOTTS WALK**
Wards affected	Witney Central
Accountable member	Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance Email: alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Madhu Richards, Director of Finance Email: madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Jasmine McWilliams, Head of Assets Email: jasmine.mcwilliams@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To request approval of the allocation of part of the building maintenance earmarked reserves for the replacement of the lifts at Marriotts Walk, Witney
Annexes	Exempt Annex A
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive resolves to: 1. Recommend to Council to allocate funding from earmarked reserves to replace the lifts at Marriotts Walk; 2. Delegate authority to the Director Finance in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance to approve the final cost of works and use of contingency up to the full amount detailed at Annex A.
Corporate priorities	Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	EXEMPT ANNEX A

Consultees/ Consultation	Director of Finance, Executive Member for Finance, Head of Finance, Managing Director, Publica, Site Asset Management Consultants, Site Managing Agents.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The lifts at Marriotts Walk are approaching end of life as they were installed in 2009 on the construction of the centre. This report recommends that the lifts are all replaced as part of the same contract and that the Council allocates funding from existing building maintenance earmarked reserves to cover the cost in the sum detailed at Annex A with a 10% contingency.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council acquired the headlease of Marriotts Walk shopping centre in January 2023 and with it the rental income from the retail and other tenants. As the landlord the Council is responsible for the structural and external maintenance together with the health & safety compliance of the centre.

2.2 Marriotts Walk was purchased by the Council to regenerate it after years of neglect from an absentee landlord. The focus since purchase has been to revitalise the centre, to let void units and to use the scheme to support a vibrant High Street in Witney and serve the whole District. It has taken over 3 years, but the centre is now almost fully let with the last available unit in advanced lease negotiations. Many of the existing tenants have renewed their leases due to the positive impact they have seen from having a supportive landlord committed to the scheme's success. The lift replacement work would further the regeneration of the centre along with the markets, events and public realm improvements planned.

3. LIFTS AT MARRIOTTS WALK

3.1 The centre was constructed in 2009, and the lifts were installed to standards and regulations BSEN81-1 which were applicable at that time. There have been no upgrades for the equipment or significant improvement since the original installation over and above maintenance and repair and annual safety assessment by the Council's insurers.

3.2 The Council's lift consultant advises that the lifts are approaching end of life and has carried out a condition survey. It is advised that the standards under which the lifts had been installed have been superseded, resulting in a number of recommended improvements should the lifts not be replaced in the short to medium term.

3.3 The lift consultant does not recommend attendance to short term improvements in isolation as they consider the lifts to have reached the end of their useful economic life due to age, current condition and major obsolescence.

3.4 Any investment in part replacement or major overhaul items now would be redundant and not cost effective as the recommendation is to replace all 3 lifts.

4. SERVICE CHARGE

4.1 The Council as Landlord of Marriotts Walk is responsible for maintenance, repair, servicing and compliance of common and public areas at Marriotts Walk. This work is carried out by

the Council's Managing Agent on a service charge basis under the RICS Professional Standard: Service Charges in Commercial Property.

4.2 Some costs of the centre are Landlord's costs only, but the main service charge cost is paid by the retail and other tenants on a calculated shared basis as part of the lease terms.

4.3 The service charge burden on the tenants at Marriotts Walk is high compared to other retail schemes as the tenants are responsible for the costs of the multi-storey decked car park maintenance and compliance, being a cost that is usually funded from car parking fees in almost all other areas of the country.

4.4 Under the RICS Professional Standard: Service Charges in Commercial Property the Landlord must recharge works to the tenants in the year in which they are undertaken. The significant cost of replacing the lifts would put an untenable financial burden on most of the retailers in the scheme as the lift work would increase their already high service charge by 40% in year. Burdening the retailers with an excessive service charge for the lift replacement would set back the progress already achieved, pushing some tenants into financial unsustainability.

4.5 The centre contributes to the Council's income which funds services for residents. In 2025/2026 Marriotts made a net contribution to the Council's finances of £454,890.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

5.1 The option of planning lift replacements on a one per year basis was discounted as this would take the last lift past end of life and increase the cost of the scheme overall and ongoing maintenance and part replacement costs.

5.2 The cost of the lift replacement could be recharged to the tenants in one year (the year the project commences) and the balancing charge sit as arrears on the tenants account and be paid on an agreed payment plan. Ordinarily the payment plan would be 3-5 years however this would be subject to the value of the project, the lease term and the tenants' financial ability to meet the payments due under the proposed payment plan. This option would put a high financial burden on the tenants, may increase vacation of the units in the case of small and medium enterprise tenants and is unlikely to recover the full cost of the lift replacement.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The capital cost of the lift works, as detailed in Annex A, would be funded from the building maintenance earmarked reserves identified by the Head of Finance and would result in an annual charge to the revenue account of £29,411 based on an estimated 17-year useful life.

6.2 The Council's contractual liability as Landlord for the lift replacement is £150,000. If the lift replacement is funded through earmarked reserves, it will have no impact on the revenue account.

6.3 For information the condition survey and previous maintenance of the lifts since construction have been payable by the tenants under the service charge.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no legal implications because of the decision to allocate the funding. Legal input would be required decision in respect of contractor terms and conditions after tendering of the works.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 The main risk is failure of one or all the lifts which would restrict public and resident access and have potential health & safety implications. The recommended option mitigates this risk through the replacement of all lifts in 2026.

8.2 The specification of the lift replacement is currently being progressed to facilitate the tendering process.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 No equalities impacts are envisaged because of this decision

10. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The report has met the SIA exemption criteria and therefore a SIA has not been included.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Name and date of Committee	**COUNCIL – 22 JULY 2026**
Subject	**WEST OXFORDSHIRE PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2043**
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Councillor Liz Leffman – Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure Email: liz.leffman@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Andrea McCaskie – Director of Governance and Regulatory Services Email: andrea.mccaskie@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Andrew Thomson – Planning Policy Manager Email: andrew.thomson@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	For Members to consider the proposed pre-submission draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 including the timetable for formally publishing the draft plan in accordance with legislative requirements.
Annexes	Annex A – Pre-Submission Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 Annex B – Local Development Scheme – LDS (July 2026) Annex C – Sustainability Appraisal Non-technical summary (to follow) Annex D – Local Plan Addendum
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive resolves to: 1. Recommend to Council to approve the pre-submission draft Local Plan attached at Annex A for the purposes of formal publication for a statutory period of at least 6-weeks in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. 2. Recommended to Council to delegate authority to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure to make any necessary minor textual and presentational amendments to the pre-submission draft Local Plan in conjunction with Officers, prior to formal publication. 3. Agree that the Local Development Scheme (LDS) attached at Annex B be published online and made available in hard copy

	format in agreed 'deposit' locations across the district.
Corporate priorities	The preparation of a new Local Plan for West Oxfordshire will help to support all of the Council's corporate priorities including: • 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
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	The emerging draft Local Plan has been the subject of extensive public consultation in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Taking account of the feedback received at each stage, Officers have now prepared the final pre-submission draft version of the plan which is proposed to be published for a statutory period of at least 6 weeks in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The pre-submission draft Plan has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – December 2024.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Members will be aware that all local planning authorities are required to have an up-to-date Local Plan in place, setting out an agreed vision for their local area and a framework for meeting housing needs and addressing other economic, social and environmental priorities.

1.2 The current Local Plan for West Oxfordshire was formally adopted in September 2018. A review of the plan was carried out in September 2023 and concluded that many policies, including those relating to housing and the economy require updating to take account of recent evidence and changes to national policy.

1.3 Work on a replacement Local Plan has been ongoing for some time, with four separate public consultations undertaken in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

1.4 Taking account of the comments received at each stage along with the findings of supporting technical evidence, including an iterative process of Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Officers have now prepared the final pre-submission draft version of the new Local Plan. Subject to the approval of Members, Officers propose to formally publish the draft Plan for a statutory period of consultation in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

1.5 The purpose of this report is for Members to consider the pre-submission draft Local Plan and determine whether it should be published for statutory consultation as currently drafted or incorporating any further changes.

2. PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT LOCAL PLAN – AN OVERVIEW

2.1 The pre-submission draft Local Plan is attached in full at Annex A. Because it is a long document, for ease of reference, the key issues of particular importance have been summarised below.

2.2 This includes:

- Plan structure
- Plan period
- Spatial strategy
- Housing and economic needs
- Delivery of supporting infrastructure
- Area Strategies
- Priority growth locations
- Development management policies
- Delivery and monitoring

2.3 Dealing with each issue in turn.

Plan Structure

2.4 The draft plan adopts the following structure.

1. Introduction
2. Plan Period
3. District Profile
4. Issues and Challenges
5. Vision and Plan Objectives
6. Spatial Strategy
7. Core Policies
8. Area Strategies
9. Development Management Policies
10. Delivery and Monitoring Framework

2.5 The structure is intended to be simple and logical and enable parts of the plan to be accessed easily and independently – particularly when published online.

Plan Period

2.6 The draft plan has a 'base-date' of 1st April 2025 and an 'end-date' of 31st March 2043 covering an 18-year period in total.

2.7 The base-date has been selected because of the December 2024 NPPF which introduced a new standard method for assessing housing need that for local plans, took effect from 12 March 2025.

2.8 The end-date of 2043 has been selected to ensure that the new plan covers a period of 15-years from the anticipated date of adoption (2027) in line with national policy. There was strong support for extending to 2043 or beyond during earlier stages of consultation.

Spatial Strategy

2.9 The spatial strategy consists of five separate policies.

2.10 Policy SP1 sets out a settlement hierarchy consisting of five separate 'tiers' with settlements having been categorised according to their scale and function:

- Tier 1 - Principal Towns
- Tier 2 - Service Centres
- Tier 3 – Large Villages
- Tier 4 – Medium Villages
- Tier 5 – Small Villages, Hamlets and Open Countryside

2.11 The settlement hierarchy has been the subject of numerous comments through earlier stages of consultation and Officers are confident that the proposed approach is appropriate and provides a useful basis for other relevant aspects of the plan.

2.12 Policy SP2 – Spatial Strategy effectively addresses the overall 'pattern' of development i.e. where development will be focused over the plan period to 2043. It is based on three inter-related principles:

1. Focusing development on accessible locations where infrastructure and sustainable transport opportunities can be maximised, including along the A40 and A44 corridors.
2. A 'hierarchal approach' to growth whereby growth is directed in accordance with the settlement hierarchy (Policy SP1) reflecting the role, accessibility and capacity of each settlement.
3. Recognising the importance of West Oxfordshire's high-quality natural and historic environment in shaping the district's character and identity. In particular, the national importance of the Cotswolds National Landscape and the need to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.

2.13 The policy establishes a settlement hierarchy to guide the distribution of growth across the district, directing the majority of new development to the most sustainable and well-served locations. The principal towns of Carterton and Witney are identified as the primary focus for housing, employment and infrastructure investment, including strategic urban extensions, regeneration opportunities and new village developments to support long-term growth. Chipping Norton will accommodate more limited growth due to its location within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL).

2.14 Service centres will accommodate proportionate levels of development aligned with their role, services and infrastructure capacity, with Eynsham, Long Hanborough and Woodstock recognised for their strategic transport and growth opportunities, while growth in Burford, Charlbury and Bampton will be more constrained.

2.15 At the lower tiers of the hierarchy, development in the large and medium villages will be more limited and focused on supporting local services, infrastructure improvements and sustainable travel opportunities, including targeted housing allocations where appropriate.

2.16 Small villages, hamlets and the open countryside will see only restricted development, primarily for uses that require a rural location or support rural communities and the local economy.

2.17 Across all tiers, the strategy promotes sustainable patterns of development, reflects local character and infrastructure capacity, and requires that development within the Cotswolds National Landscape conserves and enhances its landscape and scenic beauty in accordance with national and local planning policy.

2.18 Complementing this overarching strategy, Policy SP3 then sets out a series of key development principles, the purpose of which is to ensure that growth is sustainable, well-designed and supported by appropriate infrastructure. In summary, development must be proportionate to its location, respect local character and settlement identity, protect amenity, open spaces and environmental assets, provide safe and sustainable access, safeguard important land resources, and avoid increasing flood risk.

2.19 Policy SP4 further supports the provisions of Policy SP2 in the form of a specific policy for the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which covers around 1/3 of West Oxfordshire. In line with the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, the policy places a particular emphasis on furthering the statutory purpose of the CNL which represents a distinct shift from the previous, more passive approach of 'having regard' to its statutory purpose. The policy takes accounts of comments raised through previous consultation, in particular the views of the CNL Board.

2.20 The final spatial policy SP5 relates to the A40 corridor and proposes to safeguard land to enable the potential delivery of a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) scheme to address long-standing issues of traffic congestion along this key arterial route.

2.21 This represents a deliberate shift from the previous draft policy which was based solely on the Carterton Witney Oxford Rail Corridor (CWORC). The shift of approach reflects the fact that Oxfordshire County Council have recently commissioned an options appraisal to explore all possible MRT options, including but not limited to, a heavy rail-based solution.

2.22 Importantly, the policy seeks to ensure that developer contributions towards the capital cost of any future MRT scheme are secured as appropriate. Carterton, Witney and Eynsham are identified in broad terms as having particular potential to accommodate mobility hubs but this will depend on which type of MRT scheme is taken forward.

2.23 Oxfordshire County Council have recently commissioned an options appraisal to help determine the most appropriate form of MRT scheme to take forward. Officers therefore anticipate that the policy will evolve through the examination process to reflect the latest available evidence and information at that time.

Housing and Economic Needs

2.24 In line with national policy, a key role of the local plan is to determine the housing and economic needs of the district and to plan for these accordingly – meeting them in full wherever possible.

2.25 In terms of housing need, the draft plan proposes to meet the standard method figure of 905 homes per year for West Oxfordshire in full and apply this to the 18-year period 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2043. The total level of housing need identified for West Oxfordshire is therefore 16,290 homes (i.e. 905 x 18).

2.26 As outlined earlier, the base date of 1st April 2025 has been selected to align with the plan-making provisions of the December 2024 NPPF. Importantly, it also aligns with the base date of the emerging Oxford Local Plan 2045 which helps to provide clarity on the issue of unmet housing need.

2.27 Oxford has confirmed that in the period 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2045, their assumed overall housing need is 21,560 homes. This is based on a standard method figure of 1,078 homes per year applied over 20 years.

2.28 They have also confirmed that their assumed housing supply over the same period is 9,041 homes (452 homes per year) resulting in an 'unmet' housing need of 12,519 homes which must be accommodated elsewhere.

2.29 Policy CP2 – Delivering New Homes therefore commits to incorporating an additional 2,028 homes as part of the overall housing requirement in order to meet a proportion of Oxford's unmet housing need. This figure is based on a pro-rata assumption to 2043 and applies the same percentage apportionment that was previously agreed in 2015/16 as being appropriate for West Oxfordshire in terms of the accommodation of Oxford's unmet housing need (c. 18%).

2.30 The total housing requirement identified in Policy CP2 is therefore 18,318 homes which consists of West Oxfordshire's housing need of 16,290 homes, plus a further 2,028 homes for Oxford's unmet housing need.

2.31 Because this represents a significant uplift to the housing requirement compared to the current adopted Local Plan, Policy CP2 incorporates a 'stepped' housing requirement, whereby the overall housing requirement gradually increases or 'steps up' over the plan period, rather than being applied uniformly across each year. This is illustrated in the table below.

Period	Annual Requirement
2025/26 – 2030/31	650 dpa
2031/32 – 2036/37	1,600 dpa
2037/38 – 2042/43	802 dpa

2.32 Thus, in the initial 6-year period 2025/26 – 2030/31, the annual requirement would be 650 homes per year. Then, in the second 6-year period 2031/32 – 2036/37, the requirement 'steps up' significantly to 1,600 per year and from 2037/38 onwards 'steps down' to 802 per year.

2.33 The stepped requirement has been developed to align with the assumed rate of delivery set out in the Plan's housing trajectory.

2.34 A stepped approach is consistent with national planning guidance and will help to avoid undue pressure for speculative development in less sustainable locations as, once adopted, it would form the basis of any calculation of five-year housing land supply.

2.35 To provide a degree of contingency, Policy CP2 identifies a planned housing supply of 19,294 homes to be met from a combination of past completions, existing commitments, extant and new site allocations, strategic locations for growth (SLGs) and a reasonable windfall allowance. This is broken down as follows:

- Past completions 2025/26 582
- Large existing commitments (>10 dwellings) at 1st April 2026 2,665
- Small existing commitments (<10 dwellings) at 1st April 2026 307
- Extant site allocations (Local Plan 2031) 4,375
- New site allocations (Local Plan 2043) 915
- New Strategic Locations for Growth - SLG (Local Plan 2043) 8,350
- Windfall (150 per year from 2029/30 – 2042/43) 2,100
- Total 19,294

2.36 In terms of economic needs, based on the most recent available evidence, the plan seeks to make provision for minimum of just under 30 hectares of employment space in the period 2025 – 2043, comprising 4.5 hectares for office, R&D and light industrial uses and 25 hectares for industrial and logistics uses.

2.37 Reflecting the Council's evidence and the UK Industrial Strategy 2025, the policy lends particular support to the following key sectors:

- Advanced manufacturing and engineering
- Defence and aerospace
- Digital technology and data-driven industries
- Life sciences
- Logistics and distribution
- The rural economy including agriculture and food networks
- Sustainable tourism, arts and culture supporting the visitor economy
- The green economy

Delivery of supporting infrastructure

2.38 A recurring concern raised through earlier stages of consultation is the need for new development to be supported by appropriate and timely investment in infrastructure. Particular concerns have been raised around transport, education, community facilities, health, green space and especially water infrastructure (wastewater and water supply).

2.39 Officers fully recognise these concerns and as part of the supporting evidence base for the pre-submission draft Local Plan have commissioned an independent Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to identify and prioritise the infrastructure that is needed to support planned growth in the period up to 2043.

2.40 The IDP will be published separately as part of the Regulation 19 consultation and the key findings and requirements have been embedded in the draft plan as appropriate - including within the various individual Area Strategies outlined below.

2.41 To further strengthen the Council's approach, Policy CP4 includes a requirement for all major developments to be accompanied by a site-specific Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) setting out the infrastructure needed to support the development, how it will be phased and in the longer-term, how it will be managed and maintained.

2.42 Importantly, the policy also outlines how such requirements will be secured through appropriate mechanisms including planning conditions and legal agreements. It also stipulates in relation to the future management and maintenance of community assets, wherever feasible, priority should be given to adoption and management by an appropriate public body, statutory undertaker, community organisation or other suitable body in preference to the use of a private estate management company.

Area Strategies

2.43 The draft plan includes a total of 11 'area strategies' including:

- Carterton Area Strategy
- Witney Area Strategy
- Chipping Norton Area Strategy
- Bampton Area Strategy
- Burford Area Strategy
- Charlbury Area Strategy
- Eynsham Area Strategy
- Long Hanborough Area Strategy
- Woodstock Area Strategy
- Salt Cross Area Strategy
- Rural Area Strategy

2.44 Except for Salt Cross Garden Village (which largely signposts to the recently adopted AAP) each area strategy includes a short profile, a statement of ambition, an overall strategy policy and, where relevant, other locally specific policies including in relation to Town Centres where these have been defined.

2.45 The area strategies build on feedback from previous stages which was largely positive in terms of the issues and opportunities identified for each locality, but the amount of text has been 'stripped back' to provide greater clarity and avoid unnecessary repetition.

2.46 Officers consider that the inclusion of a separate area strategy for the 3 principal towns and the 7 service centres is appropriate and provides a valuable opportunity to set out in detail how those areas are expected to evolve in the period up to 2043.

2.47 Whilst inevitably set at a 'higher-level, the overarching Rural Area Strategy is also considered to be a helpful inclusion, providing an overarching framework to help guide future growth in the smaller villages and hamlets and rural parts of the district.

Priority Growth Locations

2.48 A key role of the local plan is to identify particular locations where future growth is expected to take place – in particular new housing and employment space. National policy allows this to take two main forms:

- Broad locations for development which should be indicated on a Key Diagram.
- Site allocations which should be identified on a Policies Map.

2.49 Within each of the 11 Area Strategies, the draft plan sets out where housing and employment space is expected to come forward in the period up to 2043.

2.50 Where relevant, this includes:

- Existing planning commitments (i.e. sites with planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission).
- Extant site allocations from the adopted Local Plan 2031 where these have not yet secured planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission but are being actively promoted and progressed.
- Proposed new site allocations.
- Proposed new Strategic Locations for Growth (SLG).
- Proposed new Areas of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO).

2.51 Further explanation of each 'category' is set out below.

Existing Planning Commitments

2.52 Where relevant, the area strategies include detail of all larger existing planning permissions as of 1st April 2026, with a summary of progress and expected delivery timescales. This includes for example, the provision of 265 homes at the REEMA North site in Carterton and 450 homes at East Witney. These existing commitments feed into the overall housing trajectory included at Appendix 2 of the draft Plan.

Extant Site Allocations from the adopted Local Plan 2031

2.53 Where relevant, the area strategies include details of existing site allocations from the current adopted Local Plan 2031 where these are yet to secure planning permission but are being actively promoted and progressed.

2.54 The plan explains the latest position in relation to each which can be summarised as follows:

- North Witney SDA – current outline planning application pending determination.
- West Eynsham SDA – partly complete (237 homes built) with a masterplan in place to guide delivery of the remainder and active discussions ongoing between landowners.
- Woodford Way Car Park – actively being progressed by WODC.
- Salt Cross Garden Village – current outline planning application pending determination following recent adoption of the Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP).

2.55 It should be noted that the new draft Local Plan will not supersede the adopted Local Plan policies for the first three of these allocations (North Witney, West Eynsham and Woodford Way Car Park). As such, they will remain 'extant' for the purposes of decision-making. The Salt Cross adopted Local Plan policy has already effectively been superseded by the Salt Cross Area Action Plan (AAP) and this is confirmed in the draft Plan.

2.56 Total assumed housing delivery across these four existing site allocations in the period up to 2043 is 4,375 homes.

2.57 Members should note that there are two other adopted Local Plan allocations which are yet to secure planning permission including Myrtle Farm, Long Hanborough (50 homes) and the East Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area (SDA) (1,200 homes).

2.58 In relation to the Myrtle Farm site, the landowner has confirmed that they do not intend to bring the site forward for development and would like it to be 'de-allocated'. The policy will therefore be superseded by the new Local Plan.

2.59 In relation to the East Chipping Norton SDA, the site cannot be taken forward in its previously envisaged form due to significant archaeological constraints and is therefore proposed to be re-designated as a new Strategic Location for Growth (SLG) with a more northern focus on the land between London Road and Banbury Road (see further explanation below).

Proposed New Site Allocations

2.60 The draft Plan includes 9 'non-strategic' site allocations (i.e. 300 homes or less). As outlined above, these are identified on the Policies Map and include:

- Policy BA2 – Land East of Bampton
- Policy BU3 – Land South of Sheep Street, Burford
- Policy CH2 – Land at Jefferson's Piece, Charlbury
- Policy CH3 – Land South of Hydac, Charlbury
- Policy LH3 – Land South West of Hanborough Station
- Policy RA2 – Land North of Aston
- Policy RA3 – Land at Kingham Station
- Policy RA4 – Land at the Downs, Standlake
- Policy RA5 – Land at Rousham Road, Tackley

2.61 The draft plan explains why each site has been allocated and sets out the key requirements of any future development including in relation to key design principles, transport and movement, heritage, landscape, green infrastructure and biodiversity, flood risk/drainage, infrastructure and phasing/delivery.

2.62 The total number of homes expected to be accommodated across these 9 sites is 915.

Proposed New Strategic Locations for Growth (SLG)

2.63 National policy recognises that beyond the initial post-adoption 5-year period of a local plan, there may be less certainty of delivery in Years 6-10 and Years 11-15. As such, it allows for the identification of specific 'developable' sites or 'broad locations for growth'.

2.64 In line with this approach, the draft plan has identified a total of eight 'Strategic Locations for Growth' (SLGs) including:

- Policy CA5 – Land West of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
- Policy CA6 – Land North of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
- Policy CA7 – Land North-East of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
- Policy CA8 – Land East of Brize Norton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
- Policy WIT5 – Land South of Witney Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
- Policy WIT6 – Land West of Witney Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
- Policy WIT7 – Land North of Burford Road, Witney Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
- Policy CN3 – Land North of London Road, Chipping Norton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)

2.65 The designation of these broad locations reflects the fact that the majority of growth from these sites is expected to come forward from around 2033 onwards, although this doesn't preclude earlier delivery where possible.

2.66 Each of the eight SLGs is illustrated on the draft Local Plan Key Diagram and supported by a draft policy and accompanying site development template. The draft policy is purposefully high-level setting out the in broad terms, the anticipated quantum and type of development, type of development (e.g. new village, urban extension) and key development requirements including a requirement for development to be informed by a 'community-masterplan'.

2.67 The draft plan defines a community masterplan as one which has been informed by a process of demonstrably meaningful and effective community engagement.

2.68 Each policy is accompanied by a Site Development Template which sit as an Appendix to the draft Plan, outlining in more detail the key principles and requirements of any future development in these locations.

2.69 The broad nature of the strategic locations makes it impossible to quantify precisely how much development each location is capable of accommodating. Any such decision will be informed by more detailed site assessment work undertaken as part of the masterplanning process. For the purposes of the overall housing supply, the draft Plan assumes delivery of 8,350 homes across the eight identified SLGs in the period up to 2043.

2.70 Some of these locations are potentially capable of accommodating further development beyond 2043 but any such decisions would need to be informed by more detailed evidence and analysis as well as further progress with the development of a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) solution along the A40 corridor.

Proposed New Areas of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)

2.71 The draft Plan also identifies four broad 'Areas of Redevelopment Opportunity' (AROs) including:

- Carterton MOD housing area of redevelopment opportunity
- Welch Way area of redevelopment opportunity
- Hanborough Station area of redevelopment opportunity
- Enstone Airfield area of redevelopment opportunity

2.72 These are not site allocations as such and are not proposed to be 'counted' towards meeting identified housing or economic needs but have been designated to take account of their broad potential for various forms and types of redevelopment and renewal.

2.73 The MOD housing area ARO seeks to positively encourage the further regeneration and renewal of other areas of older, poor quality MOD housing beyond the REEMA sites which already have planning permission at Carterton.

2.74 The Welch Way ARO establishes a supportive policy framework to enable and guide the potential future redevelopment, regeneration and enhancement of land and buildings where opportunities arise within a defined area of land at Welch Way, Witney.

2.75 The Hanborough Station ARO identifies the Hanborough Station area as a strategic opportunity to enhance rail infrastructure, improve sustainable transport connectivity and deliver a West Oxfordshire Mobility Hub.

2.76 The Enstone Airfield ARO recognises the long-term potential of the site to support economic growth, skills development, aviation activities and investment. It seeks to establish a positive policy framework to support future redevelopment, regeneration and intensification proposals where these are consistent with the operational requirements of the airfield, infrastructure capacity and the principles of sustainable development.

<u>Development Management Policies</u>

2.77 Following on from the area strategies, the draft plan includes a number of development management policies which have been refined to take account of previous consultation feedback as well as discussions with the Council's Development Management Team and other services including the climate, leisure and community well-being teams.

2.78 This process of refinement has helped to ensure the policies are concise and useable and avoid any unnecessary repetition and duplication whilst covering all Council priorities.

2.79 There are 31 policies in total and the key 'headlines' can be summarised as follows.

- Development will be expected to protect, enhance and expand the green infrastructure network, safeguarding existing open spaces and delivering new, multifunctional and accessible green spaces that are well connected, inclusive, and designed to support biodiversity, climate resilience, health and wellbeing, air quality and carbon reduction.

- Development will be required to achieve no net loss of biodiversity and deliver high-quality Biodiversity Net Gain, prioritising avoidance of impacts, protecting key habitats and species, and securing well-managed, locally relevant ecological enhancements through green infrastructure and, where needed, off-site contributions within the district.
- Development will be landscape-led, conserving and enhancing local character, visual amenity, heritage assets, and biodiversity through sensitive design and high-quality landscaping.
- Development will be required to make efficient use of land by prioritising previously developed sites, supporting regeneration, and delivering sustainable, well-designed development at appropriate densities that promotes accessibility, mixed uses, and sustainable travel.
- Existing sport, recreation and play opportunities will be safeguarded, with new and enhanced provision supported where it meets identified needs and promotes inclusive, accessible and sustainable communities.
- Healthy food environments will be supported through the protection of food-growing resources, the provision of community growing spaces, and the promotion of local food production, biodiversity and community participation.
- Net zero carbon development will be promoted through ultra-low energy building design, high energy efficiency, fossil fuel-free energy systems, renewable energy generation and the reduction of embodied carbon.
- Renewable and low carbon energy generation will be supported in suitable locations where environmental, landscape and community impacts are appropriately addressed, with particular encouragement for community-led schemes and local benefits.
- The retrofit, reuse and adaptation of existing buildings will be encouraged to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and enhance climate resilience, while respecting biodiversity and the significance of heritage assets.
- Waste generation will be minimised and circular economy principles promoted through the prevention, reuse and recycling of materials, sustainable construction practices, and the provision of effective waste management infrastructure.
- Vibrant and resilient town centres will be maintained through the protection of key town centre uses, support for diverse activities and the enhancement of local character and accessibility.
- The retention of community facilities will be prioritised, with loss only permitted where robust evidence demonstrates non-viability or where equivalent or better replacement facilities are provided in accessible locations.

- Existing active travel networks will be safeguarded, with walking, cycling and public rights of way protected and enhanced through the delivery of safe, connected and accessible routes integrated into new development and wider transport and green infrastructure networks.
- Parking provision will be responsive to location and accessibility, supporting reduced car dependency while ensuring high-quality, secure cycle parking and safe, well-designed car parking where required.
- Windfall housing development will be directed to the most sustainable locations within the settlement hierarchy, prioritising previously developed land and ensuring growth is proportionate, plan-led and does not undermine the spatial strategy or settlement character.
- Mixed and balanced communities will be supported through a diverse housing mix, tenure-blind and well-integrated design, and the delivery of accessible, adaptable and innovative housing that meets identified local needs.
- Major residential development will be required to deliver 40% affordable housing where thresholds are met, with a strong emphasis on on-site, tenure-blind provision integrated throughout schemes.
- Specialist housing, including extra-care and supported living, will be supported in sustainable, well-connected locations where it would meet identified local needs and would be well integrated with surrounding development to promote inclusion and accessibility.
- Self-build and custom housebuilding will be supported in suitable locations, with major developments required to provide a proportion of serviced plots to meet demand, ensuring they are well integrated, actively marketed, and capable of contributing to mixed and balanced communities.
- Community-led housing will be supported in sustainable locations, including exception sites where appropriate, with a strong emphasis on delivering predominantly affordable and social rented homes.
- Identified needs for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation will be met through the provision of 28 pitches and 8 plots with new, expanded and regularised sites supported in sustainable locations and strategic locations for growth required to assess the potential for provision.
- Employment development will be supported in sustainable and well-connected locations where it aligns with the Council's economic strategy, makes efficient use of land, and provides flexible premises suited to business needs. Existing employment land will be protected unless robust evidence demonstrates it is no longer viable or needed.

- Small-scale rural employment and diversification schemes, including farm and estate diversification, will be encouraged where they support existing rural businesses, make effective use of existing buildings, and avoid harm to landscape, heritage, residential amenity and the highway network.
- Major and strategic development will be required to contribute to education infrastructure and wider skills and employment initiatives, including through Community Employment and Skills Plans that promote apprenticeships, training pathways and local labour opportunities.
- Tourism and leisure development will be supported where it contributes to a sustainable local economy, enhances West Oxfordshire's character, and promotes year-round, low-carbon tourism that reduces seasonality, supports local communities and supply chains, reuses brownfield land and existing buildings where possible, and avoids concentrations of short-term holiday lets within settlements.
- Digital infrastructure must be carefully designed and sited to minimise visual and environmental impacts, especially in sensitive landscapes, making use of shared infrastructure such as mast-sharing or co-location where possible to reduce unnecessary proliferation of equipment and protect the natural environment.

Delivery and Monitoring

2.80 An effective delivery and monitoring framework is essential to ensure that the Local Plan is implemented as intended and that its policies translate into real, measurable outcomes on the ground.

2.81 It provides a clear mechanism for tracking progress against key targets, identifying where delivery is on track or where intervention may be needed, and ensuring accountability over the plan period.

2.82 The Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is a central part of this process, enabling the Council to assess whether development is meeting policy requirements, such as housing delivery, infrastructure provision, and environmental objectives, and to respond proactively to changing circumstances.

2.83 To ensure the above is achieved, the draft plan includes a delivery and monitoring framework explaining how each policy links to the Plan's overall objectives and will be monitored over the plan period. Once adopted, this will form the basis of the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

3. LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE

3.1 The Council's current Local Development Scheme (LDS) was published in March 2026 and suggests that the Regulation 19 pre-submission draft Local Plan will take place in June 2026. This has not been possible and so the LDS has been updated and is attached to this report at Annex B.

3.2 The updated LDS confirms that the Regulation 19 consultation will now take place in August 2026. The intended date of submission remains December 2026.

4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 Subject to the approval of Members, the pre-submission draft Local Plan attached at Annex A will be published for a statutory period of public consultation of at least 6 weeks, in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

4.2 It is anticipated that this will commence in August 2026.

4.3 A further report will then be brought back before Members, summarising the key issues raised through the Regulation 19 consultation and seeking formal approval to submit the draft Plan (and any proposed modifications) for independent examination in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

4.4 It should be noted that when submitted for examination, the draft Plan will be considered in the context of the December 2024 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

4.5 Subject to the approval of Members, the Local Development Scheme (LDS) attached at Annex B will be published online and made available in hard copy format in agreed 'deposit' locations across the district.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

5.1 The District Council could choose not to formally publish the new Local Plan. However, local authorities are required to keep plans up to date, typically reviewing them every 5-years or so.

5.2 Furthermore, not having an up-to-date Local Plan in place is likely to exacerbate the prospect of speculative development proposals coming forward and appeal-led planning decisions taking place outside of the Council's control.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The preparation and adoption of a new Local Plan has significant financial implications with provision for this having been made through the District Council's budget setting process.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Local Plan is being prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and when considered at examination, the appointed Planning Inspector will determine whether or not the District Council has fulfilled those requirements.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 Progressing a new Local Plan is a lengthy and complex process and involves a number of potential risks. The main risks are outlined below.

8.2 The first risk relates to timing - in particular the risk of the Council not formally submitting the plan for independent examination before the end of December 2026. This would mean the plan cannot be considered under the current national framework for plan-making but would effectively need to 're-start' under the Government's new framework, thereby leading to significant delay. This risk reinforces the importance of the Regulation 19 consultation taking place in a timely manner beginning in August.

8.3 Once submitted, as always there is a risk that the appointed Inspector will find that the Council has failed to comply with the relevant legislative requirements and/or that the plan as submitted is 'unsound'. This risk will be mitigated by Officers submitting clear evidence that all legislative requirements have been complied with and through the examination process itself during which time Officers will have the opportunity to demonstrate that the policies and proposals of the draft Plan are sound including any necessary Main Modifications.

8.4 There is also an indirect risk arising from the Government's preparation of a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is due to be published later this year. Whilst the draft Local Plan will be examined under the December 2024 version of the framework, the indications to date have been that as soon as the new NPPF is published, any Local Plan policies (even recently adopted ones) may be rendered out of date and carry minimal weight if they are in conflict with the new framework. As this risk arises indirectly due to a forthcoming national planning policy shift, there is however no mitigation that can be put in place by Officers.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 The publication of the draft Local Plan 2043 will be supported by an integrated Health and Equality Impact Assessment (HEIA).

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The climate and ecological emergencies form a central component of the Regulation 19 pre-submission draft plan attached at Annex A.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 ('the Plan') sets out a vision for the district, along with objectives and policies to guide and manage future development and land use in the period up to 2043.

1.2 Addressing the climate crisis is at the heart of this vision. The Plan's policies and proposals have been purposefully shaped to ensure effective adaptation to climate change, along with any necessary mitigation measures to achieve the ambition of net carbon zero whilst balancing future needs for new homes and jobs. Helping nature to recover, achieving high quality, net gains in biodiversity, providing energy-efficient, net-zero carbon development, renewable energy generation and a meaningful shift to more sustainable modes of transport are key to achieving these objectives.

1.3 The Plan has been informed by national and local planning policy and guidance, supporting technical evidence, including Sustainability Appraisal and the testing of different options and alternative approaches through earlier stages of public consultation.

1.4 Through this process, the key priorities which have emerged as being of greatest importance are the timely delivery of new infrastructure to support planned growth and the need to ensure that new development reflects the sensitivities and rural character of the district and does not overwhelm it - in particular our smaller or more visually sensitive settlements.

1.5 The Plan seeks to recognise and address these key concerns, whilst committing to meeting West Oxfordshire's identified development needs in full and assisting Oxford City with a proportion of their unmet housing need.

1.6 To achieve this, the Plan identifies future priority growth locations which have been carefully considered and assessed and is also supported by a separate Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) outlining the key infrastructure improvements needed to support growth in the period up to 2043.

1.7 It is a requirement for all local authorities to produce a Local Plan and, following adoption, all planning permission applications must be determined in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In line with national policy, a presumption in favour of sustainable development will apply and the Plan sets out how this will be achieved in the context of West Oxfordshire.

1.8 At a more local level, town and parish councils may prepare a neighbourhood development plan, with locally specific policies and site allocations for their area, providing that they are in conformity with national policy and the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan.

2. Plan Period

2.1 The Plan covers an 18-year plan period from1st April 2025 to 31st March 2043. The base date of 1st April 2025 aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 which came into effect for the purposes of plan-making from 12 March 2025.

2.2 The end-date of 31st March 2043 allows for a period of more than 15-years from the anticipated date of adoption (2027) in line with national policy.

2.3 The Council is required to review the Plan at least every five years, unless circumstances dictate that this needs to happen sooner, to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

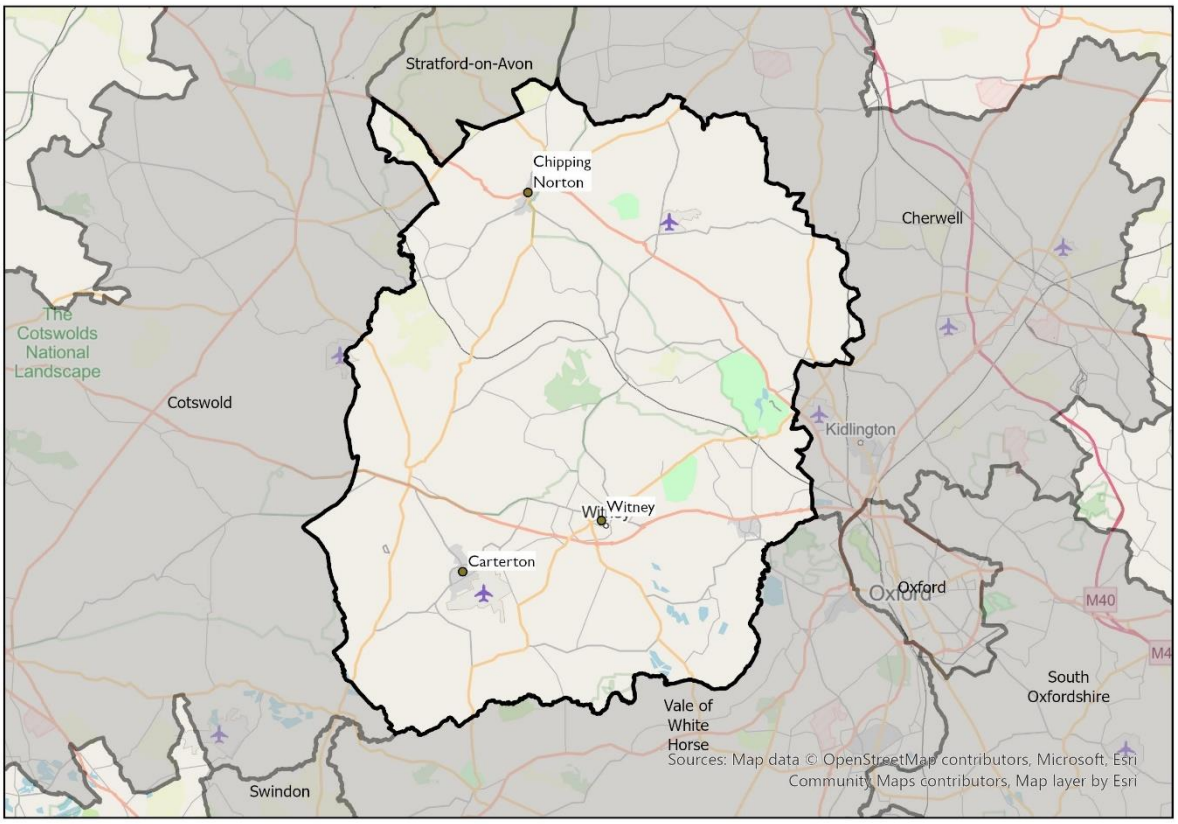

Figure 2.1 – West Oxfordshire in Wider Context

3. District Profile

3.1 The district profile below provides an overview of the key environmental, social and economic characteristics of West Oxfordshire. This helps identify the key issues facing the district now as well as the opportunities and challenges that the Local Plan will need to address in the future.

West Oxfordshire is a district in the southeast of England, within the County of Oxfordshire. It shares borders with Gloucestershire to the west and Warwickshire to the north. The district is situated to the west of Oxford, separated from the city by the Oxford Green Belt which is home to the historic rural communities, of Bladon and Cassington.

Geographically positioned between the M4 and M40 motorways, the district remains relatively isolated from the strategic road network yet enjoys good transport connectivity to the wider Southeast and Midlands particularly for communities near the rail network. The district's landscape is characterised by farmland and country estates, rolling countryside, river valleys, and protected natural habitats, contributing to its strong sense of place and local identity. As the second least densely populated areas in the Southeast, it comprises 6 towns and many villages, and hamlets, with Witney, Carterton, and Chipping Norton serving as its principal towns. A mix of historic and modern housing, attractive villages, and access to green spaces make it a highly desirable place to live, work and visit.

As of 2024, West Oxfordshire had an estimated population of approximately 121,000, with projections suggesting an increase to over 140,000 by 2045. The district has a relatively balanced age range, though some areas, such as Charlbury, have a higher proportion of residents aged 65 and older, whereas Carterton has a younger demographic. The population is aging, with the number of people aged 65+ increasing by 28.2% since 2011, compared with an increase of 4.4% in people aged 15 – 64 and a 5.6% update in children aged under 15 years. The median age has risen from 42 to 44. Household structures have also evolved, with a decrease in couples with dependent children and a slight increase in couples with non-dependent children. The district remains predominantly white (95.2%), with a higher proportion of English first-language speakers than the national average.

West Oxfordshire has committed to sustainability, with the District Council declaring a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and pledging to achieve carbon neutrality in its operations by 2030. A Carbon Action Plan published in 2024 outlines strategies to reduce emissions across buildings, transport, and services. Between 2005 and 2024, total carbon emissions steadily declined. Transport and housing remain the largest contributors to carbon emissions.

Official statistics on regional renewables electricity indicate that the total installed renewable energy capacity in West Oxfordshire was approximately 82MW in 2023 and was overwhelmingly dominated by solar PV which accounted for around 97% of the total installed capacity.

Housing in West Oxfordshire has seen strong growth, with 7,719 new homes built between 2011 and 2024, bringing the total number of households to 48,000. However, housing affordability remains a challenge, with an average house price of £387,000 in November 2024 and a housing affordability ratio of 11.4 in 2023, indicating that average house prices are over 11 times average annual earnings. Around 3,000 households are currently on the affordable housing waiting list, despite the construction of over 1,000 affordable homes since 2018. Additionally 1,128 properties are registered as long-term empty, and there is a growing trend of homes being

converted into short-term holiday lets. The housing stock is predominantly made up of detached and semi-detached properties, with a relative shortage of smaller terraced homes and flats.

Economically, the district remains resilient, with high employment levels, a skilled workforce, and strong business activity. As of January 2024, only 1.83% of the working-age population claimed unemployment-related benefits, and 90.4% of residents aged 16-64 were employed, placing West Oxfordshire among the top 10% of English local authorities for employment rates. The district has approximately 47,000 jobs, with key industries including manufacturing, construction, retail, and tourism. While agriculture dominates the landscape, it employs only a small percentage of the population. Most businesses (97.8%) are small or micro-sized, with only 0.3% classified as large enterprises.

Education in West Oxfordshire is well-regarded, with 53 primary schools serving 9,525 students in the 2023/24 school year. The district has 12 secondary schools, with 81.7% of students achieving a GCSE in English and Maths. A high proportion (96.6%) of young people remain in education or training.

Apprenticeships remain popular, with 580 starts in the 2021/22 academic year. Abingdon and Witney College offer a range of part-time and full-time courses. Early years education in communication, literacy, and maths outperforms national averages.

Healthcare in the district is strong, with health indicators often exceeding national averages. In 2021, 52.2% of residents described their health as "very good," up from 50.9% in 2011. Life expectancy is above the national average, with females living an average of 84.8 years and males 81.5 years.

The demand for health services, both community-based and clinical, is increasing with increases in life expectancy. The district is served by eleven GP practices, as well as a number of public and private dental practices. Services are reported to be under pressure from demand. In terms of secondary care, there are community hospitals in Witney and Chipping Norton. Accident and Emergency services are focused mainly at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford and to a lesser extent at the Horton Hospital in Banbury which is more accessible to residents in the north of the district. Although deprivation decreased between 2015 and 2019, access to housing and services remains a concern, particularly in parts of Chipping Norton, Witney Central, and Witney East. Part of Witney[1] is now in the top 20% most deprived nationally in the latest IMD data.

Transport infrastructure in West Oxfordshire is predominantly car-dependent, with 80% of journeys made by private vehicles. Rail connections provide access to London and Birmingham, with the Cotswold Line linking rural communities to Oxford and Hereford. While frequent bus services operate between Witney, Carterton, and Oxford, other areas are less well served. Cycling and pedestrian routes are concentrated in main towns, with limited options in rural areas. Oxfordshire County Council is progressing major improvements to the A40 corridor and to address congestion along key routes such as the A40, A44, and A415. Air quality concerns exist in Chipping Norton and Witney due to traffic emissions.

West Oxfordshire offers a wealth of recreational opportunities. The district is home to four Council-owned leisure centres, floodlit astroturf pitches, and two outdoor heated swimming pools. Parks and open spaces, including Kilkenny Lane Country Park, provide residents with green spaces for leisure. High-quality walking, cycling, and water-based activities are available, particularly in the Lower Windrush Valley, which also supports nature conservation efforts. Despite high adult participation in physical activity, child participation rates are lower than the national average.

The district's natural environment is related to the character of the landscape and the historic setting, including the Cotswolds National Landscape. There are several designated conservation

sites to protect local biodiversity, including 29 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), four National Nature Reserves (NNR), the internationally significant Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and over one hundred Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).

The Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)'s mapped nature recovery network covers around 40% of the district (both areas that are of existing importance and areas that could become important for biodiversity). West Oxfordshire is the most wooded district in the county with around 6,500 hectares of woodland, including several ancient woodlands in the Wychwood Forest area. The Evenlode and Windrush river valleys play a vital role in natural flood management and form an integral part of the nature recovery network. Throughout the district's towns and villages, a wide range of green spaces, including parks, commons, allotments, churchyards, country parks and nature reserves provide accessible nature, wildlife stepping stones and wider health, wellbeing and climate resilience benefits.

West Oxfordshire also boasts a rich heritage, with Blenheim Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as its most famous landmark. The district contains approximately 3,200 listed structures, including Kelmscott Manor, Bliss Mill and Chastleton House. It is home to 51 Conservation Areas and 149 Scheduled Monuments, covering prehistoric, Roman, and medieval sites. Additionally, 16 historic parks and gardens, such as Rousham House and Gardens, highlight the district's landscape heritage. Wychwood Forest, an ancient royal forest, remains a site of historical and ecological significance.

With its mix of natural beauty, rich history, and strong community ties, West Oxfordshire continues to be a sought-after place to live, work, and explore.

4. Issues and Challenges

4.1 The Plan needs to address a complex set of issues and navigate competing challenges to achieve truly 'sustainable development' at the local level. Key to this is balancing economic growth, environmental protection, and community well-being.

4.2 The Plan must carefully align the need for new housing and growth in the local economy, with appropriate protection of the district's landscapes, biodiversity, and historic assets, including the Cotswolds National Landscape and Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site.

4.3 A further key focus is the inter-connection between West Oxfordshire and surrounding areas, with the Plan needing to ensure that development within the district helps to support the regional and sub-regional economy, including cross-boundary infrastructure improvements. Given the pressure for growth, a particular challenge involves maintaining the integrity of the Oxford Green Belt while identifying opportunities for positive environmental enhancements.

4.4 Sustainable development requires a thoughtful distribution of growth, ensuring that both principal towns and rural communities benefit without overburdening sensitive areas. Housing policies must address affordability, support a range of household needs including downsizing for an aging population and family-friendly housing, and provide a mix of tenures to ensure social and economic diversity and well-being. In addition, the plan must seek to mitigate the impact of short-term holiday lets on local communities and explore more innovative housing solutions, such as community-led initiatives and build-to-rent models.

4.5 Environmental sustainability will guide future development, with strict energy efficiency standards for new buildings, retrofitting initiatives, and expanded local renewable energy projects. Climate adaptation measures, including natural flood management and increased tree cover, will help mitigate future risks. The appropriate management of biodiversity, green spaces, and agricultural land must remain a priority to ensure long-term environmental resilience.

4.6 Infrastructure investment is of critical importance, particularly in water supply and treatment and electricity generation capacity, which are also key to supporting goals for environmental protection and reduction of carbon emissions. Enhancement of public transport, cycling, and pedestrian networks, particularly along the congested A40 corridor, is key to reducing car dependency and lowering carbon emissions. Prioritising sustainable transport solutions, including enhanced bus services, improved rail connectivity, and EV charging infrastructure will be key to fostering a more connected, economically successful and environmentally responsible district.

4.7 The local economy must also be strengthened by supporting small businesses, expanding workforce development programs, and aligning education and training initiatives with emerging sectors such as green energy and technology. Ensuring a sufficient supply of affordable housing for workers will be essential to sustaining economic growth.

4.8 Health and well-being are central to the Plan, requiring improved healthcare access, expanded leisure facilities, and policies that promote physical activity and social cohesion. Investments in digital infrastructure, community centres, and local services will further enhance the quality of life for residents.

4.9 Preserving West Oxfordshire's rich heritage is a further key focus, requiring careful planning to maintain historic sites while supporting their adaptive reuse. The impact of climate change on heritage assets must also be considered, integrating conservation efforts with broader environmental strategies.

4.10 The Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) identifies a priority network of land for the implementation of actions that can recover nature. This covers around 40% of the county and the district, which demonstrates the level of opportunity that exists in the area for creating, restoring and enhancing biodiversity. This can be delivered in a variety of ways, including green infrastructure, biodiversity net gain, natural flood management and building design (e.g. incorporating wildlife boxes or green roofs).

4.11 Ultimately, the Plan must foster an inclusive, thriving, and sustainable future for West Oxfordshire by balancing development with the needs of communities, the economy, and the natural and historic environment.

5. Vision and Plan Objectives

5.1 The Vision and Objectives establish the overarching direction for the Local Plan and provide a clear framework for shaping growth and change across the plan period.

5.2 They articulate how the area is expected to develop, the qualities that should be protected and enhanced, and the outcomes that the Plan seeks to achieve for communities, businesses, and the environment.

5.3 The Vision describes the desired future state of the district at the end of the plan period. It reflects local aspirations, builds on the area's distinctive characteristics, and responds to the opportunities and challenges identified through the evidence base and community engagement.

In 2043, West Oxfordshire stands as a beacon of sustainable development and community well-being. Our District has embraced a transformative vision, shaping a future that balances environmental stewardship, economic vitality, and social equity. We not only meet the needs of our residents but inspire others to follow our lead in creating a sustainable and inclusive future.

The district is powered entirely by renewable energy sources and innovative green technologies. Energy-efficient buildings, both residential and commercial have become the norm, with retrofitted historic structures showcasing advanced insulation and energy systems. Public transport is carbon-neutral, including electric buses, bike-sharing schemes, and extensive pedestrian zones. Green roofs and vertical gardens are commonplace, contributing to urban cooling and biodiversity.

Communities are thriving, inclusive, and resilient. Health and well-being are prioritised through extensive green spaces, recreational facilities, and community gardens. Access to high-quality healthcare and mental health services is seamless, with integrated community health hubs providing comprehensive care. Social inclusivity is strengthened by community centres that offer programs for all ages, fostering intergenerational connections and support networks. Streets and public spaces are designed for safety and accessibility, ensuring everyone can participate in community life.

Our natural landscapes and historic buildings are meticulously preserved and enhanced. Conservation efforts ensure that biodiversity is restored, protected and thrives in rural and urban areas with urban spaces integrating nature through parks, green corridors, and wildlife-friendly initiatives. Historic buildings are not only preserved but also adapted for modern use, blending heritage with innovation and carbon neutrality. This harmonious integration of the old and new attracts tourists and enriches the cultural fabric of the district.

Urban and rural areas are vibrant and welcoming. Town centres are pedestrian-friendly, featuring a mix of local shops, cafes, cultural venues, and public art. Smart technologies ensure efficient public services, supported by digital infrastructure. Public transport is efficient, affordable, and well-connected, making it easy for residents to move around the district and beyond.

West Oxfordshire's housing market is inclusive and dynamic. Infrastructure has kept pace with development and a mix of housing types, from single-family homes to co-housing communities offers a diverse range of options and ensures that everyone from young professionals to retirees can find suitable accommodation. New affordable housing mean that all residents have access to safe and comfortable homes. New developments adhere to the highest standards of sustainability, with green building practices ensuring minimal environmental impact.

The economy is robust and diverse, characterised by innovation and sustainability. Local businesses thrive alongside global enterprises, with a strong emphasis on food and green industries, technology, and creative sectors. The district is a hub for green technology startups, research, and development, supported by partnerships with local universities and research institutions. A focus on skills development and lifelong learning ensures the workforce is adaptable and prepared for the future. Farmers markets, artisanal shops, and local producers are integral to the economy, promoting local produce and craftsmanship.

In 2043, West Oxfordshire is not just a place to live, but a thriving, inter-connected community where people enjoy a high quality of life, economic opportunities abound, and the natural and historic environment is cherished and protected. Together, we have created a future that is sustainable, inclusive, and inspiring for generations to come.

5.4 Flowing from the vision, we have identified a series of overarching plan objectives.

5.5 These are important because they help to articulate the vision and guide the overall content of the plan. They also provide a benchmark against which progress can be measured.

5.6 The objectives are thematically based and have been refined to take account of previous consultation feedback.

5.7 The delivery and monitoring framework at Appendix 3 explains the links between each objective and each of the Plan's policies and proposals.

Objective 1 – To take local action and tackle the climate and ecological emergency 'head-on' for the benefit of current and future generations by:

- Significantly reducing West Oxfordshire's carbon emissions across all sectors, with a particular focus on carbon intensive activities, including transport, housing and industry.
- Enabling the deployment of new and retrospective renewable and low-carbon energy solutions at all scales, maximising the potential benefits of this approach whilst minimising the impacts.
- Building resilience to, and reversing the impacts of climate change, supporting adaptation and nature recovery.
- Maximising the efficient use of land and buildings, favouring their retention where possible and adaptive re-use, making prudent use of natural resources and ensuring that waste is treated as a resource through the adoption of 'circular economy' principles.

Objective 2 – To foster healthier and happier communities across West Oxfordshire, by:

- Creating well-designed, safe, inclusive, and accessible environments that encourage community integration and promote strong mental and physical health.
- Enabling the adoption of healthier lifestyles by promoting physical activity through walking, cycling, the use of public transport, and the provision of convenient access to high-quality green space, sports and leisure.
- Establishing a healthier food environment by enabling better food choices and encouraging local production, distribution and consumption of healthy food.
- Ensuring that timely investment is made in the infrastructure needed to support development and that it is managed and maintained effectively over the long-term.

Objective 3 - To protect, support and enhance the quality and resilience of West Oxfordshire's built, historic and natural environments by:

- Conserving and enhancing the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, historic and cultural environment, recognising their contributions to quality of life, social and economic well-being, and enabling sensitive adaptation to climate change.
- Promoting nature recovery by supporting resilient and connected habitats and ecosystems, investing in natural capital, and achieving measurable net gains in biodiversity in accordance with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire.
- Adopting an integrated, holistic approach to the management of all aspects of the water environment.
- Protecting the district's environmental assets by preventing pollution and minimising its impact on local amenity, health, landscape character, soil resources and biodiversity.

Objective 4 – To allow West Oxfordshire's resident communities and businesses to thrive within a network of attractive, vibrant, and well-connected market towns and villages by:

- Ensuring that all new development adhere to high-quality, innovative, and inclusive design standards.
- Creating safe, welcoming, and accessible town and village centres that can effectively adapt to changing trends and remain destinations of choice.
- Ensuring that everyone can access the essential services and facilities that they need, in turn, helping to achieve greater equality and inclusivity.
- Empowering local communities to actively shape and influence the future of their area by providing a framework for neighbourhood and other community led plans.

Objective 5 – To make sure that all residents can meet their housing needs by:

- Enabling the delivery of a continuous supply of high quality and sustainable new homes to meet identified housing needs over the period 2025 – 2043.
- Maximising the efficient use of the district's existing housing stock, including empty homes, and leveraging the re-use of previously developed land and buildings.
- Meeting the needs of those who are unable to access market housing by meeting the need for genuinely affordable housing in the context of West Oxfordshire as far as possible, both in the short and long-term.
- Ensuring that the right type, size and tenure of new accommodation come forward to meet the variety of identified housing needs and engendering a greater sense of community cohesion and well-being.

Objective 6 – To foster a thriving, diverse, and resilient economy in West Oxfordshire, leveraging its strengths and future growth potential by:

- Providing a balanced portfolio of high-quality employment land to meet the diversity of commercial needs in the district, including large and smaller businesses, and ensure flexibility.
- Supporting existing and future economic assets with the necessary infrastructure, land, and premises, while protecting important economic, social, and environmental roles.
- Supporting adaptation to future trends and technological changes to support evolving working practices, including remote, hybrid, and co-working models.
- Ensuring all residents benefit from improved education, training, and skills opportunities, enhancing economic and social well-being and supporting small and start-up businesses.
- Celebrating and sustainably growing the rural economy, supporting farmers, rural businesses, and the visitor economy.

6. Spatial Strategy

6.1 All Local Plans must promote a sustainable pattern of development, aligning development needs and infrastructure with environmental considerations including climate change.

6.2 This section of the Plan sets out five spatial policies that collectively make up the overall 'spatial strategy'. These policies are intended to provide a clear steer as to where, what, and how development will occur in the area to 2043.

6.3 The spatial policies categorise settlements based on their role and function, identify the principal areas for future housing, employment growth and transport infrastructure and define clear principles to guide development, reconciling the need to balance economic and housing growth with protection and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL).

Policy SP1 – Settlement Hierarchy

6.4 The settlement hierarchy classifies the districts towns and villages on the basis of their size and service availability, including shops, schools, and public transport.

6.5 It is a key element of the Plan, forming the basis upon which other policies can guide development toward the most suitable and sustainable locations.

6.6 In summary, reflecting their broader range of services and facilities (and thus ability to accommodate future development) higher-tier settlements including the principal towns and service centres are the primary focus for strategic and large-scale growth, while lower-tier settlements (villages/hamlets) will experience comparatively smaller scale development.

6.7 This principle of proportionality is key to the Plan's Spatial Strategy (Policy SP2) which seeks to guide growth to those locations where communities can more easily access the services, facilities and transport options to meet their needs.

Policy SP1 – Settlement Hierarchy

For the purposes of the Spatial Strategy (Policy SP2) and other relevant policies of this Local Plan, the settlement hierarchy for West Oxfordshire is as follows:

Tier 1 – Principal Towns
Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton

Tier 2 – Service Centres
Bampton, Burford, Charlbury, Eynsham, Long Hanborough, Woodstock, Salt Cross Garden Village

Tier 3 – Large Villages
Aston, Brize Norton, Ducklington, Enstone, Freeland, Hailey, Middle Barton, Milton under Wychwood, Minster Lovell (South of Burford Road), North Leigh, Shipton under Wychwood, Standlake, Stanton Harcourt, Stonesfield, Tackley

Tier 4 – Medium Villages
Alvescot, Ascott-under-Wychwood, Bladon, Cassington, Chadlington, Churchill, Clanfield, Combe, Curbridge, Filkins and Broughton Poggs, Finstock, Fulbrook, Great Rollright, Kingham, Langford, Leafield, Over Norton, Wootton

Tier 5 - Small Villages, Hamlets and Open Countryside

Policy SP2 – Spatial Strategy

6.8 Flowing from the settlement hierarchy outlined above, Policy SP2 sets out the overarching spatial strategy for West Oxfordshire and explains how future growth and development will be distributed across the district to 2043. It provides the framework for delivering the Plan's vision and objectives by directing development to the most sustainable locations whilst recognising the differing roles, functions and characteristics of the district's towns, villages and rural areas.

6.9 The spatial strategy has been refined through ongoing engagement, consultation and the preparation of the Local Plan evidence base. It seeks to balance the need to accommodate housing, employment and infrastructure growth with the need to address climate change, support nature recovery and protect the district's valued landscapes, heritage and environmental assets.

6.10 The strategy is based on three interrelated principles. First, it seeks to maximise opportunities for sustainable travel by focusing growth at locations that are well connected to jobs, services and facilities, particularly along the A40 and A44 strategic corridors where investment in transport infrastructure can support more sustainable patterns of movement. This includes supporting the delivery of enhanced public transport provision, active travel networks and Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) along the A40 corridor.

6.11 Second, the strategy applies a hierarchical approach to growth based on the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy SP1. The majority of development will be directed towards the district's principal towns and service centres, where there is generally the greatest

concentration of services, employment opportunities and infrastructure capacity. More limited and proportionate levels of growth will be directed to villages in accordance with their size, role, accessibility and ability to accommodate development sustainably.

6.12 Third, the strategy recognises the importance of West Oxfordshire's high-quality natural and historic environment in shaping the district's character and identity. In particular, it reflects the national importance of the Cotswolds National Landscape and the need to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. Accordingly, development within the National Landscape will be carefully managed and limited in scale and extent, whilst ensuring that local housing, community and economic needs can continue to be supported in appropriate locations.

6.13 Taken together, these elements establish a sustainable pattern of growth that supports thriving communities, makes efficient use of land and infrastructure, reduces the need to travel by private car and safeguards the environmental qualities that make West Oxfordshire an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Policy SP2 – Spatial Strategy

The spatial strategy for West Oxfordshire to 2043 will deliver a sustainable pattern of development that meets identified housing, economic and community needs, aligns growth with infrastructure, addresses climate change, supports nature recovery, sustains vibrant communities, and protects the distinctive character of the district's towns, villages and countryside.

1. **Prioritise Sustainable Travel and Focus Growth Along Key Strategic Corridors**

Development will be focused on accessible locations where infrastructure and sustainable transport opportunities can be maximised, including along the following key strategic corridors:

- The A40 Corridor, including Carterton, Witney and Eynsham, supporting sustainable communities, infrastructure investment and improved strategic connectivity, including enhanced Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) in accordance with Policy SP5.

- The A44 Corridor, supporting the role of Chipping Norton and Woodstock and reinforcing local services, infrastructure and connectivity.

2. **A hierarchal approach to growth**

To ensure that development is sustainable, growth will be directed in accordance with the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy SP1, reflecting the role, accessibility and capacity of each settlement.

Tier 1 – Principal Towns

Carterton and Witney will be the primary focus for new development over the plan period, reflecting their existing roles, services and infrastructure and their capacity to accommodate future growth in a sustainable manner.

Growth in these locations will support regeneration, make best use of previously developed land and under-used sites, and deliver transformational opportunities for new homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure.

A number of scalable new villages within the rural fringe of Carterton (including in Brize Norton, Shilton and Alvescot Parishes) will complement the comprehensive redevelopment of existing military housing, encourage investment in the town and unlock its economic and social potential, including its relationship with RAF Brize Norton.

At Witney, the primary focus of new residential and economic development will be on sustainable urban extensions to the east, north and west of the town, complemented by a scalable new village to the south. Opportunities to better use existing sites within the urban area will continue to be explored including land at Welch Way and Woodford Way.

As much of the town falls within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL), growth at Chipping Norton will be more modest, with the primary focus being the efficient re-use of previously developed land within the built area, complemented by a sustainable urban extension to the north-east of the town.

Tier 2 – Service Centres

Bampton, Burford, Charlbury, Eynsham, Long Hanborough and Woodstock will provide for a proportionate level of development which is appropriate to the size of each settlement and their capacity to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner that demonstrably supports their service centre function.

Strategically located along the A40, Eynsham has a particularly important role to play, supporting the delivery of a sustainable urban extension to the west and Salt Cross Garden Village to the north, where the development of a highly sustainable new community will be guided by the Salt Cross Area Action Plan (AAP).

Long Hanborough and Woodstock offer strong potential to support modal shift towards public transport, including bus and rail. Land adjacent to Hanborough Station provides the opportunity for high quality residential development in a sustainable location, whilst future housing growth at Woodstock is expected to be based largely on existing commitments, reflecting the sensitivities presented by the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site (WHS).

Burford and Charlbury fall within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) and Bampton has relatively fewer services and facilities compared to the other Tier 2 service centres, meaning development in these three locations will be proportionately more limited.

Tier 3 – Large Villages

Site allocations are identified where new development can facilitate the delivery of infrastructure to improve the relative sustainability of a settlement.

Beyond this, development will be supported in locations that:

i. Are consistent with the settlement's role, character, and infrastructure capacity, taking account of recent development and planned growth.
ii. Are well served or capable of being served by public transport or active travel to key services and facilities; and
iii. Would help to sustain local services and communities.

Tier 4 – Medium Villages

Development will be more limited in scale reflecting the relative sustainability and infrastructure capacity of these settlements. An allocation for new housing is identified at Kingham, reflecting the strategic aim of focussing growth around sustainable transport corridors.

Tier 5 – Small Villages, Hamlets and Open Countryside

Development will be limited solely to uses that require a rural location or support the rural economy and local community.

Proposals for new residential development will be determined in accordance with Policies DM18 and DM20.

3. Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL)

Across all settlement tiers, development within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) must conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty and must be limited in scale and extent in accordance with national policy and Policy SP4.

Key Diagram

6.14 The Key Diagram provides a visual representation of the Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Strategy outlined in Policies SP1 and SP2.

6.15 It also illustrates the extent of the Area Strategies included at Section 8 of the Plan, including priority locations for future growth and infrastructure.

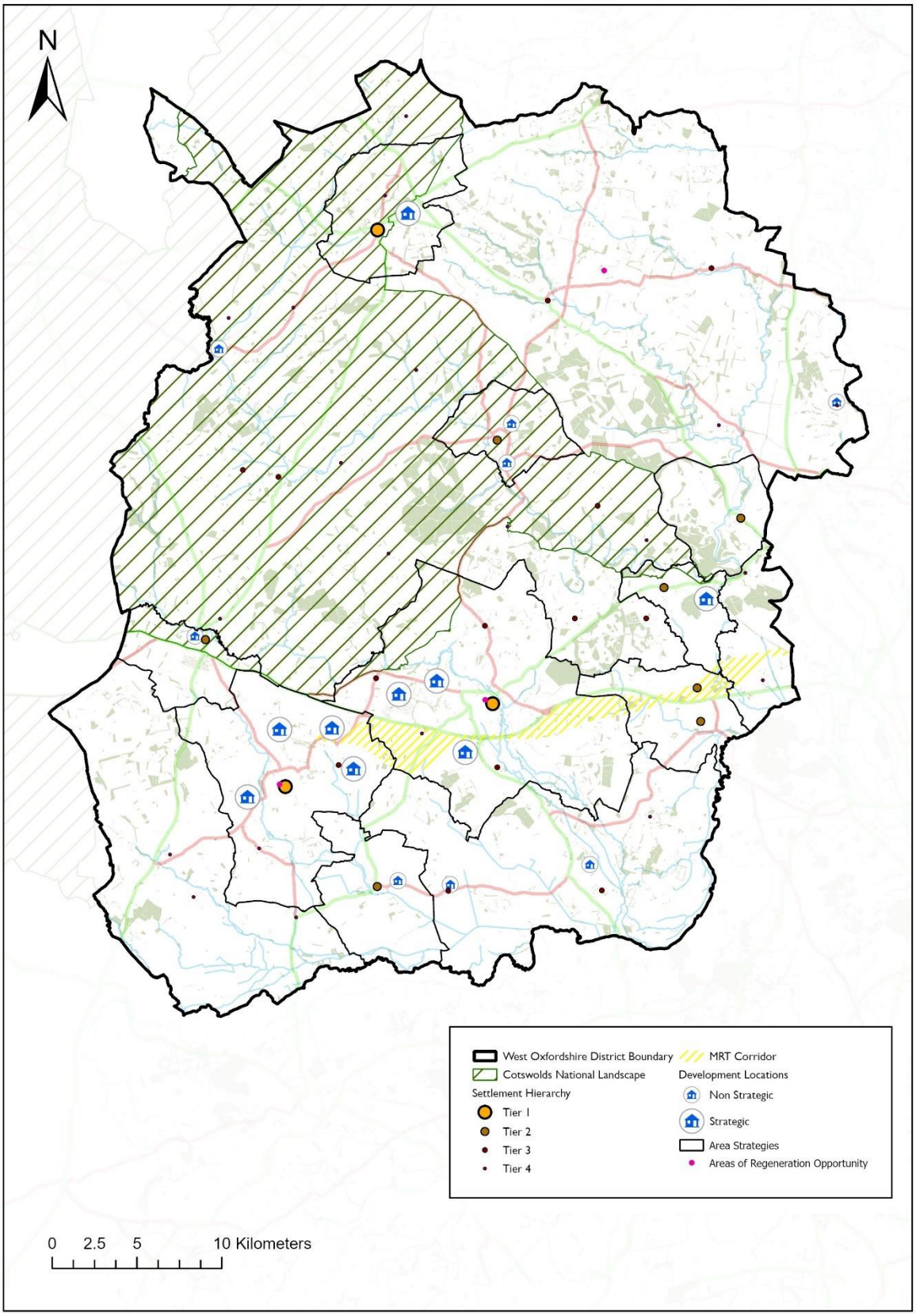

Figure 6.1 – Key Diagram

Policy SP3 – Key Development Principles

6.16 Policy SP3 sets out a series of overarching, key principles intended to apply, where relevant, to all forms of development in West Oxfordshire.

6.17 These key principles provide a framework for both plan-making and decision-taking, helping to ensure that development is sustainable and responds appropriately to local circumstances.

6.18 The principles within Policy SP3 have been refined to reflect previous consultation feedback and to ensure the policy makes a meaningful contribution to the Plan. They respond to the district's distinctive characteristics and the priorities, opportunities and challenges facing local communities.

Policy SP3 – Key Development Principles

All development proposals must adhere to the following key principles, to ensure that they contribute positively to the sustainability, character, and quality of the local area.

i. Development must be supported by the timely provision of all infrastructure required to meet identified needs in accordance with Policy CP4.

ii. Development must be proportionate and appropriate in scale, form, and character to its location, taking into account the potential cumulative impact of development in the locality.

iii. Development proposals must respond sensitively and innovatively to local character and distinctiveness, relating well to existing built form, architectural styles, materials, landscape character, and the setting of settlements, while conserving and, where possible, enhancing local identity and historic character.

iv. Development must not lead to the coalescence of settlements. Proposals must demonstrate how they will protect the separate identity of settlements by maintaining appropriate physical and visual gaps between them.

v. Development must be compatible with existing and adjoining land uses and provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupants. Proposals that would result in unacceptable impacts, including noise, pollution, overshadowing, overlooking, overbearing or loss of privacy, natural light, or usable outdoor space will not be supported unless such impacts can be effectively mitigated.

vi. Development will be expected to safeguard open spaces of recreational or ecological value within settlements. Development affecting designated Local Green Spaces will only be permitted where very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

vii. Development must ensure safe, suitable, and inclusive access for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. Proposals must demonstrate how they integrate with and relate to the existing local transport network, prioritise sustainable modes of transport, and ensure that any impacts on highway safety are not unacceptable and that residual cumulative impacts on the road network are not severe.

viii. Development must have regard to safeguarded mineral and soil resources including best and most versatile agricultural land.

ix. Development must not be at risk from any source of flooding or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere in accordance with Policy CP5.

Policy SP4 – Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL)

6.19 The Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) covers around one-third of the district and forms one of its most important environmental assets.

6.20 The CNL is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is characterised by its distinctive Jurassic limestone geology, which has shaped its rolling hills, limestone grasslands, ancient woodlands, historic settlements and honey-coloured stone architecture. Together, these features create a landscape of national significance with a strong sense of place and local distinctiveness.

6.21 The primary purposes of the Cotswolds National Landscape are to conserve and enhance its natural beauty and to increase understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. These qualities contribute significantly to the district's environmental, cultural and economic wellbeing and are highly valued by residents, businesses and visitors alike.

6.22 The Cotswolds National Landscape Board is the statutory body responsible for preparing and implementing the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan. The Management Plan provides the strategic framework for conserving and enhancing the National Landscape and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

6.23 National planning policy affords great weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty within National Landscapes, recognising their national importance. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 further strengthens this position by placing a statutory duty on relevant authorities to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Landscapes when exercising their functions.

6.24 The purpose of Policy SP4 is to ensure that development proposals conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape and its setting, while supporting sustainable development that is compatible with its protection. The policy seeks to secure high-quality development that responds positively to local landscape character, avoids harm wherever possible, and delivers appropriate environmental enhancements and long-term benefits.

6.25 Policy SP4 also seeks to facilitate delivery of the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan by encouraging development that contributes positively to its objectives, including landscape conservation and enhancement, biodiversity recovery, improved tranquillity and dark skies, and the management of recreational pressures.

6.26 The policy recognises that the setting of the National Landscape often contributes significantly to how it is experienced and appreciated. Development outside the designated area can therefore have implications for its character, tranquillity, dark skies and important views, and will be expected to take these considerations into account where relevant.

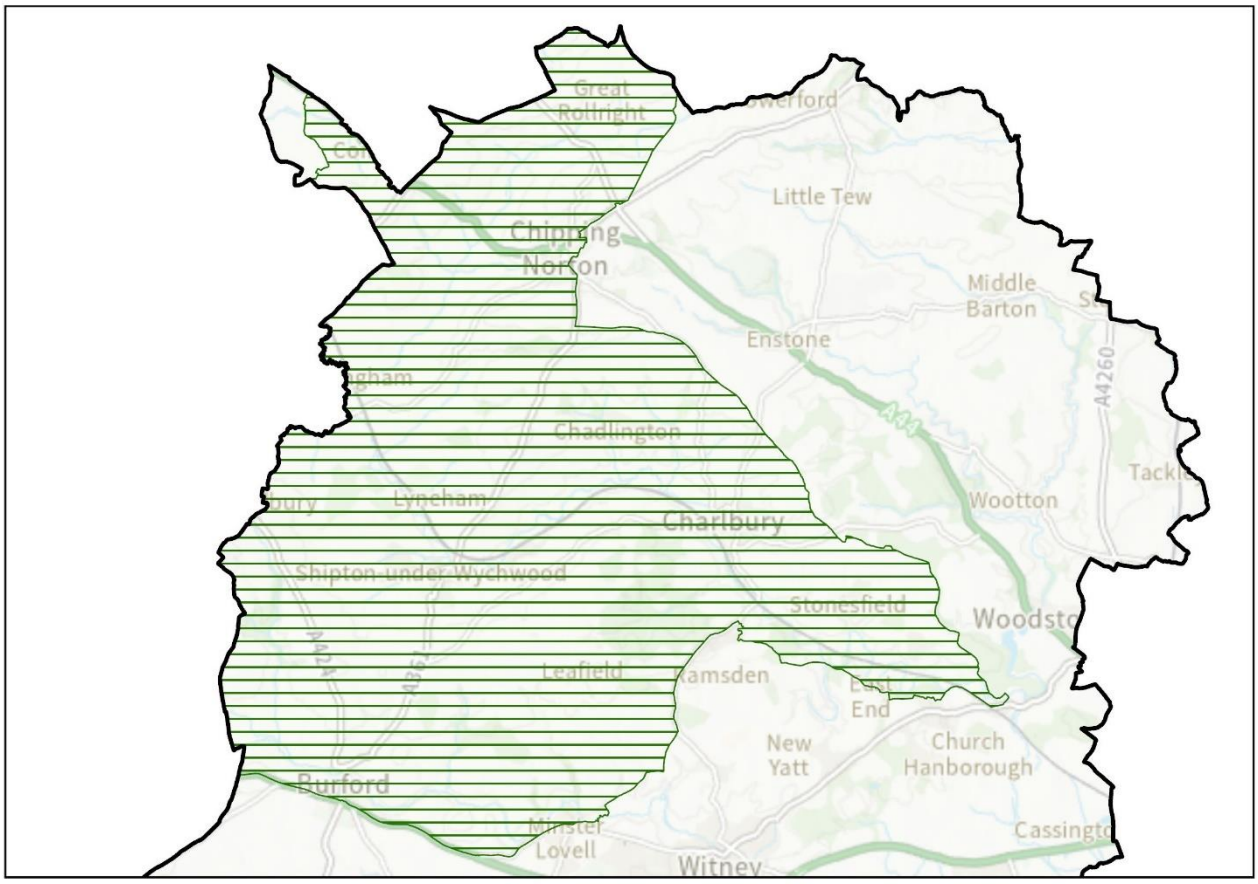

Figure 6.2 – Cotswolds National Landscape

Policy SP4 – Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL)

Development proposals within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) must:

i. Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, special qualities, landscape character, scenic beauty, cultural and natural heritage, tranquillity, and dark skies of the National Landscape, and seek to further its statutory purposes.

ii. Be sensitively located, proportionate in scale, and designed in response to landscape character, settlement pattern, local distinctiveness, and important views within, into, and out of the National Landscape, incorporating appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures where necessary.

iii. Avoid adverse impacts on the National Landscape and its setting, minimise and mitigate any unavoidable harm, and secure measurable net benefits through measures such as landscape restoration, biodiversity enhancement, and, where appropriate, reductions in existing detractors including light pollution and traffic.

iv. Align with and, where practical, contribute to the delivery of the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan[1], relevant Nature Recovery Plans, and, where appropriate, the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework[2].

v. Be proportionate in scale and extent to the settlement in which they are proposed, having regard to its character, function, accessibility, and availability of sustainable transport and local services.

vi. Where harm to the National Landscape is identified and exceptionally considered to be outweighed in the overall planning balance, demonstrate that all reasonable steps have been taken to avoid and mitigate harm and, as a last resort, provide appropriate and proportionate compensatory measures for any residual harm.

vii. Demonstrate, where applicable, that proposals constituting major development satisfy the tests set out in national policy.

Development outside the National Landscape that affects its setting must also conserve and enhance its natural beauty and special qualities, including important views, landscape character, tranquillity, and dark skies as experienced from within the National Landscape.

[1] https://www.cotswolds-nl.org.uk/our-work/cotswolds-national-landscape-management-plan/
[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework

Policy SP5 – A40 Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Corridor

6.27 Traffic congestion along the A40 corridor is one of the most significant infrastructure challenges facing West Oxfordshire. The corridor is a key movement route for residents, businesses and visitors, providing access to employment, education, services and facilities both within the district and beyond. Existing congestion affects journey times, public transport reliability, economic productivity and quality of life, whilst contributing to carbon emissions and poor air quality.

6.28 As outlined previously, a key component of the Spatial Strategy (Policy SP2) is to focus future growth along key strategic transport corridors including the A40 and A44. This means that the above considerations will become even more pressing, highlighting the importance of an appropriate solution being found.

6.29 Oxfordshire County Council is currently progressing a package of transport improvements along the A40 corridor through the Housing and Growth Deal and Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) programme. This includes the Eynsham Park and Ride, associated bus priority infrastructure and active travel improvements. These interventions are expected to deliver important benefits, increase travel choice and support a shift towards more sustainable forms of transport. However, not all elements of the proposed package are currently funded and there remains uncertainty regarding the timing and delivery of some interventions.

6.30 Furthermore, transport evidence prepared in support of the Plan indicates that, even with the planned A40 improvements in place, forecast growth across West Oxfordshire is likely to result in increased travel demand, longer journey times and greater congestion on parts of the corridor over the plan period. Whilst continued investment in highways, public transport and active travel infrastructure will remain important, the evidence suggests that a more transformational long-term solution is likely to be required to provide the step-change in connectivity and capacity necessary to support sustainable growth.

6.31 Previous work has focused on the potential for a Carterton–Witney–Oxford rail connection (CWORC) as one possible means of addressing these challenges. However, consultation feedback on earlier stages of the Plan highlighted the importance of maintaining flexibility and avoiding a premature commitment to a specific transport technology before sufficient evidence is available. In response, the Council proposes a broader Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) approach that recognises the potential for a range of solutions to be considered.

6.32 At the time of preparing this Plan, Oxfordshire County Council is commissioning further options appraisal work to assess the relative merits of different MRT technologies and identify the most appropriate solution for the corridor. Depending on the outcome of this work, the preferred option could comprise heavy rail, light rail, tram-train, guided transit, bus rapid transit or other emerging technologies capable of providing high-capacity, high-frequency and attractive alternatives to private car travel.

6.33 Given the long lead-in times associated with major transport infrastructure projects, it is important that opportunities for future delivery are not compromised by piecemeal development. Policy SP5 therefore identifies an indicative corridor of land to safeguard the

potential delivery of a future MRT solution and associated infrastructure. The purpose of the corridor is not to predetermine the final route, technology or design of the scheme, but to ensure that future options remain available while further evidence is prepared and a preferred solution emerges.

6.34 In addition to safeguarding land, the policy seeks to ensure that development does not prejudice delivery of a future MRT scheme and that, where appropriate, development contributes towards its implementation. This reflects the principle that development benefiting from improved accessibility and connectivity should make a fair and proportionate contribution towards the infrastructure required to support it. This may include financial contributions, in-kind provision of land or infrastructure, and the use of land value capture mechanisms where enhanced development potential arises directly from MRT investment.

6.35 The policy also recognises the potential role of mobility hubs in supporting the operation of a future MRT network. Such hubs could provide integrated interchange opportunities between different modes of transport, including walking, cycling, bus services, shared mobility options and private vehicles, helping to maximise accessibility and reduce reliance on private car travel. The broad locations identified in the policy are indicative only and will be refined through further technical work. Subject to further detailed assessment, the plan identifies the potential for mobility hubs to be located in broad terms at:

- Carterton, serving the town and surrounding areas.
- Witney, as a central hub for residents and businesses.
- Eynsham, to enhance connectivity and reduce reliance on private car travel.

6.36 These locations will be reviewed periodically to reflect changes in transport needs, technological advancements, and the outcomes of feasibility studies and options appraisal work.

6.37 The Council will continue to work closely with Oxfordshire County Council, infrastructure providers, neighbouring authorities, developers, landowners and local communities to refine the nature of the MRT solution, the alignment of the safeguarded corridor and the location and function of any mobility hubs. It is anticipated that further evidence will be available before submission of the Local Plan for examination, enabling the policy to be reviewed and refined as appropriate.

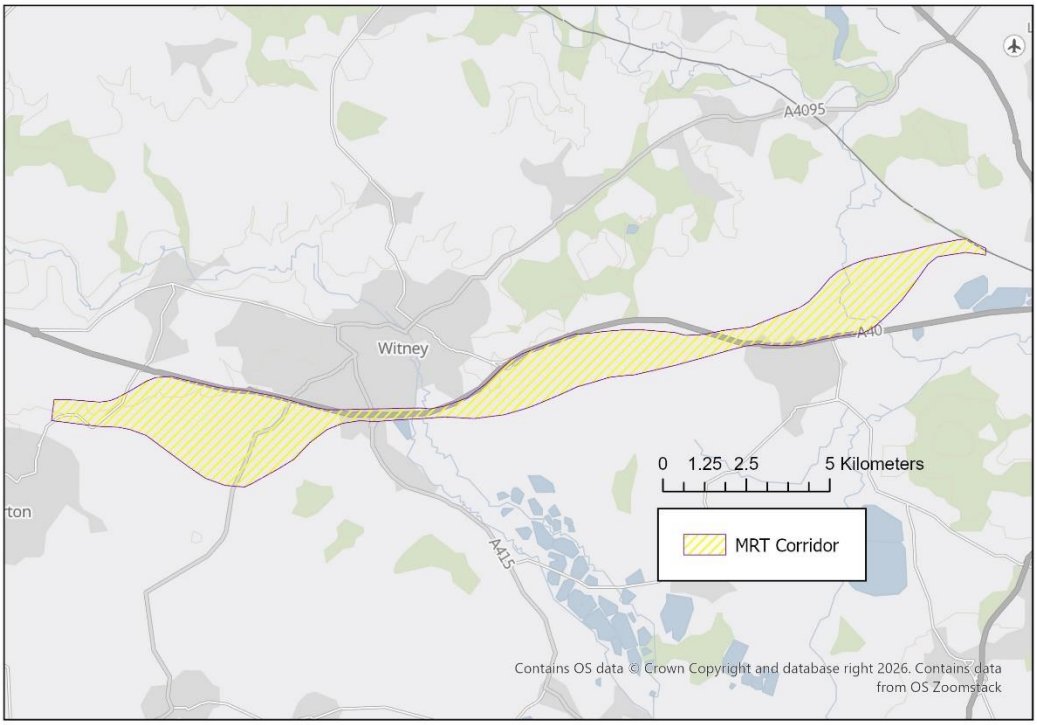

Figure 6.3 – Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Corridor

Policy SP5 - A40 Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Corridor

Purpose of the Corridor

A corridor of land is identified on the Policies Map to safeguard the potential delivery of a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) scheme to address long standing issues of traffic congestion on the A40. This indicative corridor of land is intended to support high-quality, high frequency sustainable transport infrastructure with improved connectivity between key settlements.

Safeguarding the Corridor

Within the identified corridor, proposals for new development must demonstrate that they will not hinder or prejudice the delivery of the MRT solution, including associated infrastructure and supporting facilities.

The corridor will be reviewed periodically to reflect changes in transport needs, technological advancements, and the outcomes of feasibility studies and options appraisal work.

Development Contributions

Development within, adjoining and/or dependant on the identified corridor will be required to make proportionate financial and/or in-kind contributions towards the delivery of the MRT solution.

This will include consideration of Land Value Capture (LVC) in circumstances when an increased quantum and/or density of development is able to be achieved as a direct result of the MRT solution.

Development contributions are expected to be used towards, but not limited to, feasibility work, infrastructure provision and delivery, priority measures, and associated facilities.

Supporting Evidence and Engagement

The Council will work with key stakeholders, including Oxfordshire County Council, infrastructure providers, developers, and local communities, to refine the nature of the MRT solution, the alignment of the corridor and the location and function of mobility hubs as part of the ongoing planning process.

7. Core Policies

7.1 Building on the five 'spatial policies', this section of the Plan consists of ten 'core policies' which are cross-cutting in nature, applying to the district as a whole and addressing the key, strategic issues of particular importance to the growth of West Oxfordshire in the period up to 2043.

7.2 This includes climate change, housing and economic development needs, the provision of supporting infrastructure, design, health and well-being and the natural and historic environment.

7.3 Importantly, the Core Policies have clear links to the Local Plan Vision, Objectives and overall Spatial Strategy.

Policy CP1 – Climate Change

7.4 Climate change is one of the most significant long-term challenges facing West Oxfordshire. Rising global temperatures, more frequent and intense weather events, and ongoing biodiversity loss present risks to communities, businesses, infrastructure and the natural environment. Addressing climate change is therefore a fundamental component of delivering sustainable development and securing the long-term resilience and prosperity of the district.

7.5 Climate change presents both mitigation and adaptation challenges. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is essential to limit the scale of future climate change, whilst adapting to unavoidable impacts is necessary to ensure that people, places and ecosystems remain resilient to changing environmental conditions. Future development must therefore play a positive role in both reducing emissions and preparing for the effects of a changing climate.

7.6 West Oxfordshire District Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and has committed to supporting the transition to a net zero carbon future. Tackling climate change and accelerating nature recovery are key priorities for the Council and are reflected throughout this Plan.

7.7 The principal sources of greenhouse gas emissions within West Oxfordshire are associated with transport, buildings and energy use. The location, design and construction of new development therefore have a significant influence on the district's carbon footprint. Reducing energy demand, improving energy efficiency, supporting renewable energy generation and reducing reliance on private car travel are all essential components of achieving net zero emissions.

7.8 The Oxfordshire Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) provides a county-wide pathway for achieving a net zero energy system and identifies the scale of change required across the built environment, transport and energy infrastructure sectors. The LAEP highlights the need for substantial reductions in energy demand, widespread building decarbonisation, increased renewable energy generation, expansion of smart and flexible energy systems, and a significant shift towards sustainable transport.

7.9 Policy CP1 supports these objectives by ensuring that new development minimises energy demand, is fossil fuel free, incorporates renewable energy generation wherever feasible, and is located and designed to support sustainable patterns of movement.

7.10 West Oxfordshire is also vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The district contains extensive river corridors and communities at risk of flooding, whilst higher temperatures and more prolonged periods of drought are likely to place increasing pressure on water resources, public health, biodiversity and infrastructure. Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of these impacts over time.

7.11 The district's natural environment has a critical role to play in climate adaptation. However, habitats are often fragmented, and ecological networks can lack resilience to environmental change. Healthy, connected ecosystems provide a wide range of benefits, including carbon sequestration, flood attenuation, cooling and shading, improved water quality and enhanced biodiversity. Nature-based solutions and green infrastructure therefore form an important part of the district's response to climate change.

7.12 Policy CP1 establishes an overarching framework for ensuring that development contributes towards a net zero and climate-resilient future. The policy seeks to minimise greenhouse gas emissions through energy-efficient design, renewable energy generation and sustainable transport measures, whilst ensuring that development can adapt to future climate risks including flooding, overheating and water scarcity.

7.13 A key principle of the policy is the energy hierarchy of reducing demand before meeting remaining needs through renewable and low-carbon energy sources. Development should therefore seek to minimise both embodied and operational carbon emissions from the outset through site selection, layout, design and construction methods. Where residual emissions cannot reasonably be avoided or addressed on-site, financial contributions to the West Oxfordshire Climate Offsetting Fund will be used to support local carbon reduction and climate mitigation projects.

7.14 The policy also seeks to ensure that development contributes to the wider transformation of the district's energy and transport systems envisaged through the Oxfordshire LAEP. In doing so, it will help support the delivery of net zero ambitions at both the district and county level whilst creating places that are healthier, more resilient and better able to respond to future environmental change.

Policy CP1 – Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change Impacts

Having regard to the nature, scale and location of a proposal, development must contribute to a net zero and climate-resilient future for West Oxfordshire.

Development proposals will be expected to address the following requirements where relevant and proportionate;

1. Greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced by;

a. Achieving net zero operational carbon in new buildings in accordance with Policy DM9 and ensuring the development is fossil fuel free.

b. Minimising embodied carbon, with unavoidable, residual emissions to be offset through financial contributions to the West Oxfordshire Climate Offsetting Fund.

c. Maximising opportunities for renewable energy generation on site.

d. Responding to landform and site-specific environmental conditions by optimising building orientation, massing, and landscaping to minimise energy use and risk of overheating, maximise efficiency, and enhance microclimate benefits.

e. Locating and designing development to reduce reliance on private car use and promote walking, cycling and public transport through prioritising sustainable infrastructure and connectivity in accordance with Policy CP8.

2. Development proposals must demonstrate they are resilient to the impacts of climate change by;

a. Minimising flood risk in accordance with national policy and Policy CP5.

b. Maximising water efficiency in accordance with Policy CP5.

c. Incorporating sustainable drainage systems and natural flood management in accordance with Policy CP5, through the application of green infrastructure and nature-based solutions, to address overheating, water management, and biodiversity decline.

d. Minimising risk of overheating through passive design measures and avoiding reliance on mechanical cooling.

e. Strengthening environmental resilience, particularly within areas of known environmental sensitivity including those identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, locations with a history of flooding and the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) in accordance with Policy SP4.

Proposals for major development must be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement, demonstrating how the requirements of Policy CP1 have been met. Non-major development proposals will be required to provide proportionate supporting information to demonstrate compliance with the policy.

Policy CP2 – Delivering New Homes

7.15 Ensuring that sufficient homes are provided to meet the needs of current and future residents is one of the main functions of the Plan. The planning system plays a key role in supporting the delivery of homes of different sizes, types and tenures in the right locations, helping to create balanced and sustainable communities whilst supporting economic growth and prosperity.

7.16 National planning policy requires local planning authorities to identify and meet housing needs through the preparation of an up-to-date Local Plan. As a starting point, councils are required to assess local housing need using the Government's standard method.

7.17 Application of the standard method indicates a local housing need for West Oxfordshire of 905 homes per year. When applied to the period 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2043, this equates to 16,290 homes.

7.18 Whilst local housing need provides the starting point for plan-making, it does not automatically become the housing requirement. The housing requirement is the amount of housing that the Local Plan seeks to deliver, having regard to local housing need alongside other relevant considerations, including environmental constraints, infrastructure capacity, the spatial strategy and cross-boundary strategic issues. National policy expects local planning authorities to meet identified housing needs wherever possible and to provide clear justification where this is not achievable.

7.19 West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district with a network of market towns and villages that continue to experience significant housing pressures, including affordability challenges. Whilst accommodating growth at the scale required will be challenging and will require significant investment in infrastructure and services, the Council considers that it is appropriate and achievable for the Local Plan to meet West Oxfordshire's identified housing need in full.

Oxford City's Unmet Housing Need

7.20 Housing markets and travel-to-work patterns extend beyond local authority boundaries. West Oxfordshire forms part of the wider Oxfordshire housing market area, within which Oxford acts as a key economic, educational and cultural centre. The ability of Oxford to accommodate its own housing needs is constrained by its tightly drawn administrative boundary and limited opportunities for large-scale development.

7.21 Oxford City Council has confirmed that its assumed housing capacity in the period covered by their emerging Local Plan (2025 – 2045) is 9,041 homes (452 per year). This falls significantly short of Oxford's assessed housing need over the same period which is 21,560 homes (1,078 per year). This results in a substantial 'unmet' housing need of 12,519 homes that cannot be accommodated within the City itself. Addressing this unmet need is a strategic issue that requires cooperation between the Oxfordshire authorities.

7.22 Through ongoing joint working, the Oxfordshire authorities have recognised the need for the rural districts to assist in meeting a proportion of Oxford's unmet housing need. Given its close functional relationship with Oxford and its relative capacity to accommodate sustainable growth, West Oxfordshire has committed to contributing towards this unmet need through this Plan.

7.23 The housing requirement established through Policy CP2 therefore comprises both West Oxfordshire's identified local housing need and a proportionate contribution towards Oxford City's unmet housing need.

7.24 The contribution towards Oxford's unmet housing need has been calculated by applying the overall unmet need on a pro-rata basis for the 18-year period 2025 – 2043 and using the same 18% apportionment figure previously agreed between the Councils as being appropriate for West Oxfordshire. This equates to 2,028 homes, which coupled with West Oxfordshire's own housing need of 16,290, results in an overall housing requirement of 18,318 homes from 2025 – 2043.

Stepped Housing Requirement

7.25 The adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 was based on a housing requirement of approximately 660 homes per year. In contrast, application of the Government's standard method results in a significantly higher local housing need figure of 905 homes per year, representing an increase of around 37%. In addition, this Plan makes provision for a proportion of Oxford City's identified unmet housing need. Consequently, the overall housing requirement to be planned for is substantially greater than that provided for through the adopted Local Plan.

7.26 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance[3] (PPG) recognises that a stepped housing requirement may be appropriate where there is to be a significant change in the level of housing requirement between an emerging and adopted plan, and/or where strategic sites are expected to have a phased delivery profile or are likely to deliver later in the plan period.

7.27 The Council has identified sufficient housing supply to meet the overall housing requirement of 18,318 homes over the period 2025 to 2043 and to provide a reasonable degree of flexibility. However, a significant proportion of this supply is expected to be delivered through strategic urban extensions, new villages and other large-scale strategic allocations. Whilst these locations are capable of delivering substantial numbers of homes over the plan period, they require significant lead-in times associated with masterplanning, infrastructure provision, land assembly, planning approvals and site preparation before housing completions can be achieved at scale.

[3] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-supply-and-delivery

7.28 In these circumstances, the Council considers it appropriate to apply a 'stepped' housing requirement that aligns more closely with the anticipated delivery profile of the Local Plan strategy. This approach reflects the realistic timing of housing delivery, is consistent with national planning guidance, supports a plan-led approach to growth and provides greater certainty for communities, infrastructure providers and the development industry.

7.29 The following stepped requirement is proposed.

Period	Annual Requirement
2025/26 – 2030/31	650 dpa
2031/32 – 2036/37	1,600 dpa
2037/38 – 2042/43	802 dpa

7.30 Without a stepped approach, there would be a significant risk that short-term housing requirements would exceed the realistic delivery capacity of the housing market, particularly given the reliance on strategic sites that will come forward progressively over the plan period. This could increase pressure for less sustainable speculative development and undermine the spatial strategy of the Plan before the planned strategic locations for growth are able to deliver at scale.

Housing Supply and Delivery

7.31 To ensure that the stepped housing requirement can be delivered, the Plan identifies a range of sources of housing supply as reflected in Policy CP2 below. These include:

- Past residential completions for 2025/26
- Large existing commitments[4] (>10 dwellings) at 1st April 2026
- Small existing commitments (<10 dwellings) at 1st April 2026
- Extant site allocations from the adopted Local Plan 2031
- New site allocations from the Local Plan 2043
- New Strategic Locations for Growth from the Local Plan 2043
- Windfall allowance

7.32 Further explanation of each source of supply is outlined below.

Past Residential Completions - 2025/26

7.33 Because the Plan has a base-date of 1st April 2025, any residential completions recorded since then can be counted towards meeting the Plan's overall housing requirement. A total of **582** dwellings were completed from 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026 as reflected in Policy CP2 below.

[4] i.e. sites with planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission subject to a Section 106 legal agreement

Large existing commitments (>10 dwellings) at 1st April 2026

7.34 A further important source of housing supply is those sites which have already secured planning permission or a 'resolution to grant' planning permission subject to completion of a Section 106 legal agreement.

7.35 As of 1st April 2026, existing commitments on larger sites (i.e. capable of accommodating more than 10 dwellings) totalled **2,665** dwellings as shown in Policy CP2.

Small existing commitments (<10 dwellings) at 1st April 2026

7.36 As of 1st April 2026, the total number of dwellings with planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission on smaller sites of less than 10 dwellings was **307** as reflected in Policy CP2.

Extant site allocations from the adopted Local Plan 2031

7.37 The majority of site allocations from the adopted Local Plan 2031 have either been completed or have secured planning permission and are under construction or close to starting.

7.38 There are however a small number of sites which have yet to secure planning permission but are being actively progressed by the landowners/site promoters. These existing allocations will not be superseded by this Plan and so will remain 'extant' for the purposes of decision-making.

7.39 The sites are listed below along with the assumed number of dwellings expected to come forward in the period to 2043. In total, this equates to around 4,375 dwellings as reflected in Policy CP2. Further information on each site and how they are being actively progressed is set out in the relevant Area Strategy and further information on their assumed rate of delivery is set out in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2.

Local Plan 2031 allocation	**Assumed approximate number of dwellings up to 31st March 2043**
North Witney Strategic Development Area	1,250
West Eynsham Strategic Development Area	950
Salt Cross Garden Village	2,125
Woodford Way Car Park, Witney	50
Total	**4,375**

New site allocations – Local Plan 2043

7.40 As set out in the relevant Area Strategies, this Plan identifies nine new site allocations which are sites that have been identified as being suitable in principle for new housing development and cumulatively, have the potential to deliver around 915 new homes.

7.41 The sites are listed below along with the assumed number of dwellings expected to come forward in the period to 2043. Further information on their assumed rate of delivery is set out in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2.

Site Reference	Local Plan 2043 allocation	Assumed number of dwellings up to 31st March 2043
BA2	Land east of Bampton	150
BU3	Land south of Sheep Street, Burford	30
CH2	Land at Jefferson's Piece, Charlbury	30
CH3	Land south of Hydac, Charlbury	40
LH3	Land west of Hanborough Station	300
RA3	Land at Aston	25
RA4	Land at Kingham Station	70
RA5	Land at the Downs Standlake	200
RA6	Land at Rousham Road, Tackley	70
	Total	**915**

New Strategic Locations for Growth (SLG)

7.42 As set out in the relevant Area Strategies, this Plan identifies eight 'Strategic Locations for Growth' or SLGs. These are broad locations illustrated on the Plan's Key Diagram that have been identified as being suitable in principle to accommodate new development of a 'strategic' scale (i.e. more than 300 homes). Because they are large, strategic-scale growth opportunities, the expectation is that they are likely to come forward from Year 6 of the plan period onwards (although this doesn't preclude earlier delivery where possible and subject to compliance with relevant policies of this Plan).

7.43 The eight proposed SLGs are listed in the table below along with the assumed number of dwellings expected to come forward in the period to 2043. Total assumed delivery is anticipated to be 8,350 homes with the majority of these new homes coming forward from 2031/32 onwards as shown in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2.

SLG Reference	Local Plan 2043 SLG	Assumed number of dwellings up to 31st March 2043
CA5	Land West of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)	800
CA6	Land North of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth	700
CA7	Land North-East of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth	2,000
CA8	Land East of Brize Norton Strategic Location for Growth	2,000

WIT5	Land South of Witney Strategic Location for Growth	700
WIT6	Land West of Witney Strategic Location for Growth	700
WIT7	Land North of Burford Road, Witney Strategic Location for Growth	700
CN3	Land North of London Road, Chipping Norton Strategic Location for Growth	750
	Total	**8,350**

Windfall

7.44 Windfall housing sites are those that come forward on sites that are not specifically allocated for development but may nonetheless be suitable and capable of making a useful contribution towards housing land supply.

7.45 It is anticipated that windfall development will continue to play an important role in maintaining housing supply throughout the plan period, particularly within existing settlements, provided proposals accord with national policy and the development management policies of this Plan.

7.46 For the purposes of the assumed overall housing supply, a modest assumption of 150 homes per year from windfall housing sites has been adopted. This has been applied to the 14-year period 1st April 2029 – 31st March 2043 to avoid any 'double counting' of sites which already have planning permission.

7.47 This equates to a total of **2,100** new homes as reflected in Policy CP2 but is a highly conservative estimate when recent past trends are considered and may well be exceeded.

Overall Housing Supply

7.48 Taking account of the above, Policy CP2 is based on an assumed overall housing supply of **19,294** homes in the period 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2043. Set against the housing requirement of 18,318 homes, this represents a modest supply 'buffer' of just over 5%, reflecting the reality that housing delivery can be affected by changing market conditions, infrastructure provision, site-specific constraints and developer build-out rates. Providing a reasonable level of flexibility helps maintain delivery over the plan period and reduces the risk of the housing requirement not being met due to unforeseen delays.

Policy CP2 – Delivering New Homes

Housing Requirement

A total housing requirement of 18,318 new homes will be met over the period 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2043. This comprises:

- 16,290 new homes (905 per annum) to meet West Oxfordshire District Council's identified local housing need in full.

- 2,028 additional homes to assist in meeting a proportion of Oxford City's identified unmet housing need (c. 18%).

For the purposes of monitoring delivery and calculating housing land supply, the housing requirement will be applied on a 'stepped' basis as follows:

Period	Annual Requirement
2025/26 – 2030/31	650 dpa
2031/32 – 2036/37	1,600 dpa
2037/38 – 2042/43	802 dpa

5-Year Housing Land Supply

The Council will maintain and monitor a deliverable supply of housing land sufficient to meet the stepped housing requirement set out above in accordance with national policy.

Housing Supply

The planned level of housing supply over the period 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2043 is 19,294 homes. This allows for meeting a proportion of Oxford's unmet housing need over that period and provides a modest over-supply 'buffer' in relation to West Oxfordshire's own identified housing need to account for changing market conditions, infrastructure delivery, site-specific constraints and variations in build-out rates.

Sources of Housing Supply

The planned level of supply will be met through a combination of past completions, existing commitments, site allocations and windfall as follows:

- Past completions 2025/26 582
- Large existing commitments (>10 dwellings) at 1st April 2026 2,665
- Small existing commitments (<10 dwellings) at 1st April 2026 307
- Extant site allocations (Local Plan 2031) 4,375
- New site allocations (Local Plan 2043) 915
- New Strategic Locations for Growth - SLG (Local Plan 2043) 8,350
- Windfall allowance 2,100
- Total 19,294

Site Allocations and Strategic Locations for Growth (SLG)

Site allocations and Strategic Locations for Growth (SLGs) will ensure that development is strategically focused on key growth locations in accordance with the overall spatial strategy set out in Policy SP2.

Windfall Allowance

A windfall allowance of 150 homes per year from 2029/30 to 2042/43 is factored in as a source of housing supply. Any such windfall proposals will be assessed against national policy, Policy DM18, and other relevant policies of this plan.

Policy CP3 – Supporting Economic Growth and Local Prosperity

7.49 An economic needs assessment (ENA) has been prepared to inform the Plan, reflecting the expectations of the NPPF that planning policies should be informed by proportionate and up-to-date evidence on economic development needs. The primary purpose of the ENA is to help establish a clear economic vision and strategy for West Oxfordshire, based on an understanding of existing and future business needs. The assessment provides the evidence necessary to identify employment land requirements, support sustainable economic growth and productivity, and ensure that the Local Plan is responsive to the needs of the local economy over the plan period.

7.50 West Oxfordshire has a diverse economy. In terms of aligning with national priorities and the UK Industrial Strategy in particular, West Oxfordshire has strengths in critical sectors including defence which may be scaled following the defence infrastructure review, advance manufacturing and life sciences. Tourism is particularly important with the Cotswolds National Landscape and Blenheim Palace being key attractors to visitors. There is also an opportunity for the district to capitalise on core growth sectors, with an existing positive presence of major logistics, aerospace, pharmaceutical, and advanced manufacturing businesses.

7.51 West Oxfordshire is relatively 'self-contained' economically, with some important connections in terms of governance, market characteristics and connectivity to the rest of Oxfordshire, particularly Oxford and Cherwell in terms of commuter flows and sector relationships. The county of Oxfordshire broadly defines the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) that West Oxfordshire sits within. The transport network plays a critical role in supporting economic growth and prosperity in West Oxfordshire and economic and housing development should be directed to locations with existing connections or where connectivity can be enhanced. Poor transport connectivity is a limiting factor on economic growth and prosperity.

7.52 Economic activity rates in the district are high, deprivation low and the population well educated.

7.53 The manufacturing sector is the largest employment sector in West Oxfordshire and the district shows strong growth in the business administration and support services and professional, scientific and technical sectors in terms of job numbers. Conversely, the motor trades, and mining quarrying and utilities sectors show decline in terms of job numbers across the district.

7.54 The predominant land use in West Oxfordshire is agricultural, and the district has a distinct rural nature. The western area of district lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) and the rural economy is an important component of the district's economy more widely.

7.55 Diversification of income streams for farm businesses and estates has become increasingly important. Agricultural premises can host a variety of additional employment-supporting functions beyond those solely related to farming activities, including light industrial activities in workshops, (self) storage, and cafes and food preparation.

7.56 The district has an abundant supply of small, often good quality developments in rural and outlying areas. These clusters are characterised by converted traditional agricultural and industrial buildings and light industrial business typologies. Many are occupied by small and start-up businesses. Farm diversification is a key element of the economy in the district, and rural sites have generally been occupied by the same (typically family-owned) businesses for a long time. The rural economy is linked to tourism more broadly in the district, and there is significant evidence of agricultural clusters being diversified with the opening of cafes or retail units that attract tourists.

7.57 Examples of circular economic practices that could be incorporated into agricultural businesses include water collection and storage, processing and sale of agri-inputs, and increased on-site and cooperative agro-processing, and local market stimulation and access points.

7.58 The evidence indicates that West Oxfordshire benefits from a diverse and resilient economy, characterised by high levels of economic activity, a strong manufacturing base, growing knowledge-intensive sectors, nationally significant defence and aerospace interests, and a thriving rural and visitor economy. While the district is relatively self-contained, it also plays an important role within the wider Oxfordshire Functional Economic Market Area and is well placed to contribute to national and regional economic priorities. To realise these opportunities, continued investment in infrastructure, skills, innovation and modern business premises will be required, alongside measures to address connectivity constraints and support business growth.

7.59 In response, Policy CP3 seeks to support sustainable economic growth and local prosperity by providing a flexible framework that enables the expansion and modernisation of existing businesses, supports emerging and priority sectors, promotes innovation and inward investment, and maintains an adequate supply of employment land and premises. The policy also recognises the importance of the district's rural economy, including agriculture, farm diversification, tourism and local food networks, ensuring that economic growth is distributed across both urban and rural areas and contributes positively to environmental, social and economic objectives.

Policy CP3 – Economic Growth and Local Prosperity

1. Economic Vision

Development proposals will be encouraged where they:

a. Contribute to a diverse, resilient and productive economy, aligned with national industrial priorities, future employment trends and local economic strengths;

b. Support the development and scaling of local businesses and co-operatives that support climate, nature recovery and health related outcomes, through innovation, inward investment, and business growth, particularly within priority sectors;

c. Address barriers to growth including infrastructure constraints, skills gaps, and availability of appropriate premises;

d. Enhance the district's role within the wider Oxfordshire and Oxford - Cambridge economic area; and

e. Are accessible to the strategic road network, particularly for industrial and logistics uses and support sustainable transport opportunities including the provision of EV charging infrastructure.

2. Supporting a modern and flexible economy

Development in the following key sectors will be supported subject to compliance with Policies DM27 – DM32;

- Advanced manufacturing and engineering
- Defence and aerospace
- Digital technology and data-driven industries
- Life sciences
- Logistics and distribution
- The rural economy including agriculture and food networks
- Sustainable tourism, arts and culture supporting the visitor economy
- The green economy

Particular encouragement will be given to proposals that meet identified needs, including developments that:

a. Develop clusters, networks and innovation hubs, including science parks and business campuses, and enable knowledge exchange and collaboration, particularly where co-location benefits are demonstrated;
b. Support the expansion and modernisation of existing strategically important employers and sites;
c. Provide modern, flexible and adaptable employment space for start-ups, SMEs and scale-up businesses;
d. Deliver a range of employment premises, including offices, laboratories, workshops and high-specification industrial space;
e. Support agricultural businesses to incorporate circular economic practices;
f. Enable new working practices, including hybrid and homeworking;
g. Incorporate appropriate digital infrastructure and utilities capacity, including energy provision;
h. Strengthen the foundation and operation of local sustainable food networks; and
i. Accord with an adopted Whole Estate Management Plan that has been endorsed by the Council.

3. Employment and Floorspace Provision (2025 – 2043)

The Council will maintain a flexible and responsive supply of employment land and premises to meet identified needs over the plan period.

Indicative provision includes:

Use Class	Indicative Land Requirement[5]
Class E (Office, R&D, light industrial)	4.5 hectares
Class B2/B8 (Industrial & logistics)	25 hectares

These figures are indicative and not a cap allowing for flexibility in response to market signals, reflect forecast needs and existing commitments and will be regularly monitored and updated.

4. Sources of Employment Provision

Employment provision will be delivered through the following:

a. Existing commitments
b. Site allocations, Strategic Locations for Growth (SLG) and Areas of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO) including:

    i. Salt Cross Garden Village
    ii. Land east of Brize Norton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
    iii. Land west of Witney Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
    iv. Enstone Airfield Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)

c. The intensification, renewal and upgrading of existing employment areas; and
d. Rural employment sites, including farm diversification and small business clusters.

[5] Indicative land requirements have been pro-rated to cover period 2025-2043 based on ENA assessment of land requirements to 2041.

Policy CP4 – Delivering Infrastructure In-step with new development

7.60 The provision of adequate, necessary infrastructure is fundamental to meeting the vision and objectives of the Plan and delivering sustainable development.

7.61 Infrastructure requirements include but are not limited to transport, energy and utilities, green infrastructure, water, social infrastructure and health and social care. Throughout the district the provision of enhanced water and sewage treatment infrastructure is essential if growth is to occur without degrading the ecological status of watercourses further. We will support opportunities for renewable energy provision, as well as ensuring that energy needs at new development are minimised and can be met from renewable sources.

7.62 National policy emphasises the importance of identifying and co-ordinating the provision of infrastructure to deliver sustainable development. This is a key factor in deciding the most appropriate pattern of development, ensuring that future growth is steered towards locations that are well-served by existing infrastructure and/or capable of being well-served in the future.

7.63 At the local level, this is reflected in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision[6] which emphasises the importance of high-quality development, properly supported by necessary infrastructure including excellent digital connectivity. We wish to maintain digital connectivity across the district and support network upgrades and network access to new residential and commercial developments.

7.64 Improving transport links is an essential aspect of achieving a sustainable pattern of growth. Transport corridors are important to ensuring a sustainable pattern of new development can be secured.

7.65 Safeguarding the route of a potential future Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) solution for West Oxfordshire along the A40 corridor (Policy SP5) has a vital role to play in securing a new sustainable transport connection into the heart of West Oxfordshire.

7.66 Ensuring that new development is supported by appropriate investment in supporting infrastructure has been a recurring theme raised by stakeholders through previous consultation, with particular concerns raised around the capacity of local sewage treatment works to accommodate further growth along with the ability of the A40 to absorb additional traffic.

7.67 It is for these reasons that the provision of supporting infrastructure has been identified as a strategically important issue for the new local plan to address. The Council has prepared an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to identify the infrastructure required to support planned growth. The IDP provides an important strategic framework for infrastructure planning across the district and has informed the overall spatial strategy and site allocations/strategic locations for growth within the Plan.

[6] https://www.oxfordshireleaders.org.uk/a-vision-for-oxfordshire

7.68 Infrastructure planning is however an ongoing process, and circumstances may change over the lifetime of the Plan. Infrastructure capacity, service requirements, funding arrangements, delivery responsibilities and regulatory requirements may evolve and for this reason, major development proposals will be expected to prepare a site-specific Infrastructure Delivery Plan or equivalent infrastructure statement. This will ensure that infrastructure requirements are assessed at an appropriate level of detail, reflect the latest available evidence and provider information, and identify any additional infrastructure needs arising from the proposed development together with how and when they will be delivered.

7.69 It is important that infrastructure is not only provided at the right time but that appropriate arrangements are also put in place for its long-term stewardship, management and maintenance. This applies to a wide range of assets including public open space, green infrastructure, sustainable drainage systems, community facilities, renewable and low-carbon energy infrastructure, heat networks and other shared facilities that support sustainable communities.

7.70 There are a number of approaches to the long-term management and maintenance of infrastructure and community assets delivered through new development, including adoption by public authorities, statutory undertakers, community trusts and other appropriate organisations, as well as management through private estate management companies (ManCos).

7.71 In recent years, the use of private estate management companies has become increasingly common, particularly for the maintenance of public open space, green infrastructure, sustainable drainage systems and other shared facilities. Whilst such arrangements can in some circumstances provide an effective mechanism for securing long-term maintenance, concerns have been raised nationally and locally regarding issues of transparency, accountability, affordability and the potential for residents to incur ongoing management charges in addition to Council Tax. Residents often have limited influence over the costs, standards of service and future management of privately managed assets.

7.72 The Council considers that, wherever practicable, infrastructure and community assets that serve a wider public function should be adopted and managed by an appropriate public body, statutory undertaker, community organisation or other suitable body that provides clear accountability and long-term stewardship in the public interest. This approach will help to ensure consistent standards of maintenance, equitable access, and greater certainty for future occupiers.

7.73 Accordingly, the Council's preference is for adoption and management through such arrangements wherever feasible. The use of private estate management companies should only be considered where alternative options have been fully explored and it has been demonstrated that adoption or management by an appropriate public or community body is not practical, viable or capable of being secured. In such circumstances, robust governance, funding and accountability arrangements will be expected to ensure that infrastructure and community assets are effectively managed and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Policy CP4 – Delivering infrastructure in step with new developments

1. **Infrastructure Requirements**

    a. Development proposals must be supported by timely provision of new or enhanced infrastructure necessary to meet the needs arising from the development, due to its individual or cumulative impact, including, but not limited to, energy, transport, utilities, education, healthcare, open space and community facilities.

    b. Necessary infrastructure must be delivered in step with the phasing of development to ensure it is available when required by future occupants or users.

    c. Major[7] development proposals must be supported by a site-specific Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which complements the Council's district-wide IDP. The IDP must:

        i. Be proportionate to the type and scale of development proposed.
        ii. Identify the infrastructure required to support the development.
        iii. Set out the phasing of infrastructure delivery alongside development.
        iv. Identify arrangements for the long-term management and maintenance of on-site infrastructure and community assets including funding arrangements.

2. **Management and Maintenance of On-Site Infrastructure and Community Assets**

    a. Where development provides shared infrastructure such as public open space, green infrastructure, sustainable drainage systems, heat networks and community energy or other community facilities, proposals must demonstrate appropriate arrangements for their long-term management and maintenance. Priority should be given to adoption and management by an appropriate public body, statutory undertaker, community organisation or other suitable body.

3. **Securing Infrastructure Delivery**

    a. Infrastructure provision and long-term management arrangements, including funding and monitoring arrangements will be secured through appropriate mechanisms including the use of planning conditions and planning obligations.

    b. Where necessary, such mechanisms will be used to ensure that development cannot commence or be occupied (depending on the circumstances of the case) until such time as the necessary infrastructure has been secured and programmed for delivery.

[7] ~~Includes major, medium, large, and strategic~~

Policy CP5 – Water Environment

7.74 The water environment is a critical component of West Oxfordshire's natural infrastructure and includes water resources, rivers and watercourses, groundwater, wastewater infrastructure, water quality, aquatic and riparian habitats and flood risk. These issues are closely interconnected and cannot be considered in isolation.

7.75 The primary purpose of Policy CP5 is therefore to take an integrated approach to water management, ensuring that planned growth is supported by sufficient water resources and infrastructure, does not adversely affect water quality or ecological interests, and remains resilient to the impacts of climate change and flooding.

7.76 Development must contribute towards the restoration and long-term resilience of the Evenlode, Windrush and Upper Thames River catchments by delivering measurable improvements in water quality, natural flood management, climate resilience, nature recovery, and public engagement. Proposals must be informed by, and aligned with, relevant catchment partnership priorities.

7.77 West Oxfordshire is located in a serious water stressed area where the current household demand for water is a high proportion of the current effective infall which is available to meet demand. Future household demand for water is likely to be a high proportion of the effective rainfall which is likely to be available to meet demand.

7.78 Based on the forecasts in Thames Water's latest Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) there could be shortfalls in water supply up to 2041 and beyond. Without corrective action, the supply to the district could be less secure which will mean a greater probability that demand restrictions will be required in dry years.

7.79 The total number of dwellings forecast to come forward in West Oxfordshire is higher than those used in Thames Water's WRMP which is likely to exacerbate shortfalls.

7.80 The WRMP has identified and forecasted the effects of design management options on household consumption, non-household consumption and leakage. The options should be sufficient to offset some of the deficits in the development scenarios tested by Thames Water. The demand options will be able to deliver from the first year of implementation, due to shorter lead times and are important across the plan period. However, the need for supply options could increase as more development comes forward over the lifetime of the Plan.

7.81 Given West Oxfordshire's location within an area of serious water stress, reducing water consumption is a key component of sustainable development. The Plan therefore requires new residential development to achieve a water consumption target of no more than 100 litres per person per day.

7.82 This reflects the level previously consulted upon by Government as part of proposed changes to the optional Building Regulations water efficiency standard[8] and is considered an appropriate and achievable response to local water resource constraints. Achieving higher standards of water efficiency will help reduce pressure on water supplies, improve long-term resilience to drought and climate change, and support the sustainable delivery of planned growth.

Wastewater Infrastructure, Water Quality and Environmental Capacity

7.83 The Sewage Treatment Works (STWs) and network serving the district are the most important infrastructural asset with respect to future development in the district. There are challenges at many of the STWs and uncertainty regarding the headroom available to accommodate future growth.

7.84 In terms of environmental capacity, the Environment Agency's catchment data explorer shows that most of the watercourses in the district have declining or poor ecological status and fail with regard to chemical status. This suggests that overall, they are likely to be vulnerable to future growth.

7.85 Future upgrades to the sewer network alongside measures identified in the Thames River Basin Management Plan and Thames Water's DWMP will help but will take time.

Nature Recovery

7.86 West Oxfordshire contains several protected sites and designated habitats that depend on the quality and quantity of water within the wider catchment. Watercourses also form an integral part of the priority nature recovery network identified in the Oxfordshire LNRS. This reinforces the need for an integrated approach to water management that considers water resources, wastewater, water quality, flood risk, ecological impacts value and nature recovery opportunities.

7.87 West Oxfordshire is covered by three river catchments, the Evenlode, Windrush and Upper Thames catchments. Catchment Partnerships have developed Plans for these areas, to restore the rivers to "good ecological status", recover nature and enhance biodiversity, manage flood risk through natural processes, build climate resilience and strengthen community wellbeing.

7.88 Development within each catchment can help meet objectives of the catchment management plans, including nature recovery objectives, through the creation of connected green infrastructure networks that delivers multiple benefits for people and nature.

[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/water-efficiency-standards-a-review-of-building-regulations-2010-part-g2

7.89 The Evenlode Landscape Recovery project is a 20-year, farmer-led environmental initiative spanning 3,100 hectares across the Evenlode, Glyme, and Dorn river catchments. Backed by Defra and local land managers, the project integrates sustainable food production with large-scale habitat restoration, natural flood management, and water quality improvements.

Flood Risk

7.90 West Oxfordshire contains an extensive network of rivers, streams and associated floodplains, including the River Thames and its principal tributaries, the Windrush and Evenlode. These watercourses are important environmental assets but also present significant constraints and considerations for future development. National policy requires a sequential approach to development in areas at risk of flooding and seeks to ensure that development is directed away from areas of highest risk wherever possible.

Effects of Climate Change on Flood Risk

7.91 Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of flood events and place additional pressure on water resources and wastewater infrastructure. The use of sustainable drainage systems, natural flood management measures and multifunctional green infrastructure can help to manage flood risk whilst also delivering wider benefits for biodiversity, water quality, landscape character and climate resilience. Policy CP5 therefore promotes an integrated approach that seeks multiple benefits from water management interventions.

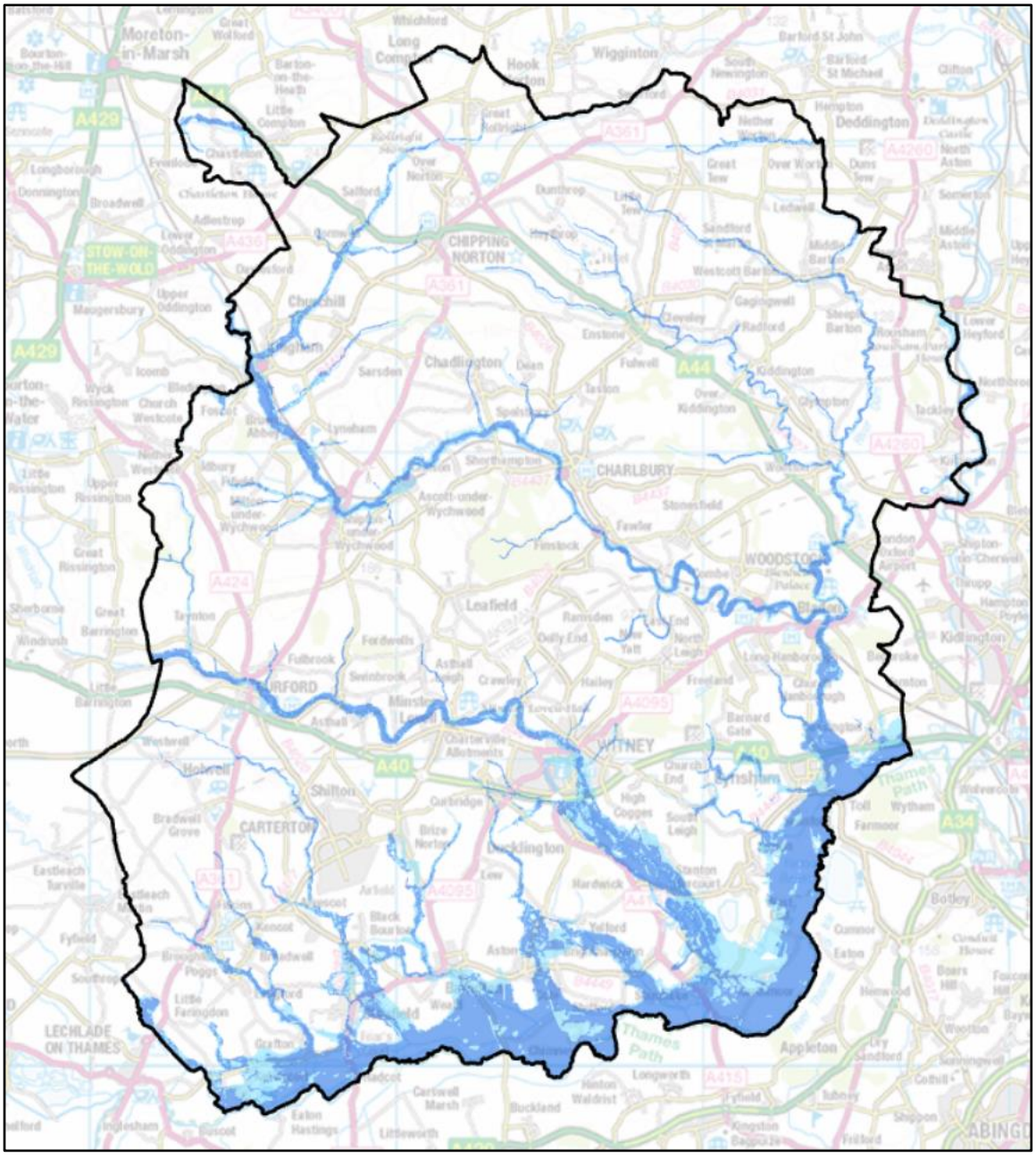

Figure 7.1 – Flood Zones 2 and 3 in West Oxfordshire

Policy CP5 – Water Environment

Sustainable Water Management

Development proposals will be expected to adopt an integrated approach to water management and address the following requirements where they are relevant and proportionate;

1. **Flood Risk**

    a. Risks from all sources of flooding must be managed in accordance with national policy

b. Development proposals must apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location and design of development, taking account of all sources of flood risk and the impacts of climate change.

c. It must be demonstrated that development will be safe for its lifetime, will not increase flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

d. Development proposals must incorporate sustainable drainage systems and, where appropriate, natural flood management measures and multifunctional green infrastructure to manage surface water runoff, improve the ecological status of watercourses and waterbodies, and provide wider environmental benefits in line with priorities identified by river catchment partnerships.

e. Proposals must include appropriate arrangements for the long-term management and maintenance of flood risk and drainage infrastructure in accordance with CP4

2. Nature Recovery

Development proposals affecting, adjacent to, or with the potential to influence watercourses, waterbodies and their associated riparian environments must, where relevant and proportionate to the type, scale and location of the proposal:

a. Protect and, where possible, enhance the ecological value, natural functioning and connectivity of watercourses, waterbodies and associated habitats.

b. Conserve and support the recovery of aquatic and riparian habitats, species and ecological networks, including through the restoration of natural river processes and habitat complexity where opportunities arise.

c. Avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the ecological, hydrological and geomorphological functioning of the water environment and demonstrate that any necessary infrastructure or interventions including culverts and artificial lighting, have been designed sensitively to support nature recovery in accordance with best practice guidance.

d. Contribute positively towards nature recovery and ecological connectivity in accordance with Policy CP10.

3. **Water Supply and Efficiency**

a. All development must provide necessary water supply infrastructure and ensure water supply security. Any off-site upgrades to water infrastructure needed to meet this requirement must be delivered prior to occupation.

b. All development must promote water conservation;

i. Proposals for new dwellings must demonstrate how they can meet a target of no more than 100 litres per person per day, through water-efficient fixtures, recycling systems, and greywater or rainwater reuse.

ii. Commercial development must achieve at least the BREEAM "excellent" standard for the "Wat 01" water category or equivalent.

4. **Wastewater Management and Water Quality**

    a. Development that increases wastewater discharges must be supported by necessary wastewater infrastructure and ensure that wastewater is managed sustainably, without adverse ecological impact on water bodies or ecosystems.

    b. Proposals for development must demonstrate that appropriate sewerage and wastewater infrastructure, treatment and discharge arrangements, water quality safeguards, and pollution prevention measures will be provided in accordance with Policy CP4.

5. **Connection to Public Sewers and Non-Mains Systems**

    a. In accordance with national guidance, all development must prioritise connection to the public foul sewer. Only where it can be robustly demonstrated that it is not feasible or reasonable to do so, will an alternative private treatment arrangement be considered, subject to Environment Agency support.

    b. Any proposals for non-mains systems must provide sufficient information to demonstrate environmental safety, operational arrangements, and compliance with permits and Building Regulations where they would have a land use impact.

6. **Grampian Conditions and Phasing**

    a. Where evidence of insufficient water supply or foul water capacity exists, the Council will impose Grampian-style conditions to ensure that delivery of necessary infrastructure is phased in accordance with Policy CP4.

Proposals for major development must be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement, demonstrating how the requirements of Policy CP5 have been met. Non-major development proposals will be required to provide proportionate supporting information to demonstrate compliance with the policy.

Policy CP6 – Design Excellence and Placemaking

7.92 Achieving high quality design is a fundamental component of sustainable development and contributes positively to making places better for people, nature and the climate. Design is not simply about the appearance of buildings; it encompasses the arrangement of streets, spaces and buildings, movement and connectivity, landscape, biodiversity, environmental performance, accessibility, safety, adaptability and long-term stewardship.

7.93 The National Model Design Code and National Design Guide establish a clear framework for achieving well-designed places. They promote a context-led approach to design based around an understanding of the physical, social, environmental and historic characteristics of a place. The ten characteristics of well-designed places identified in national guidance – context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan – provide a useful framework for considering the quality of development proposals.

7.94 The Council supports a design-led approach to development in which site constraints and opportunities are understood from the outset and used to shape proposals. This approach helps to ensure that development responds positively to its surroundings, reinforces local distinctiveness and creates places that are attractive, functional and enduring. High-quality design can also contribute to wider objectives including climate resilience, healthier lifestyles, and social inclusion.

7.95 The West Oxfordshire Design Guide provides locally specific guidance on achieving high-quality design across the district and remains an important material consideration in the preparation and assessment of development proposals. The Design Guide should be read alongside national policy and guidance and any subsequent updates or replacement documents. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how relevant guidance has informed the evolution of their proposals from the earliest stages of design.

7.96 In addition to district-wide guidance, there are a range of locally distinctive design considerations that may apply to particular sites and settlements, including Neighbourhood Plans, Village Design Statements, Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, and the Oxfordshire Street Design Guide. These documents provide important evidence regarding local character, settlement form, movement patterns, heritage significance and public realm design, and should be taken into account where relevant.

7.97 The Government's draft Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance[9] emphasises the importance of effective community engagement, multidisciplinary working and the use of design tools and assessment processes to secure better outcomes. In line with this approach, the Council expects design to be an iterative process informed by evidence, engagement and testing rather than a retrospective justification of a predetermined scheme.

7.98 Design and Access Statements play an important role in demonstrating how proposals have evolved in response to site context, policy requirements and design guidance. Statements

[9] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/design-and-placemaking-planning-practice-guidance/design-and-placemaking-planning-practice-guidance

should be proportionate to the scale and complexity of development proposed but should clearly explain the design rationale, key design principles and how high-quality design outcomes have been achieved.

7.99 Independent design review can be a valuable tool in improving the quality of significant, complex or sensitive development proposals. Early engagement with a recognised design review process can help identify opportunities for improvement, resolve design issues and provide confidence that proposals have been subject to robust and objective scrutiny. The Council will therefore require design review for proposals where the scale, prominence, sensitivity or potential impact of development justifies this approach.

7.100 The Council recognises that achieving design excellence is an ongoing process rather than a single assessment at the planning application stage. Applicants are therefore encouraged to engage with the Council, local communities, infrastructure providers and other stakeholders at an early stage to ensure that proposals are informed by a comprehensive understanding of place and can contribute positively to the character, quality and sustainability of the district.

Policy CP6 - Design Excellence and Placemaking

1. Key design principles

All development proposals must;

a. Demonstrate a clear understanding of the context of the site and locality, responding to local character, landscape and settlement patterns.

b. Deliver high-quality design that is both sustainable and locally distinctive.

c. Conserve and/or enhance the built and natural environment and character of the district

d. Contribute to the creation of attractive and vibrant places that are both functional, flexible and enduring.

e. Be informed by, and demonstrably aligned with:

i. the West Oxfordshire Design Guide;
ii. where applicable, Neighbourhood Plan policies, Village Design Guides, Conservation Area Character Appraisals and the Oxfordshire Street Design Guide.
iii. National policy and guidance including the Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance, and any successor guidance.

2. Design Statements and Evidence

Proposals must be supported by a proportionate Design and Access Statement that clearly explains:

a. how the proposed design responds to site context and locality;
b. how relevant design guidance and policies have informed the proposal and how these are complied with; and

c. how the scheme delivers high-quality, sustainable and inclusive design outcomes.

3. Design Review

For complex or sensitive development proposals, the Council will require applicants to undergo a process of independent design review at an early stage in the design process.

Policy CP7 – Healthy Place Shaping

7.101 Planning policies and decisions should aim to create places which offer opportunities for social interaction and meetings between members of the community through the delivery of mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages; safe and accessible environments which include social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs; a sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities; and access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation.

7.102 Design and use of the built and natural environments are major determinants of health and well-being.

7.103 Health is influenced by a wide range of social, economic and environmental factors, many of which are shaped by planning decisions. The location, layout and design of development can affect physical activity levels, access to services and facilities, social interaction, community cohesion, air quality, access to nature, opportunities for recreation, perceptions of safety and overall quality of life. As a result, planning has an important role to play in supporting healthier communities and reducing health inequalities.

7.104 A healthy place is one that supports people of all ages and abilities to live active, independent and fulfilling lives. This includes providing safe and attractive opportunities for walking, wheeling and cycling, ensuring convenient access to employment, education, healthcare, shops and community facilities, and creating high-quality public spaces that encourage social interaction and community activity.

7.105 Access to green infrastructure, open space and the natural environment is particularly important in supporting physical and mental health and wellbeing. Parks, natural green spaces, sports facilities, play areas, community growing spaces, street trees and other forms of green infrastructure can provide opportunities for exercise, relaxation, social interaction, biodiversity enhancement and climate resilience. Integrating these features into the design of development can deliver multiple benefits for people and nature.

7.106 The Oxfordshire Healthy Place Shaping Principles provide a locally relevant framework for embedding health and wellbeing considerations into planning and development decisions. They promote an integrated approach that recognises the relationship between place, health, climate resilience, environmental quality and social outcomes. Development proposals should demonstrate how these principles have informed the design and evolution of schemes from the earliest stages.

7.107 Creating healthy places also requires consideration of inclusion and accessibility. Development should be designed to meet the needs of different groups within society, including children and young people, older people, disabled people and those with protected characteristics. Inclusive design can help ensure that places are welcoming, safe and accessible to all and support social participation and independent living.

7.108 The Council supports a design-led approach to healthy place shaping. Applicants are encouraged to have regard to the Building for a Healthy Life toolkit when preparing development proposals. Building for a Healthy Life provides a nationally recognised framework for assessing the design quality of new residential development and promotes well-connected neighbourhoods, access to services and facilities, high-quality public spaces, integration with nature, active lifestyles and a strong sense of place. Whilst not a policy requirement, the toolkit can provide a useful means of demonstrating how proposals have responded positively to the healthy place shaping objectives of this Plan.

7.109 Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) are an important tool in understanding the likely effects of development on health and wellbeing and identifying opportunities to maximise positive outcomes and minimise adverse impacts. The Council will require HIAs for major development proposals to ensure that health considerations are integrated into the planning and design process. Assessments should be proportionate to the scale and nature of development proposed and prepared in accordance with the Oxfordshire Health Impact Assessment Toolkit[10] or any successor guidance.

7.110 The creation of healthy places is most effective when considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development design. Effective engagement with local communities, public health bodies, NHS organisations, service providers, transport authorities and community organisations can help identify local needs and priorities and ensure that development proposals respond appropriately to them. For larger and strategic developments, early collaboration is particularly important to ensure that supporting infrastructure, services and facilities are planned and delivered in a coordinated manner.

7.111 Policy CP7 therefore seeks to embed health and wellbeing considerations throughout the planning process and ensure that development contributes positively to the creation of healthy, inclusive, resilient and sustainable communities across the district.

[10] https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/64bfc2696e3a5a80360d3c60/64fba0200a3ae14953ff6b3b_210126-Oxon-HIA-Toolkit-FINAL.pdf

Policy CP7 - Healthy Place Shaping

1. Healthy Place Shaping Principles

Development must be inclusive and accessible to all, supporting health, wellbeing and social interaction, with measures aligned to the Oxfordshire Healthy Place Shaping Principles.

Development proposals will be expected to address the following requirements where they are relevant and proportionate;

a. Creating safe, attractive and well-connected places that encourage walking, cycling and active travel;
b. Providing access to high-quality green and open spaces for relaxation, recreation, play, sport and food growing opportunities for all age groups and abilities;
c. Ensuring good access to healthcare, education, employment, community facilities, local services and public transport;
d. Delivering inclusive and adaptable public spaces and buildings that are accessible to all users;
e. Integrating green infrastructure, urban greening and nature-based solutions to support physical and mental wellbeing;
f. Promoting social interaction, sense of place, community cohesion and opportunities for informal gathering; and
g. Reducing inequalities in access to services, facilities and healthy living opportunities.

Applicants are encouraged to have regard to the Building for a Healthy Life toolkit, where relevant, as a means of informing design quality and demonstrating how the healthy place shaping principles have been considered in the preparation of development proposals.

2. Health Impact Assessments

Health Impact assessments (HIA) will be required for major development proposals. HIAs must follow the Oxfordshire HIA Toolkit (or successor guidance).

3. Engagement and Community Wellbeing

In addition to the above, proposals for large scale and strategic development must also demonstrate how they have been informed by effective early engagement with local communities, public health bodies, NHS partners, service providers, transport authorities and community organisations.

Policy CP8 – Sustainable Transport

7.112 The Spatial Strategy for the Local Plan includes a focus of growth along key strategic corridors including the A40 and A44. The rationale for focusing development in these areas is that they are currently comparatively well connected by public transport, particularly bus services, helping to ensure that new development within these corridors is accessible by a range of transport modes. There are also a number of key settlements within these corridors including Carterton, Witney, Eynsham and Woodstock, with direct road and public transport links to Oxford.

7.113 These settlements have some of the highest concentrations of services, facilities and employment opportunities within the district and provide the easiest and most convenient access to day-to-day needs. Concentrating a significant proportion of development in such locations helps reduce the need to travel and creates greater opportunities for walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport use.

7.114 A key objective of the Local Plan is to promote a more sustainable and integrated transport system. This includes reducing reliance on private car travel where reasonable alternatives exist, encouraging a shift towards active travel and public transport, and supporting the transition to low-emission forms of transport.

7.115 Policy CP8 establishes a transport hierarchy which prioritises walking, wheeling and cycling first, followed by public transport, shared and low-emission vehicles, and finally private motor vehicles. Development proposals will be expected to reflect this hierarchy in a manner that is proportionate to their scale, nature and location.

7.116 The Plan seeks to align growth with existing and planned infrastructure, including transport, schools and utilities. Notwithstanding the strategic focus of development towards the most accessible parts of the district, significant investment in transport will be required to accommodate planned growth and support sustainable travel choices. New development will therefore be expected to contribute towards necessary transport infrastructure and mitigation measures where appropriate.

7.117 The emphasis of the Plan is to encourage modal shift and enable more journeys to be undertaken by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. This approach supports wider objectives relating to climate change, air quality, public health and reducing congestion. However, as a predominantly rural district, it is recognised that many communities are relatively isolated from the public transport network and that some settlements do not have sufficient services and facilities to meet day-to-day needs locally. The application of Policy CP8 will therefore be proportionate and context-specific, recognising that opportunities to reduce car dependency vary considerably across the district.

7.118 In urban areas and locations well-served by public transport, development will be expected to maximise opportunities for active travel and public transport use through site layout, connectivity and design. Streets and spaces should be designed to be safe, attractive and accessible for all users, including people with disabilities and reduced mobility, whilst ensuring that parking and servicing requirements do not dominate the public realm.

7.119 Much of the proposed growth within the Plan is located within already constrained transport corridors. The A40 experiences significant congestion at peak times, affecting journey times, economic productivity and quality of life. The A40 will remain an important corridor for travel to work movements both within and beyond the district. Measures have been identified to improve public transport connectivity through the corridor including enhanced bus services, park and ride provision and the Science Transit proposals which provide opportunities for improved public transport priority and connectivity with Oxford.

7.120 The scale of growth proposed could place increasing pressure on existing transport infrastructure and services. It is therefore important that development supports the delivery of both current and future transport improvements. To help future-proof transport provision beyond the Plan period, land is safeguarded for a potential future Mass Rapid Transit corridor within the A40 corridor. Policy CP8 supports the protection and delivery of strategic transport infrastructure, including public transport enhancements, active travel networks, mobility hubs, rail improvements and targeted highway interventions where required to support sustainable growth.

7.121 Access to housing, employment, education, healthcare and other essential services is an important factor in addressing rural deprivation and social exclusion. Improving transport connectivity, particularly sustainable transport connectivity, can help improve access to opportunities and services, support economic participation and reduce inequalities. The Plan therefore seeks to improve connectivity across the district whilst recognising the differing needs and circumstances of urban and rural communities.

7.122 Transport assessments, transport statements and travel plans are important tools in understanding the transport implications of development proposals and identifying appropriate mitigation measures. They help ensure that development is supported by suitable access arrangements, does not compromise highway safety and contributes towards achieving sustainable transport objectives. The Council will expect such information to be proportionate to the scale and likely impacts of development proposed.

7.123 The transition to low-emission transport will play an increasingly important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality. Development proposals should therefore support the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and other measures that facilitate the transition to cleaner and more sustainable forms of transport.

Policy CP8 – Sustainable and Integrated Transport

1. Prioritising Sustainable Movement

Development must prioritise transport modes in the following hierarchy, where appropriate to the location and nature of development:

a. Walking, wheeling and cycling
b. Public transport
c. Shared and low-emission vehicles
d. Private motor vehicles

Where relevant and practical, development should:

e. Provide safe, direct and attractive active travel connections within sites and to surrounding areas.
f. Maximise access to high-quality public transport, including through layout and density.
g. Support a modal shift towards low-carbon travel.

2. Integration, Accessibility and Design

a. All development must provide safe and suitable access for all users, including people with disabilities and reduced mobility, and integrate transport into high-quality design.

b. Streets and spaces should be safe, attractive and designed to minimise conflict between users, while parking and servicing must be appropriately incorporated so that they do not dominate the public realm. Development should also provide electric vehicle charging infrastructure and support the transition to low-emission transport.

3. Assessing Transport Impacts

Development proposals must:

a. Be supported by a proportionate transport assessment or statement and travel plan where they have significant transport implications
b. Demonstrate that residual cumulative impacts are not severe and that highway safety is not compromised;
c. Identify and secure necessary mitigation and infrastructure improvements, prioritising sustainable transport measures.
d. Where necessary, and applicable, be accompanied by a Construction Traffic Management Plan to demonstrate how proposals will mitigate safety and amenity risks during construction.

4. Strategic Transport Infrastructure

Development should, where appropriate, support, contribute to and help deliver strategic transport infrastructure identified in this Plan and supporting evidence.

Strategic transport schemes include, but are not limited to:

a. Strategic public transport and rail improvements, including mass rapid transit corridors, enhanced bus connectivity and rail upgrades;
b. Active travel networks, including strategic walking and cycling routes and Movement and Place Plans;
c. Integrated transport hubs and mobility infrastructure;
d. Targeted highway improvements required to support sustainable growth;
e. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

5. Urban and Rural Context

The application of this policy will be proportionate and context-specific, recognising differences between urban and rural areas.

In urban areas, development should fully maximise opportunities for walking, wheeling cycling and public transport.

In rural areas, development will not be required to meet the same modal expectations where genuine sustainable transport choices cannot reasonably be achieved but must demonstrate that opportunities have been maximised.

Policy CP9 – Historic Environment

7.124 West Oxfordshire has a rich and distinctive historic environment that shapes the identity, character, and sense of place of its towns, villages, and landscapes. From the globally significant Blenheim Palace to the district's numerous Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, and archaeological sites, the historic environment is a key part of what makes West Oxfordshire unique.

7.125 The historic environment is an irreplaceable resource and its conservation is a key component of achieving sustainable development. National planning policy recognises the importance of conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed by current and future generations. It also recognises that well-managed change can help to sustain and enhance the historic environment, support economic vitality and secure the long-term future of heritage assets.

7.126 The purpose of Policy CP9 is therefore to ensure that development proposals conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of West Oxfordshire's historic environment. The policy adopts a proportionate and significance-led approach that reflects national policy and guidance. It seeks to ensure that the historic, architectural, archaeological and cultural value of heritage assets, together with the contribution made by their settings, is fully understood and addressed when considering development proposals.

7.127 The policy gives substantial weight to the conservation of designated heritage assets, including Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens and nationally important archaeological sites and monuments.

7.128 It also recognises the contribution made by non-designated heritage assets, historic landscapes and townscapes, which collectively help to define the special character of West Oxfordshire. The policy supports development that secures the conservation, enhancement and viable long-term use of heritage assets, including those identified as being at risk, and encourages opportunities for heritage-led regeneration, improved public access, interpretation and understanding.

7.129 In accordance with national policy, proposals that would result in harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset will be required to demonstrate clear and convincing justification. Any harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, with the highest level of protection afforded to assets of the greatest significance. Where development affects archaeological remains or other heritage assets, appropriate investigation, recording and dissemination of findings may be required.

7.130 Through this approach, Policy CP9 seeks to balance the conservation of West Oxfordshire's exceptional historic environment with the need to accommodate sustainable growth and change.

Policy CP9 – Historic Environment

1. Historic Environment

a. All development proposals in West Oxfordshire must conserve and / or enhance the significance of the district's historic environment, landscape, buildings and structures and their settings.

b. Development proposals including applications for advertisement consent must be appropriate and sensitive to the significance of any heritage assets impacted.

c. Opportunities for heritage-led regeneration, improved public access, interpretation and appreciation of West Oxfordshire's historic environment will be supported.

d. Development that secures the conservation, enhancement and viable long-term use of heritage assets, including those identified as being at risk will generally be supported.

2. Designated Heritage Assets

In determining planning applications, substantial weight will be given to conserving and enhancing the significance of designated heritage assets. This includes:

a. The Outstanding Universal Value and significance of Blenheim Palace and Park, designated as a World Heritage Site (WHS), in accordance with its WHS Management Plan.

b. The architectural and historic interest of Listed Buildings, particularly their character, fabric and settings.

c. The character and/or appearance of the District's Conservation Areas and their settings, considering the contribution of their surroundings to their historical and visual significance having regard to any relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisals.

d. The archaeological and historic interest of nationally important monuments (whether Scheduled or not), with emphasis on their fabric and settings.

e. The cultural, architectural, and historic interest of Registered Parks and Gardens and their settings.

3. Non-Designated Heritage Assets

a. Where a proposal affects a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement will be undertaken, having regard to the significance of the asset, and the scale of any harm or loss, in accordance with national policy.

4. Historic Landscape and Townscape

Proposals should respond positively to the historic character of West Oxfordshire's towns, villages and rural landscapes, including the historic environment of the Cotswolds National Landscape, the Upper Thames landscape, historic parklands, traditional field patterns and the historic vernacular of the district.

In determining applications that affect the historic character of the landscape or townscape, particular attention will be paid to the following

a. the age, distinctiveness, rarity, sensitivity and capacity of the particular historic landscape or townscape characteristics affected
b. the extent to which key historic features contribute to the area's character, such as hedgerows, watercourses and woodland;
c. the degree to which the form and layout of the development will respect and respond to the preexisting historic character (including e.g. street and building layouts)
d. the extent to which the form, scale, massing, density, height, layout, landscaping, use, alignment and external appearance of the development conserves or enhances the special historic character of its surroundings.

Policy CP10 – Nature Recovery

7.131 Policy CP10 seeks to ensure that all new development in West Oxfordshire actively contributes to the protection, enhancement, and recovery of the district's natural environment, encompassing habitats, species and other ecological features.

7.132 It aims to align development with the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)[11] by promoting biodiversity, creating ecological networks, restoring and creating habitats, increasing species populations and improving the quality of habitats that are proposed for statutory Biodiversity Net Gain.

7.133 The policy also emphasises the need for development to integrate nature-based solutions and sustainable land use practices, ensuring that the district's ecosystems remain resilient and capable of supporting biodiversity for future generations in light of climate change.

7.134 West Oxfordshire's landscapes are key to defining the character of the district. The protected landscapes of the Cotswolds, extensive country estates, parkland, rivers, hedgerows, woodlands and predominantly agricultural rural environment define the character of the district.

[11] https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy-lnrs

7.135 A strategic, core policy that prioritises the protection, enhancement, and recovery of the district's natural environment is essential for several reasons. Firstly, West Oxfordshire is home to diverse ecosystems including woodlands, wetlands, and grasslands, that provide important benefits for people, including carbon storage, flood alleviation, air and water quality, recreation and access to nature that supports good health and well-being.

7.136 Secondly, national planning policy requires local planning policies and decisions to contribute to and enhance the local natural environment including valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity or geological value.

7.137 The backdrop to this is that nature is degraded and has declined significantly in recent decades, including our rivers and streams, woodlands and hedgerows, for example, through pollution, direct loss and inappropriate management. Access to nature has been recognised as fundamental to support the good health and well-being of communities.

7.138 It is therefore necessary to restore and recover nature to build resilience to climate change. Healthy habitats are essential for providing those important ecosystem services.

7.139 Development pressures can place ecosystems at risk of degradation, potentially diminishing their ability to support biodiversity, mitigate climate change, and maintain the area's overall environmental health.

7.140 Policy CP10 will help to ensure that future development in the district is in harmony with nature and contributes positively to the natural environment. In line with national policy, it will also ensure that new development provides measurable gains for biodiversity, including maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure and contributing to natural capital at catchment or landscape scales across West Oxfordshire.

7.141 Developments must contribute towards potential measures in the LNRS within the site or within the surrounding area/landscape either through their BNG proposals or other biodiversity enhancements.

7.142 Developments will be required to safeguard habitats and designated sites included within the 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' (aka the "core zone") and contribute towards the potential measures identified in the 'Areas That Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity' (aka the opportunity area or "recovery zone") as shown on the 'local habitat map'. These two areas taken together are referred to as the 'priority nature recovery network' and currently cover 40% of Oxfordshire.

7.143 Developments sites that are within the areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity (the 'recovery zone') must contribute towards the potential measures that are identified or propose alternative measures that are more appropriate to the site with a clear justification provided in the associated report (e.g. Ecological Impact Assessment).

7.144 Development sites that are contiguous with the priority nature recovery network should also consider whether habitats and/or features for species can be incorporated into their BNG

proposals or other biodiversity enhancements – this is essential for enhancing ecological networks and expanding the area of semi-natural habitat that is available, which is a key aim of the LNRS.

7.145 It is important to note that the local habitat map doesn't include all land that has potential for habitat creation and/or enhancement as it is based on a model where the aim was to map at least 30% of the county for nature recovery. The unmapped areas can still contribute, particularly where they are contiguous with the priority network, where connections between mapped areas can be improved and where stepping stones can be created. This feeds into the principles of "More, Bigger, Better and Joined" that were coined after the publication of the Lawton Report in 2010.

7.146 The wider environmental benefits arising from an improved approach to BNG and contributions to nature recovery include carbon sequestration, reduced flood risk, access to nature for recreation, improved physical and mental health and wellbeing, and good air and water quality. There are various techniques for measuring natural capital, including the Environmental Benefits from Nature (EBN) tool which integrates with the statutory biodiversity metric that is used to measure BNG outcomes. This tool also works alongside Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework[12].

[12] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/EBNT.aspx

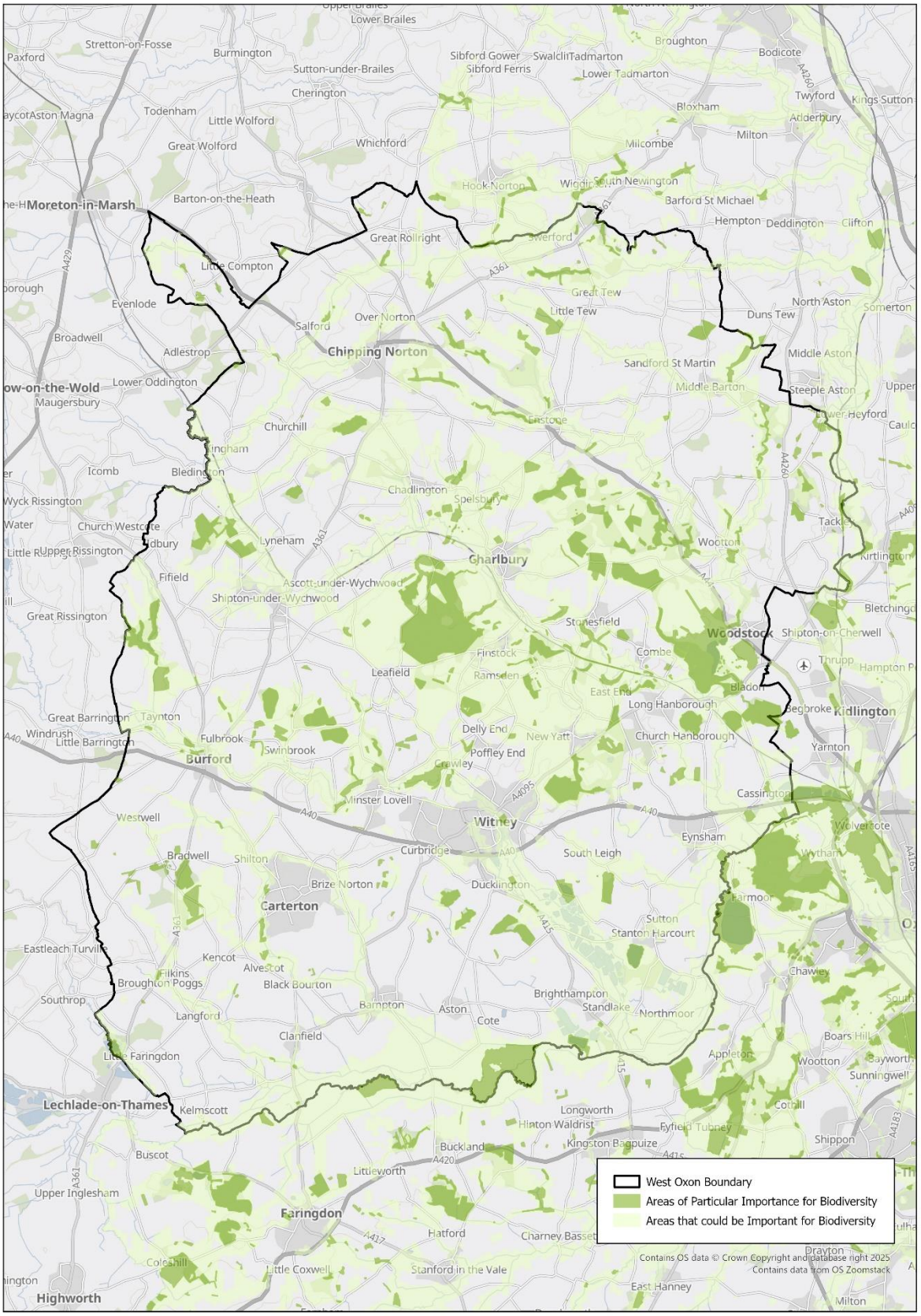

Figure 7.2 – Local Nature Recovery Strategy in West Oxfordshire

Policy CP10 – Nature Recovery

Having regard to the nature, scale and location of a proposal, development must contribute to nature recovery in West Oxfordshire.

Development proposals will be expected to address the following requirements where they are relevant and proportionate;

a. Make a positive contribution toward the protection, enhancement and recovery of the natural environment including priority habitats and species.

b. Maximise, opportunities to establish and/or restore ecological corridors and networks that re-connect fragmented habitats, within the development and beyond.

c. Implement high-quality biodiversity net gains (BNG) that contribute meaningfully towards nature recovery. prioritising the best outcomes for nature in balance with the need to make sure these are realistic and achievable in light of the expected anthropogenic pressures that would result from the development.

d. Demonstrate how wider environmental benefits such as carbon sequestration, natural flood management, recreation and food production etc. will be provided as part of an integrated and holistic design process for Green Infrastructure provision.

e. Ensure sustainable management practices such as ongoing maintenance, monitoring, and adaptive management, to ensure long-term benefits for biodiversity and ecosystem health are secured.

Integration with the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

2. Development proposals must be aligned with and contribute to delivery of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Scheme (LNRS). Proposals must:

    a. Safeguard existing areas of particular importance for biodiversity (Core Zone).

    b. Maximise opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the recovery zone

    c. Expand and improve existing and create new ecological networks by creating and restoring natural habitats and improving connectivity for species.

    d. Ensure proposals for BNG, green infrastructure and sustainable design are informed by the potential measures identified in the LNRS

    e. Where appropriate, reflect the results of collaboration with local conservation groups, landowners, and stakeholders.

Ecological Impact Assessment

Proposals for development where there is potential for ecological loss, deterioration or harm, will be required to prepare and submit an Ecological Impact Assessment in accordance with best practice guidance.

8. Area Strategies

8.1 This section of the Plan comprises 11 area strategies, explaining in detail what is expected to happen and where in each area in the period up to 2043, including priority locations for future growth and supporting infrastructure.

8.2 The 11 area strategies include:

- Carterton Area Strategy
- Witney Area Strategy
- Chipping Norton Area Strategy
- Bampton Area Strategy
- Burford Area Strategy
- Charlbury Area Strategy
- Eynsham Area Strategy
- Long Hanborough Area Strategy
- Woodstock Area Strategy
- Salt Cross Area Strategy
- Rural Areas Strategy

8.3 The purpose of the area strategies is to drill down into more detail and set out what 'good growth' will look like for each area. The strategies have been drafted in response to previous consultation feedback, the Plan's supporting evidence base and other relevant material considerations.

8.4 With the exception of Salt Cross, each area strategy consists of a short 'profile' of the area in 2026, a 'statement of ambition' setting out key priorities for the area in the period up to 2043 and an overall strategy which seeks to capture those ambitions and priorities in the form of a single area-wide policy.

8.5 Where relevant, other locally specific policies are included for each area, including in relation to Town Centres[13] and in relation to proposed locations for future growth.

8.6 Development at Salt Cross will be guided by the Salt Cross Area Action Plan (AAP) which was formally adopted in February 2026. The Salt Cross Area Strategy therefore provides an update on the AAP and progress with the current outline planning application that has been submitted for the site by Grosvenor Developments Ltd.

[13] Carterton, Witney, Chipping Norton, Woodstock and Burford

8.1 Carterton Area Strategy

The Carterton Area Today

8.1.1 The Carterton Area, for the purposes of the Carterton Area Strategy is defined as the town of Carterton and its neighbouring parishes including Alvescot, Black Bourton, Brize Norton and Shilton. The extent of this area is shown on Figure 8.1 below.

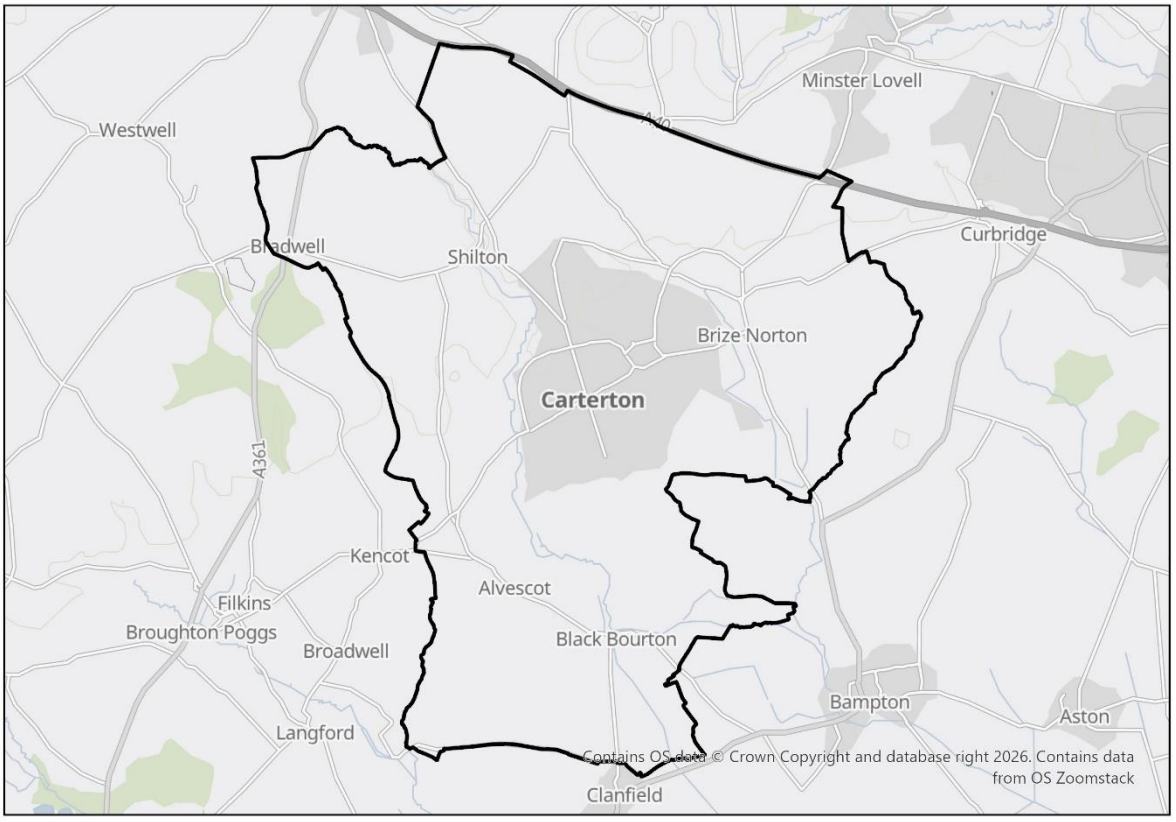

Figure 8.1 – Geographic Extent of the Carterton Area Strategy

8.1.2 The Carterton Area comprises the town of Carterton together with the adjoining parishes of Brize Norton, Shilton, Alvescot and Black Bourton. Home to around 20,000 people, it is one of the most significant and distinctive parts of West Oxfordshire, centred on the district's second largest town and the nationally important RAF Brize Norton, the UK's principal air transport and air-to-air refuelling base.

8.1.3 Over the last two decades the area has experienced substantial growth, particularly in Carterton and Brize Norton where major developments such as Shilton Park and Brize Meadows have delivered new homes, employment opportunities, community facilities and supporting infrastructure. Whilst growth has helped to meet housing needs and strengthen the area's role within the district, maintaining the separate identity and character of surrounding villages and preventing coalescence remains an important consideration for the future while ensuring that new development assists in necessary place making improvements to the town itself.

8.1.4 Carterton has evolved from its origins as a settlement of smallholdings into a modern and growing town with a strong military connection and an increasingly diverse community. Housing remains relatively affordable compared with many parts of Oxfordshire, making the area attractive to service families, first-time buyers and working households. The regeneration of older MOD housing areas, particularly the REEMA estates, presents a significant opportunity to improve housing quality, increase density in sustainable locations and enhance the appearance of the town.

8.1.5 The area benefits from a wide range of services and facilities, including schools, healthcare provision, community facilities, retail centres and a strong sports and leisure offer. Carterton Leisure Centre, the Country Park, sports pitches, recreational spaces and an active network of clubs and organisations make an important contribution to health and wellbeing.

8.1.6 However, growing demand is placing increasing pressure on existing facilities. There is a recognised need for investment in sports infrastructure, including improved football facilities, additional pitch provision and modern all-weather 3G facilities to support current and future demand from organisations such as local football clubs, which has significant ambitions for future growth and expansion, as well as the wider community. Demand for education and healthcare infrastructure is also expected to increase as the area continues to grow.

8.1.7 Carterton town centre performs an important role as a service hub for the surrounding area and benefits from a concentration of retail, leisure and community facilities. However, it continues to underperform relative to the size of its catchment and there is an excellent opportunity to strengthen its role by improving the range and quality of shopping, leisure, cultural and food and drink uses, creating a more attractive and vibrant destination for residents and visitors.

8.1.8 The local economy is dominated by RAF Brize Norton, which supports thousands of military, civilian and contractor jobs and plays a vital role in the local and national economy. The wider area also contains established employment locations including Ventura Park and West Oxfordshire Business Park. Despite this, the area has historically experienced a shortage of local employment opportunities relative to its workforce, resulting in significant levels of out-commuting, particularly to Witney, Oxford and beyond. Increasing economic self-containment through the provision of additional employment land, business growth opportunities and investment in higher-value sectors remains a key challenge and opportunity.

8.1.9 Transport and connectivity are important issues for the area. Whilst Carterton benefits from reasonable bus services to Witney and Oxford and has a relatively compact urban form that supports walking and cycling, there is no rail connection and road access to the strategic highway network remains constrained. Longstanding aspirations to improve connectivity, including enhanced links to the A40 corridor, improved active travel routes and longer-term Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) options, have the potential to support economic growth, improve access to jobs and services and reduce reliance on private car travel.

8.1.10 The area also benefits from a varied and attractive natural environment. Open countryside, rolling farmland, the Shill Brook corridor, mature trees, green infrastructure networks and proximity to the Cotswolds National Landscape all contribute to local character and quality of life. The Shill Brook in particular forms an important landscape, biodiversity and recreational asset and is identified as a key component of the area's nature recovery network. Alongside these environmental assets, parts of the area are affected by flood risk associated with the Shill Brook and other watercourses, highlighting the importance of sustainable drainage and climate resilience measures.

8.1.11 The surrounding villages each make a distinct contribution to the character of the area. Brize Norton has experienced significant growth in recent years whilst retaining its historic core and strong sense of community. Alvescot and Shilton remain smaller rural settlements with rich historic character, attractive landscapes and limited but valued local facilities. Together they help provide a transition between the urban area of Carterton and the wider rural landscape. Protecting their existing character and identity, limiting the sprawl of Carterton into its rural hinterland whilst accommodating future strategic-scale growth is therefore a key consideration for the Plan.

8.1.12 Looking ahead, the Carterton Area is well placed to play an increasingly important role within West Oxfordshire in line with the overall Spatial Strategy (Policy SP2). Continued investment in housing, including through urban renewal, new and enhanced employment opportunities, town centre improvement, sports and community infrastructure, sustainable transport and environmental enhancement will be essential to creating a more self-sustaining, connected and resilient place whilst maintaining the distinctive qualities that make the area an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Statement of Ambition - The Carterton Area in 2043

8.1.13 The Carterton Area will play a central role in delivering sustainable growth and prosperity in West Oxfordshire over the period to 2043.

8.1.14 As the district's second largest settlement and one of its most sustainable locations for future development, Carterton will continue to evolve as a thriving service, employment and community hub, supporting the needs of both existing and future residents whilst strengthening its relationship with the surrounding parishes of Brize Norton, Shilton and Alvescot.

8.1.15 Growth will be carefully planned and coordinated across the wider area, combining the regeneration and renewal of existing neighbourhoods within Carterton, including older military housing areas, with the delivery of well-designed new villages on the town's rural fringe. New development will create distinctive places with a strong sense of identity, supported by homes and jobs. Development will be linked to both proposed and existing settlements by high-quality footpath and cycle networks through areas of open countryside so as to enable easy access to the services, facilities and infrastructure needed to enable communities to thrive.

8.1.16 Whilst accommodating significant growth, development will be planned in a way that respects the character and setting of neighbouring villages, protects important environmental assets and maintains the separate identity of individual settlements.

8.1.17 A key ambition for the area is to create a more balanced and self-sustaining community. Building on the strategic importance of RAF Brize Norton and the area's skilled workforce, Carterton will strengthen its role as a focus for employment, innovation and enterprise.

8.1.18 Investment in employment opportunities, business growth and inward investment will help diversify the local economy, reduce levels of out-commuting and support long-term economic resilience. At the same time, Carterton town centre will be revitalised as an attractive civic, cultural and commercial destination, offering an enhanced range of retail, leisure, community and cultural facilities that better reflect the role and scale of the town. It should provide a growing range of public services, accessible to existing and new surrounding communities.

8.1.19 The Carterton Area will be a place where healthy and active lifestyles are supported through high-quality environments, accessible services and strong community infrastructure. Investment in healthcare, education, community facilities, sports and leisure provision will ensure that growth is matched by the infrastructure required to support a growing population. Building on the area's strong sporting tradition, opportunities will be taken to enhance indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, including the provision of a new 'sports hub' for the town comprising modern sports pitches and all-weather facilities to meet existing and future demand and support the continued success of local clubs and organisations.

8.1.20 The area will benefit from a comprehensive and integrated approach to infrastructure planning. Communities will be connected by high-quality walking, wheeling and cycling routes, improved public transport services and enhanced digital infrastructure, making it easier for people to access jobs, education, services and leisure opportunities while reducing reliance on private car travel. Strategic transport improvements, including enhanced connections to the wider Oxfordshire area and the A40 corridor, will support sustainable growth and improve the area's accessibility and economic competitiveness.

8.1.21 Green infrastructure will form a defining element of the area's future character and identity. A network of green spaces, landscape corridors and biodiversity assets, including the Shill Brook corridor and the countryside surrounding the new settlements, will be protected, enhanced and connected to provide benefits for nature, recreation, health and climate resilience. These green assets will help shape the pattern of development, provide clear separation between settlements and contribute to the area's distinctive sense of place. This approach will include those green and open spaces within areas that are allocated for future development, seeking appropriate community-led 'greenwhile uses' until construction begins.

8.1.22 Through a combination of regeneration, carefully planned growth, infrastructure investment and environmental enhancement, the Carterton Area will become a more prosperous, connected, healthy and resilient place, making a significant contribution to the long-term economic, social and environmental success of West Oxfordshire.

Strategic Development Framework for the Carterton Area

8.1.23 Building on the area profile and statement of ambition above, Policy CA1 provides a framework for managing growth across Carterton and the surrounding parishes of Brize Norton, Shilton, Alvescot and Black Bourton to 2043.

8.1.24 The framework recognises Carterton's role as one of the district's principal settlements and the primary focus for housing, employment and infrastructure growth. It seeks to ensure that development is planned comprehensively and holistically and is delivered alongside the infrastructure, services and environmental enhancements necessary to support sustainable communities.

8.1.25 The framework also seeks to strengthen Carterton's role as a service, employment, leisure and community hub, support economic diversification and regeneration, improve connectivity, protect the identity of surrounding villages and enhance the area's valued natural and historic environment.

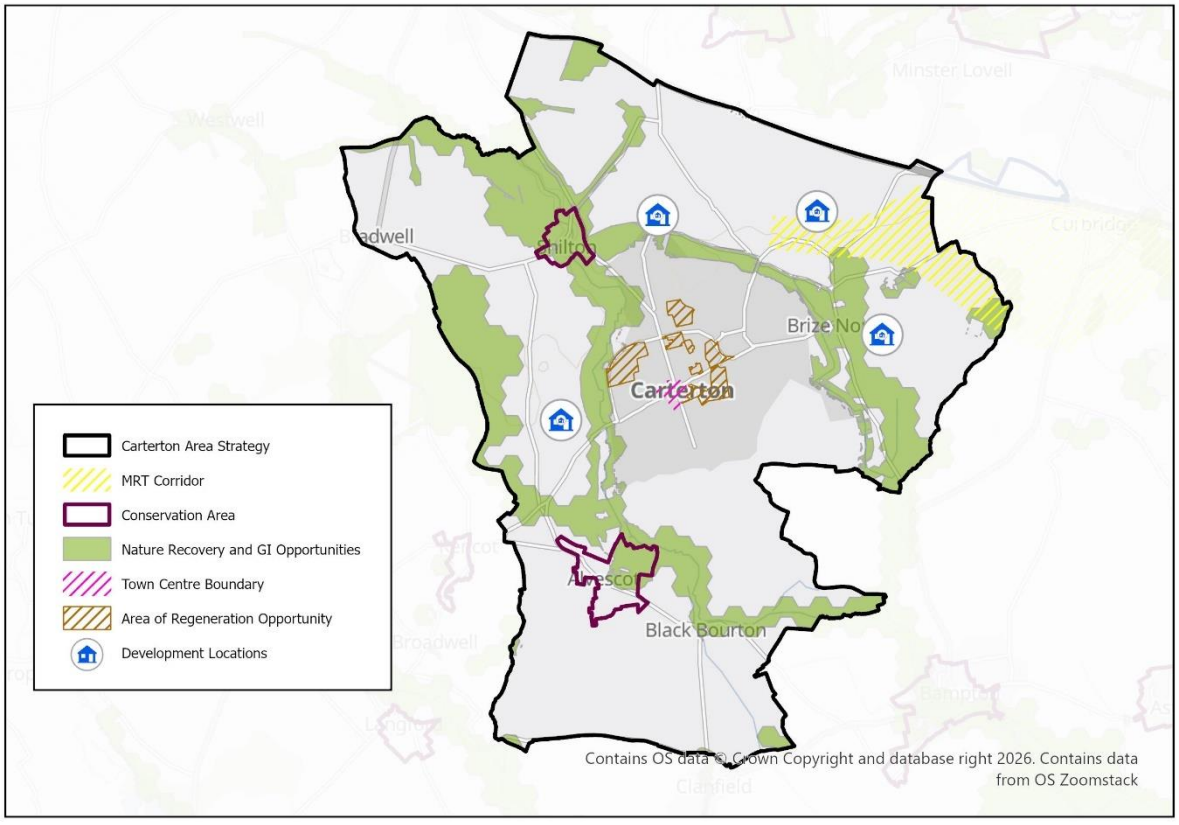

Figure 8.2 – Carterton Strategic Development Framework

8.1.26 The Council will work proactively with landowners, developers, the Ministry of Defence, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, infrastructure providers, local communities and other partners to secure the coordinated delivery of development and infrastructure in accordance with this framework.

Policy CA1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Carterton Area

Development proposals within the Carterton Area will be supported where they contribute positively towards the delivery of the following objectives, having regard to their scale, nature and location:

1. **Supporting a strong and resilient economy**

    a. Reinforcing Carterton's role as a key service, employment and commercial centre through investment in employment opportunities, business growth, skills development and economic diversification;

    b. Supporting the vitality, viability and attractiveness of Carterton town centre through an enhanced retail, leisure, cultural, community and food and drink offer, including opportunities for mixed-use development and regeneration;

    c. Protecting and enhancing employment land and premises and supporting new employment opportunities, particularly in sectors that complement RAF Brize Norton, advanced engineering, logistics, low-carbon industries, digital technologies and sustainable food production and distribution;

    d. Supporting the continued operation, resilience and long-term future of RAF Brize Norton and recognising its strategic importance to the local economy and community.

2. **Delivering sustainable and infrastructure-led growth**

    a. Prioritising the efficient use of land within the existing built-up area through regeneration, redevelopment of previously developed land, infill development and the comprehensive renewal of poor-quality or underutilised MOD housing stock where appropriate;

    b. Delivering strategic-scale development through comprehensively planned and well-connected new communities that complement Carterton and the surrounding villages of Brize Norton, Shilton, Alvescot and Black Bourton, whilst maintaining their separate identities and avoiding coalescence;

    c. Providing a balanced mix of housing types, tenures and sizes, including affordable, accessible and adaptable homes that meet identified housing needs and that also meet the needs of the travelling communities;

    d. Ensuring that development is supported by the timely and co-ordinated provision of infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to meet the needs arising from growth.

3. **Protecting and enhancing the environment and landscape setting**

    a. Safeguarding the identity, setting and character of Carterton and surrounding villages;

b. Protecting, enhancing and connecting existing and proposed green infrastructure assets, including the Shill Brook corridor, the Kilkenny Lane Country Park and other public open spaces, biodiversity assets as well as the wider countryside;

c. Delivering high-quality green infrastructure, accessible natural green space, biodiversity enhancement, community growing opportunities and multifunctional open space as an integral part of development;

d. Conserving and enhancing landscape character, important views and environmental assets that contribute to the distinctiveness of the area.

4. Improving connectivity and supporting climate resilience

a. Promoting patterns of development that reduce the need to travel and support sustainable lifestyles;

b. Delivering improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling networks and enhancing access to employment areas, schools, community facilities, RAF Brize Norton and the town centre;

c. Supporting improvements to public transport, mobility hubs, mass rapid transit initiatives and other measures that improve connectivity within the Carterton Area and along the A40 corridor;

d. Supporting high standards of sustainable design, energy efficiency, climate resilience and the transition to a low-carbon future.

5. Creating healthy, inclusive and connected communities

a. Supporting the provision and enhancement of education, healthcare, sports, leisure, recreation, community and cultural facilities to meet the needs of existing and future residents;

b. Enhancing opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles through the provision of high-quality public realm, open space, recreation facilities and active travel infrastructure;

c. Supporting investment in sports and leisure infrastructure, including the creation of a new 'sports hub' for the local area, comprising sports pitches, all-weather playing surfaces and associated facilities;

d. Delivering safe, attractive and inclusive neighbourhoods that promote social interaction, sense of place, community cohesion, health and wellbeing;

e. Supporting the regeneration of underutilised land and buildings through comprehensive, design-led approaches that improve the quality and attractiveness of the built environment whilst meeting the needs of local residents.

Carterton Town Centre

8.1.27 Carterton Town Centre is the principal centre serving the town and surrounding rural communities and performs an important role within West Oxfordshire's network of centres. Located around the junction of Burford Road, Black Bourton Road, Alvescot Road and Brize Norton Road, it provides a focus for shopping, services, employment, leisure, community facilities and public transport. As the second largest town in the district and a key focus for future growth, the town centre has an increasingly important role to play in meeting the needs of existing and future residents, businesses and visitors.

8.1.28 The town centre benefits from a strong convenience retail offer, anchored by major food stores and supported by a range of independent businesses, service providers, community facilities and public services. It serves a wide catchment area, including surrounding villages and RAF Brize Norton, and benefits from relatively low vacancy levels compared with many town centres nationally. The centre therefore performs an important day-to-day role and remains a valued local destination for shopping, services and community activity.

8.1.29 Unlike many of West Oxfordshire's historic market towns, Carterton developed relatively recently and does not possess a traditional high street or historic core. Whilst this presents challenges in terms of character, identity and visitor appeal, it also provides opportunities. The town centre contains a number of underutilised sites and spaces capable of accommodating regeneration, redevelopment and public realm improvements. Its relatively modern layout and physical capacity provide scope to introduce a broader range of uses and create a more attractive, distinctive and vibrant town centre environment.

8.1.30 Despite its important role, the town centre currently underperforms relative to the size of its population and catchment. Whilst convenience shopping is well represented, the range of comparison retailing, leisure, food and drink, cultural and evening economy uses remains relatively limited. As a result, many residents continue to travel elsewhere for shopping, entertainment and leisure activities. There is therefore an opportunity to strengthen Carterton's role as a destination and create a more diverse and resilient town centre offer.

8.1.31 The significant growth planned within the wider Carterton Area presents a major opportunity to support the continued evolution of the town centre. New investment can help create a stronger civic, commercial and community focus, improve the quality of public spaces, support local businesses and provide a wider range of services, facilities and activities.

8.1.32 Through a combination of regeneration, public realm enhancement and diversification of uses, Carterton Town Centre has the potential to become a more attractive, vibrant and distinctive heart of the town, better reflecting its role as one of West Oxfordshire's principal settlements.

Key Priorities

8.1.33 Key priorities for Carterton Town Centre include:

- Strengthening the vitality and viability of the town centre through a broader mix of retail, leisure, food and drink, cultural, community and health uses;
- Supporting a stronger evening economy and increasing activity throughout the day and evening;
- Improving the quality of the public realm, including Market Square, the central crossroads and surrounding streets, to create a more attractive and welcoming environment;
- Introducing additional greenery, urban greening and public spaces that encourage people to spend time in the town centre;
- Supporting the regeneration and redevelopment of opportunity sites and underutilised land through high-quality mixed-use development;
- Improving accessibility, legibility and connectivity, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users;
- Strengthening links between the town centre, surrounding neighbourhoods, the Recreation Ground and other community assets;
- Supporting local businesses, entrepreneurship and flexible forms of commercial space including through raising the profile of the town and attracting new investment; and
- Reinforcing Carterton's distinctive identity, including its civic and military heritage, whilst creating a modern and attractive centre fit for a growing population.

A Strategy for Carterton Town Centre

8.1.34 Building on the Strategic Development Framework for the Carterton Area (Policy CA1) the purpose of Policy CA2 is to support the transformation of Carterton Town Centre into a more attractive, vibrant and resilient destination that better serves the needs of residents, businesses, visitors and the wider community.

8.1.35 The policy seeks to encourage investment, diversification and regeneration whilst enhancing the quality of the built environment and public realm. It supports a town centre that is active throughout the day and evening, promotes sustainable movement, provides opportunities for business growth and community activity, and acts as a focal point for the continued growth and evolution of the town and surrounding parishes.

8.1.36 Given the scale of growth proposed in the Carterton Area, the Council will support opportunities for the expansion of the town centre boundary where this would help to strengthen its role, improve connectivity and deliver a broader range of town centre uses in accordance with the strategy set out in Policy CA2.

Policy CA2 – Carterton Town Centre

1. Development proposals in Carterton Town Centre (as defined on the Policies Map) will be supported where they deliver high-quality placemaking; a more attractive, greener and better-connected public realm; and a broad, resilient mix of uses that strengthens vitality throughout the day and into the evening.

2. The Council will support development proposals that contribute to the regeneration, diversification and enhancement of Carterton Town Centre, including proposals that:

    a. Strengthen the vitality and viability of the town centre, through:

        i. diversification of the retail, leisure, cultural, food and drink, community, health and civic offer to broaden the town centre's appeal and support activity throughout the day and into the evening.

        ii. well-designed mixed-use development, including upper-floor workspace and appropriate residential opportunities above ground floor levels, where this supports vitality and does not undermine active ground-floor uses.

        iii. flexible formats such as co-working hubs, incubator spaces, pop-ups, community hubs and youth facilities, including meanwhile and temporary uses where appropriate.

    b. Promote sustainable patterns of development, making effective use of key redevelopment and infill sites, or well-designed mixed-use schemes that provide active frontages, strong pedestrian/cycle connections and a more coherent urban grain that integrates with the existing town centre.

    c. Enhance placemaking, the public realm and green infrastructure, with particular focus on the central crossroads, Market Square and main streets, through:

        i. creating a coherent, attractive and accessible public realm with uncluttered streetscapes, high-quality materials, lighting, seating and other street furniture that encourages social interaction and dwell time.

        ii. introducing more greenery, street trees and other urban greening, including 'green avenue' planting where appropriate, to soften the hard environment and improve comfort, shade and biodiversity.

        iii. activating and better connecting key public spaces, including the Recreation Ground, Market Square and surrounding civic spaces through safer, more direct and legible walking and cycling routes and through community-led events, markets, festivals and public art.

    d. Improve accessibility, legibility and connectivity to, from and within the town centre, prioritising walkability and cycling, through:

        i. enhancing pedestrian and cycle movement within and to/from the town centre, including safer routes, improved crossings, enhanced lighting and signage and better integration of active travel routes.

ii. supporting the implementation of a local mobility hub with integrated public transport, active travel facilities, information/wayfinding and inclusive access.

iii. delivering secure cycle parking, electric vehicle charging points and sufficient, well-located car parking, while exploring opportunities to rationalise and make best use of space, including multi-functional parking areas that can support events and flexible markets where appropriate.

e. Support a vibrant, inclusive and adaptable town centre economy, through:

i. providing flexible, affordable and/or temporary space to support start-ups, small businesses, local enterprise and creative industries.

ii. providing premises suitable for cafés, restaurants and other evening economy uses, in a manner that safeguards residential amenity and supports a safe and welcoming town centre environment.

f. Protect and reinforce the character and identity of the town centre, through:

i. maintaining continuity of built frontages to create a strong sense of place.

ii. celebrating Carterton's civic and military heritage through interpretation, signage and public realm features.

iii. ensuring new development responds positively to the local context and contributes to a cohesive townscape.

3. The Council will work in partnership with Carterton Town Council, the RAF, local businesses, applicants, landowners and community groups to deliver town centre improvements and community activation, including:

a. improvement works to the central crossroads and key routes and spaces for all modes of travel, such as public realm enhancements to Market Square and main streets.

b. place-marketing initiatives, branding, events and coordinated campaigns that position Carterton as a distinctive and welcoming destination.

c. delivery of new signage, wayfinding, orientation and interpretation features that improve legibility and celebrate the town's civic and military heritage.

4. Where necessary and related in scale and kind, development proposals will be expected to contribute towards improvements to Carterton Town Centre including, but not limited to, the delivery of public realm and infrastructure enhancements, active travel, green infrastructure, wayfinding and public space improvements.

RAF Brize Norton

8.1.37 RAF Brize Norton is the Royal Air Force's principal air transport and air-to-air refuelling station and is one of the United Kingdom's most strategically important defence assets. The station serves as the main operating base for the RAF's strategic and tactical air mobility fleet, supporting military operations, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, peacekeeping missions and the movement of personnel and equipment worldwide.

8.1.38 The base is a major employer within West Oxfordshire and the wider sub-region, supporting thousands of military personnel, civilian employees and contractors. Its presence generates significant economic activity through defence-related industries, logistics, engineering, training and local supply chains. RAF Brize Norton also contributes to the vitality of surrounding communities through demand for housing, services, education and community facilities.

8.1.39 National planning policy recognises the importance of maintaining effective defence infrastructure and safeguarding nationally significant installations. Local planning authorities are required to take account of the needs of defence and national security and to ensure that development does not prejudice the operational capability of military facilities.

8.1.40 RAF Brize Norton is recognised as infrastructure of national importance and its safeguarding requirements are therefore a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the surrounding area.

8.1.41 The operational effectiveness of RAF Brize Norton depends not only on activities within the station boundary but also on the characteristics of the surrounding area. Certain forms of development can affect aircraft operations, flight safety, radar and communications systems, security requirements and the long-term resilience of the base. Development proposals therefore need to take account of Ministry of Defence safeguarding requirements and demonstrate that they will not compromise operational capability.

8.1.42 Aircraft operations associated with the station can generate noise impacts over a wide area. It is important that new development is appropriately located and designed to ensure that future occupants are not exposed to unacceptable levels of aircraft noise. Equally, new development should not give rise to unreasonable restrictions on the continued operation of the station or constrain future operational requirements.

8.1.43 RAF Brize Norton is also an important economic asset. The station supports a substantial defence, aviation and logistics cluster and provides opportunities for local employment, skills development and business growth. Development that supports the station's economic role, strengthens supply chains, improves infrastructure and enhances connectivity can contribute positively to the local economy while reinforcing the long-term sustainability of the base.

8.1.44 This policy seeks to provide a balanced framework that safeguards the operational effectiveness, safety and resilience of RAF Brize Norton while supporting sustainable growth and investment. It seeks to ensure that development is compatible with the station's strategic role, protects national defence interests and maximises opportunities for economic and community benefits associated with its continued presence in West Oxfordshire.

Policy CA3 - RAF Brize Norton

1. **Strategic Role**

    a. Development proposals will be supported where they sustain or enhance the operational effectiveness, resilience, and log-term role of RAF Brize Norton as a nationally significant military installation.

2. **Safeguarding Operational Capability**

    a. Where relevant and appropriate, development proposals must have regard to the importance of avoiding an unacceptable degree of impact on:

        i. Aircraft operations, including take-off, landing, and manoeuvring.
        ii. Airspace safeguarding and technical infrastructure (including radar, communications, and navigation systems).
        iii. Flight safety, including risks arising from lighting, building height, or bird strike.
        iv. Security and resilience of the base.

    b. Proposals that would generate uses or features likely to attract birds, create lighting glare, or otherwise interfere with aviation operations will be resisted unless suitable mitigation is secured.

    c. Planning applications within relevant zones must be supported by proportionate technical evidence and will be subject to consultation with the Ministry of Defence and other relevant bodies.

3. **Noise and Amenity**

    a. Development proposals within areas affected by aircraft noise must:

        i. Be compatible with the noise environment.
        ii. Incorporate appropriate noise attenuation and design measures.
        iii. Avoid introducing noise-sensitive uses in locations where adverse impacts cannot be adequately mitigated.

    b. Proposals should not prejudice the continued lawful operation of the base by placing unreasonable restrictions on its activities.

4. **Supporting the Local Economy**

    a. Development proposals that support the economic role of the base and its supply chain will be supported, including:

        i. Employment uses linked to defence, aviation, logistics, and engineering.
        ii. Training and skills development opportunities.
        iii. Infrastructure that enhances connectivity and operational efficiency.

5. **Community and Infrastructure**

    a. Proposals should, where appropriate:

i. Support the needs of service personnel, civilian staff, and their families, including housing, guest accommodation, services, and community facilities within the base and beyond as appropriate.
ii. Ensure impacts on local infrastructure are appropriately mitigated.

Priority Growth Locations

8.1.45 A key component of the Carterton Area Strategy is to provide clarity on where future growth and investment will be focused over the plan period to 2043. The scale of development proposed for the Carterton Area reflects its role as one of the most sustainable locations in West Oxfordshire for accommodating growth and its importance as a key service, employment and community centre.

8.1.46 The strategy seeks to ensure that growth is delivered in a coordinated and infrastructure-led manner that supports the continued evolution of Carterton whilst protecting the character and identity of surrounding villages and enhancing the area's environmental assets.

8.1.47 Future development will contribute towards the delivery of new homes, employment opportunities, infrastructure, community facilities, green infrastructure and sustainable transport improvements, helping to create a more self-sustaining, prosperous and resilient place.

8.1.48 The priority growth locations identified below are based on three main components:

- Major existing commitments of 10+ homes and 1,000 sqm+ commercial floorspace;
- MOD Housing Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)
- Strategic Locations for Growth (SLG)

8.1.49 Major existing commitments are sites that as of 1st April 2026, have planning permission or a resolution to grant planning permission for more than 10 homes or 1,000 sqm of commercial floorspace. These are effectively already in the development 'pipeline' and are expected to make an important contribution towards meeting local and wider housing, employment and infrastructure needs. They are included below for information with the residential permissions reflected in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2.

8.1.50 The MOD Housing Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO) reflects the 'brownfield first' commitment of the Plan's overall Spatial Strategy (Policy SP2) and the Carterton Strategic Development Framework (Policy CA1). It seeks to positively encourage the further regeneration and renewal of other areas of older, poor quality MOD housing beyond that which already has planning permission and in keeping with the Defence Housing Strategy (2025).

8.1.51 The Strategic Locations for Growth (SLG) comprise four broad locations which are illustrated on the Plan's Key Diagram and have been identified as being suitable areas within which to accommodate strategic-scale housing and employment growth in the period up to 2043 and, in some instances, potentially beyond.

Major Existing Planning Commitments (10 or more homes)

8.1.52 Major existing commitments with planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission in the Carterton Area as of 1st April 2026, include the following:

- 350 Dwellings – Land north of Kilkenny Country Park
- 265 dwellings – REEMA North
- 82 dwellings – REEMA central
- 99 Dwellings – Brize Meadow

8.1.53 The most significant of these include land north of Kilkenny Lane, which effectively represents a first phase of development at CA6, Strategic Location for Growth to the north of Carterton in Brize Norton Parish along with the REEMA North and Central site close to Carterton Town Centre.

8.1.54 Brize Meadow is a sustainable urban extension of Carterton to the east of Monahan Way, within Brize Norton Parish. The site was first identified as a draft allocation through the preparation of the adopted Local Plan 2031 but went on to secure planning permission for 700 homes before the plan was adopted. Since then, a further 99 homes have secured planning permission bringing the total to just under 800 homes.

8.1.55 Construction is well advanced with 122 homes still to complete as of 1st April 2026. As reflected in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2, these are expected to all be completed by 2027/28.

8.1.56 The REEMA North and Central site is allocated in the adopted Local Plan 2031 for the provision of around 300 new homes.

8.1.57 The REEMA Central site has recently secured a resolution to grant outline planning permission for 82 dwellings.

8.1.58 To the north of Upavon Way, the REEMA North site now has full planning permission for 265 dwellings which will comprise a mixture of accommodation for service families linked to RAF Brize Norton and open-market housing. Notably, the MOD has committed to these homes being built to zero-carbon standards.

8.1.59 As reflected in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2, all of the permitted units at REEMA North and Central (347 in total) are expected to be completed within the next five years.

MOD Housing Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)

8.1.60 The York Road Estate, REEMA West, REEMA Central and REEMA South comprise approximately 46.4 hectares of previously developed land within Carterton and are occupied predominantly by Service Family Accommodation (SFA) associated with RAF Brize Norton.

8.1.61 Together, the sites contain around 860 dwellings at an average density of approximately 18.5 dwellings per hectare. Much of the housing reflects historic Ministry of Defence requirements and includes relatively low-density development that presents opportunities for renewal and more efficient use of land.

8.1.62 The successful redevelopment of REEMA Central and the approved redevelopment of REEMA North (265 dwellings on 9.37 hectares) demonstrate how estate renewal can deliver modern, energy-efficient accommodation whilst supporting the ongoing operational needs of RAF Brize Norton.

8.1.63 The MOD's Defence Housing Strategy 2025[14] sets out a long-term programme to modernise the defence housing estate and recognises opportunities for defence land to contribute towards wider housing delivery where operational requirements are maintained. Consistent with this approach, the Carterton MOD Housing Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO) establishes a positive policy framework to support future redevelopment without allocating the sites for a specific form or scale of development.

8.1.64 Located within the built-up area of Carterton, the estates are well served by existing services, facilities, employment, schools and public transport. Redevelopment therefore offers the opportunity to make more effective use of previously developed land, support the vitality of the town and provide enhanced community facilities, green infrastructure and other supporting infrastructure where appropriate.

8.1.65 Redevelopment proposals should optimise the use of land through appropriate increases in density whilst delivering high-quality design, attractive public realm, biodiversity enhancements and opportunities for walking, wheeling and cycling. Development should also support the transition to a low-carbon future by delivering highly energy-efficient homes, incorporating renewable and low-carbon energy where appropriate, and seeking to achieve net zero operational carbon standards, reflecting the approach established through the redevelopment of REEMA North.

8.1.66 Estate renewal also provides an opportunity to diversify Carterton's housing stock whilst continuing to meet the accommodation needs of service personnel and their families. Proposals should provide a suitable range of dwelling sizes, types and tenures that support sustainable, balanced and inclusive communities.

[14] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-defence-housing-strategy-2025

8.1.67 Based on the current extent of developed land, there is potential over the longer term to accommodate a significantly greater number of homes whilst continuing to meet Ministry of Defence requirements. By way of illustration, redevelopment at an average density of around 30 dwellings per hectare across the four estates could accommodate in the order of 1,400 dwellings. This could enable the retention or reprovision of approximately 870 Service Family Accommodation units, as currently anticipated by the Ministry of Defence, whilst also creating capacity for around 530 additional homes to help meet wider housing needs.

8.1.68 These figures are indicative only and do not represent a site allocation, development target or cap on development. The scale, form and mix of future development will be determined through masterplanning, detailed design, infrastructure capacity and the operational requirements of RAF Brize Norton.

8.1.69 Given the national importance of RAF Brize Norton, the Council will work positively with the Ministry of Defence, Defence Infrastructure Organisation and other stakeholders to support estate renewal that maintains operational effectiveness whilst delivering wider social, economic and environmental benefits for Carterton.

8.1.70 A comprehensive Defence Estate Renewal Framework, or equivalent masterplanning approach, will be supported to provide a coordinated long-term vision for the renewal of the MOD housing estates. This should address future accommodation requirements, housing delivery, infrastructure, movement and connectivity, environmental enhancement, climate resilience and integration with the wider town, ensuring redevelopment is planned and delivered in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

Policy CA4: Carterton MOD Housing Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)

The York Road Estate, REEMA West, REEMA Central and REEMA South sites, as identified on the Policies Map, are designated as an Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO).

The Council will support the comprehensive or phased redevelopment and regeneration of these areas where proposals make more efficient and effective use of previously developed land whilst maintaining the operational requirements of RAF Brize Norton and contributing towards the sustainable growth of Carterton.

Redevelopment proposals should seek to:

1. Optimise the use of land through an appropriate increase in development density, having regard to local character, accessibility, infrastructure capacity, environmental considerations and the creation of high-quality places;

2. Support the delivery of modern, adaptable and energy-efficient Service Family Accommodation that aligns with the Ministry of Defence's long-term accommodation objectives and operational requirements;

3. Provide, whilst continuing to meet the accommodation needs of service personnel and family, a suitable mix of housing types, sizes and tenures that responds to identified local needs and supports the creation of balanced and inclusive communities;

4. Achieve high standards of design, place-making and sustainability, creating attractive, safe and healthy neighbourhoods with a strong sense of place, encouraging social cohesion;

5. Provide well-designed and accessible green infrastructure, public open space, landscaping, biodiversity enhancements and opportunities for recreation and active lifestyles;

6. Improve walking, cycling and public transport connectivity within Carterton and to surrounding services, facilities, employment opportunities and RAF Brize Norton;

7. Make efficient use of existing and proposed infrastructure and provide any necessary supporting infrastructure required as a consequence of development, including where appropriate health, education, recreation, community and green infrastructure provision;

8. Demonstrate that redevelopment proposals would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the operation, safety, security or future requirements of RAF Brize Norton.

The Council will support the preparation of comprehensive masterplans, a Defence Estate Renewal Framework, development frameworks or other agreed planning mechanisms to guide the coordinated redevelopment of individual sites or groups of sites within the Area of Redevelopment Opportunity. Such frameworks should address housing delivery, Service Family Accommodation requirements, supporting infrastructure, community facilities, environmental enhancement, movement and connectivity, climate resilience and net zero carbon objectives.

Strategic Locations for Growth

8.1.71 To further support the delivery of new homes and jobs in the Carterton Area, the Plan identifies four Strategic Locations for Growth (SLG) as follows:

- Policy CA5 – Land West of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
- Policy CA6 – Land North of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
- Policy CA7 – Land North-East of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
- Policy CA8 – Land East of Brize Norton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)

8.1.72 These are broad locations which have been identified as being suitable 'in principle' for strategic-scale growth and are illustrated on the Key Diagram. Because of existing infrastructure deficiencies and the need for comprehensive masterplanning the locations are expected to come forward primarily from Year 6 of the plan period onwards although this doesn't preclude earlier delivery where possible. Their identification as broad areas for future growth is consistent with national policy, which recognises the important role of strategic-scale development in meeting longer-term housing, employment and infrastructure needs.

8.1.73 The identification of Strategic Locations for Growth forms an important component of the Plan's overall spatial strategy. Whilst a good proportion of development needs arising during the plan period will be met through existing commitments, site allocations and other opportunities within the built-up areas of the district's towns and villages, the Strategic Locations for Growth provide a framework for accommodating longer-term development requirements (including potentially beyond the plan period) in a planned and coordinated manner, helping to ensure that future growth is aligned with the area's economic role, including its relationship with RAF Brize Norton and the wider A40 corridor.

8.1.74 The identification of these broad locations also provides certainty for infrastructure providers, landowners, developers and local communities regarding the broad pattern and direction of future planned growth.

8.1.75 The Plan includes an overarching policy for each location setting out the type of development expected, for example housing, employment or mixed-use development, together with the anticipated form of development, such as a sustainable urban extension or new village. This is accompanied by a more detailed site development template setting out the key requirements and development principles that must be addressed as proposals evolve.

8.1.76 Development in these locations will be guided by a process of community masterplanning. The draft Plan defines a community masterplan as one which has been informed by a process of demonstrably meaningful and effective community engagement. This approach will help to ensure that local communities, infrastructure providers, key stakeholders and other interested parties are actively involved in shaping the future form, character and delivery of development, including the provision of supporting infrastructure, services, facilities and green infrastructure.

8.1.77 Developers of the four strategic locations for growth will be expected to collaborate on the preparation of masterplans for each area, to ensure that infrastructure provision and place making for the town generally is planned holistically.

8.1.78 For each strategic location, an indicative quantum of anticipated development has been identified. The final scale, form and density of development will be informed by further technical evidence, infrastructure capacity assessments and site-specific masterplanning work.

8.1.79 In particular, future decisions regarding the overall quantum and density of development are expected to be influenced by the progression of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) proposals and other sustainable transport interventions along the A40 corridor, reflecting the important relationship between planned growth and the delivery of enhanced public transport connectivity. This approach provides flexibility to optimise the use of land in the most sustainable locations whilst ensuring that development remains aligned with the timely provision of supporting infrastructure.

Policy CA5 – Land West of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)

8.1.80 As one of the district's principal locations for growth, under Policy SP2, the Carterton area is expected to accommodate significant new development alongside investment in employment opportunities, infrastructure, services and facilities, helping to create a number of self-sustaining and resilient communities. The identification of the land to the west of Carterton's supports the wider ambition of strengthening the town and town centre whilst maintaining the distinct identity of surrounding rural settlements.

8.1.81 The SLG provides an opportunity to deliver a comprehensively planned new village that complements the regeneration and renewal of existing neighbourhoods within Carterton, including former military housing areas, whilst contributing towards meeting identified housing needs. Development should support the vitality and viability of Carterton Town Centre, improve access to services, facilities and employment opportunities, and help create a balanced separate community where more day-to-day needs can be met locally.

8.1.82 A comprehensive community masterplan will be required to ensure that development is delivered in a coordinated manner that in conjunction with the other new settlements also delivers the infrastructure necessary to support growth. This should include high-quality green and blue infrastructure, biodiversity enhancement, public open space, opportunities for recreation and healthy lifestyles, sustainable transport connections and climate-resilient design measures. Development should respond positively to landscape character and the wider setting of Carterton, protecting the separation and individual identity of neighbouring

settlements whilst contributing towards the delivery of a distinctive and attractive new community set in a high quality landscape framework.

Policy CA5 – Land West of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)			
Indicative Site Area	125 Ha	**Current Use**	Agriculture
Landowner / Site Promoter	Crest Nicholson		
Overview			
Land West of Carterton is identified as a Strategic Location for Growth for residential-led development in the form of a new village providing up to approximately 800 dwellings where this is demonstrated to be compatible with site constraints, infrastructure capacity, landscape, heritage, biodiversity, flood risk, access, education requirements and a comprehensive community masterplan.			
Development Type	New Village		
Development Requirements			
The development of the SLG must be guided by a comprehensive, community masterplan, supported by an initial development template (attached at Appendix 1), with any such masterplan required to demonstrate how the template has been taken into account. In accordance with Policy DM24, proposed strategic-scale development in this location will be required to assess the potential for including accommodation for travelling communities as part of the overall development mix.			

Policy CA6 – Land North of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)

8.1.83 Land north of Carterton is identified as a Strategic Location for Growth that will support the sustainable growth of the town and contribute towards the delivery of homes, infrastructure and community facilities required over the plan period. Building upon existing commitments in the northern part of the town, the allocation provides an opportunity to deliver a well-connected and comprehensively planned new village or villages that reinforces Carterton's role as one of West Oxfordshire's principal settlements.

8.1.84 The allocation will help support the creation of a more prosperous, connected and healthy community through the provision of new homes alongside supporting infrastructure, recreation facilities, public open space and green infrastructure. Development should establish strong links with the town centre and adjoining new and existing settlements, employment areas, schools and community facilities through a network of attractive walking, wheeling and cycling routes and public transport connections that encourage a reduction in reliance on private car travel.

8.1.85 There are a number of important, existing uses in this rural fringe location including the Kilkenny Lane Country Park, the Kilkenny Lane allotments and Carterton Football Club. Any development will therefore be expected to respect and where possible and appropriate, integrate and enhance accessibility to these facilities.

8.1.86 In the case of Carterton Football Club, a number of the club's existing training pitches are currently laid out on land which is owned and being actively promoted for development by a leading housebuilder.

8.1.87 In these circumstances, the Council's expectation is that any proposed development involving land which currently used by the club, must not unreasonably impact upon the functioning of the club (e.g. through replacement provision), pending the delivery of an enhanced facility in an alternative, suitable and accessible location (e.g. as part of a new sports hub for the town).

8.1.88 Development in this location will also be expected to contribute towards the enhancement of green infrastructure networks, including ecological corridors and landscape buffers, helping to maintain the distinct identity of neighbouring settlements and reinforce landscape character. A comprehensive community masterplan will be required to ensure that development is coordinated with infrastructure delivery, biodiversity enhancement, climate resilience measures and longer-term transport improvements, including future opportunities associated with Mass Rapid Transit and mobility hubs.

Policy CA6 – Land North of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)			
Indicative Site Area	114 Ha	**Current Use**	Agricultural
Landowner / Site Promoter	David Wilson Homes and Harper Crewe		
Overview			
The Land North of Carterton is identified as a Strategic Location for Growth for residential-led development providing up to approximately 700 dwellings where this is demonstrated to be compatible with site constraints, infrastructure capacity and a comprehensive community masterplan.			
Development Type	New Village/s		
Development Requirements			
The development of the SLG must be guided by a comprehensive, community masterplan, supported by an initial development template (attached at Appendix 1), with any such masterplan required to demonstrate how the template has been taken into account. Any proposed development affecting the land currently in use by Carterton Football Club will be expected to demonstrate how the functioning of the club will not be unreasonably affected (e.g. through replacement provision), pending the delivery of an enhanced facility in an alternative, suitable and accessible location.			

In accordance with Policy DM24, proposed strategic-scale development in this location will be required to assess the potential for including accommodation for travelling communities as part of the overall development mix.

Policy CA7 – Land North East of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)

8.1.89 Land north east of Carterton is identified as a major Strategic Location for Growth that will make a substantial contribution towards meeting housing needs and delivering the long-term vision for the Carterton Area.

8.1.90 The allocation represents an opportunity to create a new village or several new villages that supports Carterton's continued evolution as a key service, employment and community hub whilst contributing to wider prosperity of the area and delivering a mobility hub for the Carterton Area.

8.1.91 Development will be expected to deliver a sustainable and well-connected new community incorporating a broad range of housing, supporting services, community facilities, public open space and green infrastructure. Development should be planned to support healthy and active lifestyles and sustainable transport, facilitate social interaction and foster a strong sense of place and identity from the outset. New development should also help reinforce Carterton's economic role by supporting access to employment, skills and training opportunities and improving connectivity to key destinations within the wider area.

8.1.92 A comprehensive community masterplan approach will be required to ensure that development is fully integrated with Carterton and surrounding communities whilst avoiding adverse impacts on landscape character, environmental assets and settlement identity. Significant emphasis should be placed on creating a landscape-led development framework with extensive green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancement, climate-resilient design and sustainable transport connections. Development must be supported by the co-ordinated delivery of necessary education, healthcare, utility, transport and community infrastructure and contribute positively towards the creation of a more self-sustaining, resilient and environmentally responsible community.

Policy CA7 – Land North East of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)			
Indicative Site Area	255 Ha	**Current Use**	Agricultural
Landowner / Site Promoter	Christ Church / Savills		
Overview			
Land North-East of Carterton is identified as a Strategic Location for Growth for residential-led development providing approximately 2,000 dwellings in the period to 2043.			

Development Type	New Village/s
Development Requirements	
The development of the SLG must be guided by a comprehensive, community masterplan, supported by an initial development template (attached at Appendix 1), with any such masterplan required to demonstrate how the template has been taken into account. In accordance with Policy DM24, proposed strategic-scale development in this location will be required to assess the potential for including accommodation for travelling communities as part of the overall development mix.	

Policy CA8 – Land East of Brize Norton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)

8.1.93 Land east of Brize Norton is identified as a Strategic Location for Growth capable of accommodating a new village or villages of strategic significance that supports both the Carterton Area Strategy and the wider Spatial Strategy of the Local Plan. In addition to delivering significant housing growth, the allocation provides an important opportunity to strengthen the local economy through the provision of employment land, helping to address historic patterns of out-commuting and create a more balanced relationship between homes and jobs within the area. The site will also be required to make provision for meeting the needs of travelling communities

8.1.94 The site will support the ambition of creating a more economically diverse and self-sustaining Carterton Area, building upon the strategic importance of RAF Brize Norton and the area's skilled workforce. Development will be expected to provide a comprehensive mix of homes, employment opportunities, green infrastructure, public open space and community facilities whilst supporting investment in sustainable transport and wider infrastructure improvements.

8.1.95 A comprehensive community masterplan will be required to ensure that development is carefully integrated within Brize Norton Parish while protecting the separate identity of settlements including Brize Norton Village itself.

8.1.96 Particular attention must be given to maintaining the individual identity and character of existing settlements, delivering strategic landscape buffers and ecological networks, and protecting the environmental qualities that contribute to the area's distinctiveness.

8.1.97 Given the scale of development proposed, the SLG provides the opportunity to deliver a broad range of significant strategic infrastructure improvements including transport improvements such as the delivery of a new link road to the east of Brize Norton Village, new and enhanced active travel connectivity, biodiversity gain and nature recovery, climate resilience and nature-based solutions whilst delivering a high-quality new community that supports the long-term prosperity and sustainability of the wider area.

Policy CA8 – Land East of Brize Norton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)			
Indicative Site Area	392 Ha	**Current Use**	Agricultural
Landowner / Site Promoter	Lonestar / KSW		
Overview			
Land East of Brize Norton is identified as a Strategic Location for Growth for residential-led development providing approximately 2,000 dwellings and approximately 10 Hectares of Employment Land.			
Development Type	New Village/s		
Development Requirements			
The development of the SLG must be guided by a comprehensive, community masterplan, supported by an initial development template (attached at Appendix 1), with any such masterplan required to demonstrate how the template has been taken into account. In accordance with Policy DM24, proposed strategic-scale development in this location will be required to assess the potential for including accommodation for travelling communities as part of the overall development mix. Development should be supported by a site specific Infrastructure Delivery Plan.			

Key Infrastructure Requirements for the Carterton Area

8.1.98 The key strategic infrastructure requirements currently anticipated for the Carterton Area include, but are not limited to;

- A new sports hub and associated indoor and outdoor sports facilities serving the wider Carterton Area;
- Additional sports pitches and all-weather artificial turf pitch (ATP) provision to meet future recreational needs;
- Delivery of a Mobility Hub and Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) infrastructure as part of enhanced sustainable transport connectivity along the A40 corridor;
- Upgrades to the sewerage and water supply network, including new and enhanced pumping station infrastructure where required;
- Strategic green infrastructure providing opportunities for recreation, biodiversity enhancement, landscape integration and climate resilience;
- Flood mitigation and sustainable drainage measures to manage surface water and reduce flood risk;
- Additional health infrastructure capacity to support future population growth including enhance primary health care provision;
- Improvements to Carterton Town Centre and public realm to enhance vitality, accessibility and sense of place;
- Enhanced walking, wheeling and cycling connectivity both within the Carterton Area and to surrounding settlements, services and employment locations; and

- Expanded further education and skills training provision to support local residents and the area's economic growth ambitions.
- Provision of a cemetery

8.1.99 The IDP demonstrates that there are no known infrastructure constraints that would prevent the delivery of the Strategic Locations for Growth during the plan period, subject to appropriate phasing and investment.

8.1.100 The Council will continue to work collaboratively with infrastructure providers, delivery agencies, neighbouring authorities, landowners, developers and local communities to refine, coordinate and secure the infrastructure necessary to support planned growth.

8.1.101 Development proposals within the Strategic Locations for Growth will be expected to contribute appropriately towards the delivery of infrastructure requirements having regard to their scale, impacts and viability considerations.

Phasing

8.1.102 Given the scale and strategic nature of the proposed Strategic Locations for Growth, careful consideration must be given to the timing and phasing of development. The Council's approach is founded on the principle that growth should be aligned with the timely provision of infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to support sustainable communities and maintain quality of life for existing and future residents.

8.1.103 The Strategic Locations for Growth are intended primarily to meet medium and longer-term development needs and are not expected to make a significant contribution to housing delivery during the initial five years of the plan period. Instead, the majority of development requirements arising in the early years of the Plan will be met through existing commitments, extant permissions, allocated sites and opportunities within settlements.

8.1.104 This provides an opportunity for the Strategic Locations for Growth to be planned comprehensively and brought forward in a co-ordinated manner, rather than through fragmented or piecemeal development.

8.1.105 A phased approach to delivery will enable the necessary masterplanning, technical assessment, stakeholder engagement and infrastructure planning work to be undertaken before substantial development commences. It will also allow key strategic infrastructure requirements, including transport improvements, Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) proposals, utility network enhancements, education provision, health infrastructure, green infrastructure and flood mitigation measures, to be aligned with the scale and pace of development.

8.1.106 The Council requires development proposals within the Strategic Locations for Growth to demonstrate how the delivery of homes, employment opportunities, community facilities and supporting infrastructure will be coordinated over time. Development should be phased to ensure that infrastructure is provided at the appropriate stage and that the impacts of growth do not exceed the capacity of existing networks and services.

8.1.107 In particular, the timing, scale and density of development will need to take account of the delivery of strategic transport interventions along the A40 corridor and other infrastructure identified through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and other evidence base work.

8.1.108 The release of development within the Strategic Locations for Growth will therefore be linked to the demonstrated availability of infrastructure capacity, or firm commitments for its delivery, commensurate with the scale and timing of development proposed.

8.1.109 The phased release of Strategic Locations for Growth will also provide flexibility to respond to changing circumstances over the plan period, including evolving infrastructure requirements, funding opportunities, technological advances and future reviews of the Local Plan. This approach supports the creation of well-planned, sustainable and resilient communities whilst ensuring that growth is delivered in a manner that is both achievable and infrastructure-led.

8.1.110 Accordingly, the Council will use planning conditions, planning obligations, infrastructure funding mechanisms and site-specific masterplans, as appropriate, to secure the timely delivery of infrastructure and ensure that development proceeds in accordance with agreed phasing strategies.

8.2 Witney Area Strategy

The Witney Area Today

8.2.1 The Witney Area, for the purposes of the Witney Area Strategy, comprises the town of Witney together with the surrounding parishes of Curbridge, Crawley, Ducklington, Hailey, Minster Lovell and South Leigh. The extent of this area is shown on Figure 8.2 below.

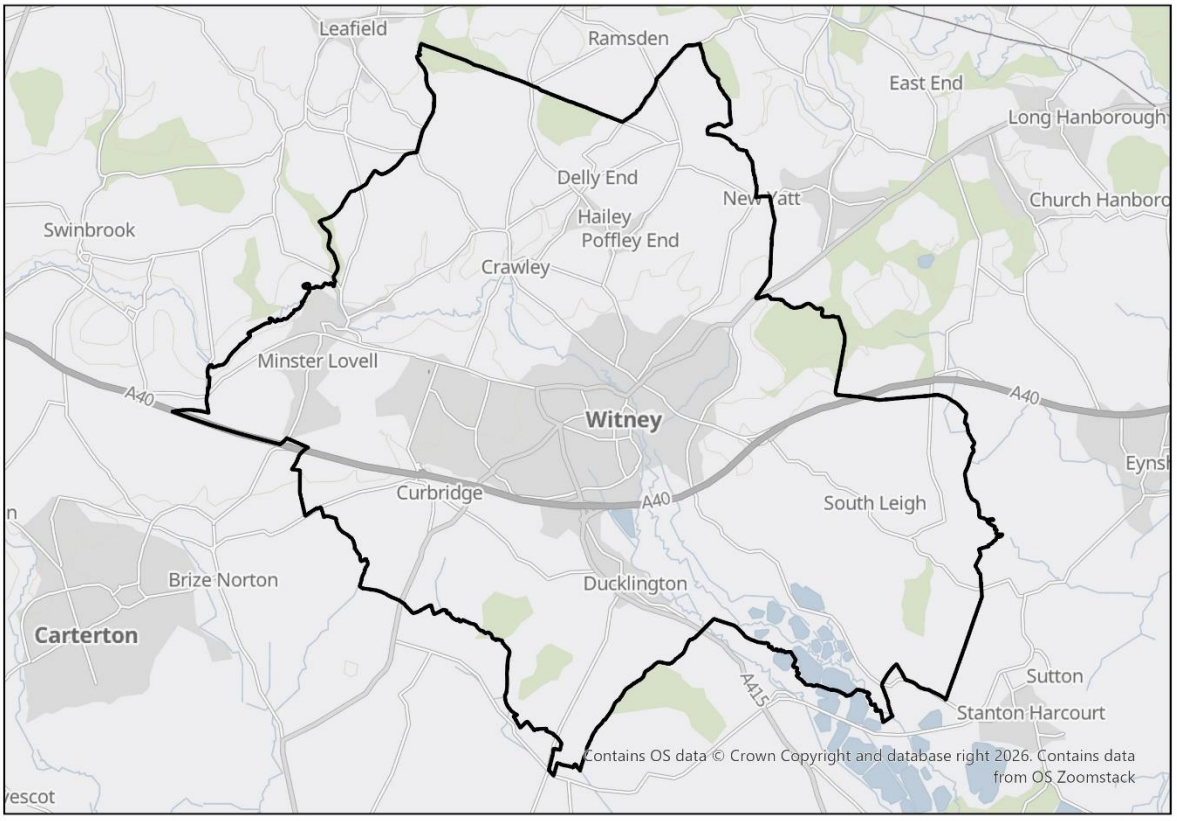

Figure 8.3 – Geographic Extent of the Witney Area Strategy

8.2.2 The area is centred on Witney, West Oxfordshire's largest town and principal economic and service centre. Home to almost 30,000 people, Witney has experienced substantial growth over recent decades, more than doubling in size since the 1980s through major urban extensions including Madley Park, Deer Park and, more recently, Windrush Place. As the district's largest settlement, Witney continues to play a central role in meeting housing, employment, retail and service needs across West Oxfordshire.

8.2.3 The town has a rich heritage rooted in the blanket-making industry, which shaped its historic core, relationship with the River Windrush and architectural character. This legacy remains visible in its attractive streetscape and former mill buildings, many of which have been sensitively converted. The River Windrush, running through the heart of Witney, provides a vital green and ecological corridor but also brings challenges related to flood risk, especially in light of past flood events.

8.2.4 The area benefits from a comprehensive range of services and facilities. Witney functions as the principal retail, leisure, education and healthcare hub for much of West Oxfordshire, serving both residents of the town and surrounding rural communities. The town centre contains a mix of national retailers, independent businesses, cafés, community facilities and public spaces, complemented by destinations such as Marriott's Walk and the Woolgate Centre. The area also benefits from schools, healthcare provision including Witney Community Hospital, sports and leisure facilities, museums, parks and extensive green spaces which make an important contribution to quality of life and wellbeing.

8.2.5 Witney is the district's largest employment location, accounting for around a third of all jobs in West Oxfordshire. The local economy is diverse, with strengths in manufacturing, technology, professional services, retail and logistics. Established employment areas and business parks support a wide range of businesses, including innovative small and medium-sized enterprises with strong links to the wider Oxfordshire knowledge economy. As a result, the area plays a vital role in supporting economic growth and employment opportunities both locally and across the district.

8.2.6 Despite its many strengths, the area faces a number of significant challenges. Traffic congestion remains a longstanding issue, particularly around Bridge Street and the River Windrush crossing, creating delays on key routes including Mill Street, West End, Woodstock Road and Newland. Whilst air quality within the designated Air Quality Management Area has improved in recent years, congestion continues to affect journey times, accessibility and the overall functioning of the town. Access to the A40 corridor remains a particular concern, with congestion affecting connectivity to Oxford and the wider strategic road network

8.2.7 Transport and connectivity are therefore key issues for the future of the area. Whilst Witney benefits from frequent bus services to Oxford and other surrounding settlements, journey times can be slow and unreliable, particularly during peak periods. The town is not served by rail and reliance on private car travel remains relatively high. Walking and cycling infrastructure within the town is comparatively well developed, although opportunities exist to improve connectivity, wayfinding, cycle parking and links to surrounding settlements. Enhanced active travel connections, including improved routes between Witney and Carterton, have been identified as a priority for the future.

8.2.8 Housing need remains high. Witney contains the largest housing stock in West Oxfordshire and continues to be one of the district's most sought-after locations. Whilst opportunities for redevelopment and intensification within the existing urban area remain important, the scope for large-scale development within the town is becoming increasingly limited. Future growth will therefore need to be carefully planned and balanced against environmental constraints including flood risk, landscape sensitivity and the need to maintain the separate identity of neighbouring villages.

8.2.9 The area benefits from a high-quality natural environment which contributes significantly to its character and attractiveness. The surrounding valley landscape, ridgelines, ancient woodland remnants and the wider Windrush Valley provide an attractive setting for the town and its villages. The Lower Windrush Valley Project Area and associated green infrastructure networks represent important ecological, recreational and landscape assets which support biodiversity, nature recovery and public wellbeing.

8.2.10 The surrounding villages each make a distinctive contribution to the character of the area. Settlements such as Ducklington, Curbridge, Hailey and Minster Lovell retain their individual identities and historic character whilst benefiting from their proximity to Witney. Together they provide an important transition between the urban area and the wider countryside, offering attractive residential environments, valued community facilities and access to the rural landscape. Protecting their individual character and avoiding coalescence with Witney will remain an important consideration as the area continues to evolve.

8.2.11 Looking ahead, the Witney Area is well placed to fulfil its role as a key focus for housing, employment, retail and service provision within West Oxfordshire, in line with the overall Spatial Strategy (Policy SP2). Continued investment in transport infrastructure, healthcare, education, flood resilience, green infrastructure, town centre vitality and employment opportunities will be essential to ensuring that future growth is sustainable and that the area remains an attractive, prosperous and resilient place in which to live, work and visit.

Statement of Ambition – The Witney Area in 2043

8.2.12 The Witney Area will play a central role in delivering sustainable growth, economic prosperity and environmental enhancement in West Oxfordshire over the period to 2043.

8.2.13 As the district's principal town and largest settlement, Witney will continue to strengthen its role as the main focus for housing, employment, retail, leisure and service provision, supporting both its own residents and the wider network of villages and rural communities across West Oxfordshire.

8.2.14 Growth will be carefully planned and coordinated across the wider area, combining the efficient use and renewal of land within the existing urban area with well-designed and sustainable urban extensions and new villages. New development will create distinctive communities with a strong sense of place, supported by the homes, jobs, services, community facilities and infrastructure needed to meet the needs of existing and future generations.

8.2.15 Whilst accommodating future growth, development will be planned in a way that respects the area's rich historic character, the setting of the River Windrush, the surrounding landscape and the individual identity of neighbouring villages. Important environmental assets, including the Windrush Valley and wider green infrastructure network, will be protected and enhanced, helping to maintain the distinctive character of the area whilst supporting nature recovery, climate resilience and public wellbeing.

8.2.16 A key ambition for the area is to create a more sustainable and self-contained community. Building on its position as West Oxfordshire's principal employment location, Witney will strengthen its role as a centre for innovation, enterprise and business growth. Investment in employment opportunities, modern business space and digital infrastructure will support a diverse local economy, helping to reduce out-commuting, attract inward investment and create high-quality employment opportunities for residents.

8.2.17 Witney town centre will remain at the heart of the area's economic, social and cultural life. Opportunities will be taken to strengthen its vitality and viability through investment in public spaces, independent and national retail provision, leisure and cultural activities, hospitality and community services. The town centre will continue to evolve as an attractive and accessible destination, serving both local communities and visitors whilst retaining its distinctive market town character.

8.2.18 The area will be a place where healthy and active lifestyles are supported through high-quality environments, accessible services and strong community infrastructure. Investment in healthcare, education, community facilities, sport, recreation and green spaces will help ensure that growth is matched by the infrastructure needed to support a growing population. Particular emphasis will be placed on improving access to high-quality open spaces, leisure facilities and opportunities for recreation, health and wellbeing.

8.2.19 With investment in low-carbon transport, modern infrastructure including a mass rapid transport link to Oxford, and accessible services, Witney will reduce its dependency on car travel, easing congestion and improving air quality. Growth will be shaped sensitively around the town's landscape and heritage, ensuring the character of both Witney and surrounding villages is respected. Addressing transport and connectivity challenges will be fundamental to the area's future success. A comprehensive and integrated approach to transport infrastructure will seek to reduce congestion, improve accessibility and provide greater travel choice. Communities will benefit from enhanced walking, wheeling and cycling networks, improved public transport services and strategic investment in transport infrastructure, including improved connectivity along the A40 corridor.

8.2.20 Climate action and environmental sustainability will underpin future growth across the area. New development will be expected to achieve high standards of environmental performance, support the transition to a low-carbon economy and contribute towards net-zero ambitions. Investment in green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancement, flood resilience and sustainable drainage will help ensure that the area is well equipped to respond to the challenges of climate change whilst creating more attractive and resilient places.

8.2.21 Through a combination of carefully planned growth, infrastructure investment, town centre renewal, economic development and environmental enhancement, the Witney Area will continue to evolve as a thriving, connected and sustainable market town area, making a significant contribution to the long-term economic, social and environmental success of the district whilst retaining its intrinsic qualities and characteristics.

Strategic Development Framework for the Witney Area

8.2.22 Building on the area profile and statement of ambition above, Policy WIT1 provides a framework for managing growth across Witney and the surrounding parishes of Curbridge, Crawley, Ducklington, Hailey, Minster Lovell and South Leigh to 2043.

8.2.23 The framework recognises Witney's role as West Oxfordshire's principal town and a key focus for future growth under the Plan's Spatial Strategy (Policy SP2). It seeks to ensure that future growth strengthens Witney's role as a sustainable and prosperous market town whilst addressing the infrastructure, transport, environmental and climate-related challenges associated with continued growth.

8.2.24 The framework focuses on strengthening Witney's role as the district's principal service and employment centre, supporting a vibrant and successful town centre, improving connectivity and accessibility, reducing congestion, enabling sustainable patterns of development, protecting the character and identity of surrounding villages, enhancing the River Windrush corridor and wider green infrastructure network, and ensuring that growth is accompanied by the infrastructure, services and investment necessary to maintain quality of life, environmental quality and economic prosperity.

8.2.25 The Council will work proactively with infrastructure providers, Oxfordshire County Council, landowners, developers, local communities and other partners to secure the coordinated delivery of development, transport improvements, infrastructure investment and environmental enhancements in accordance with this framework.

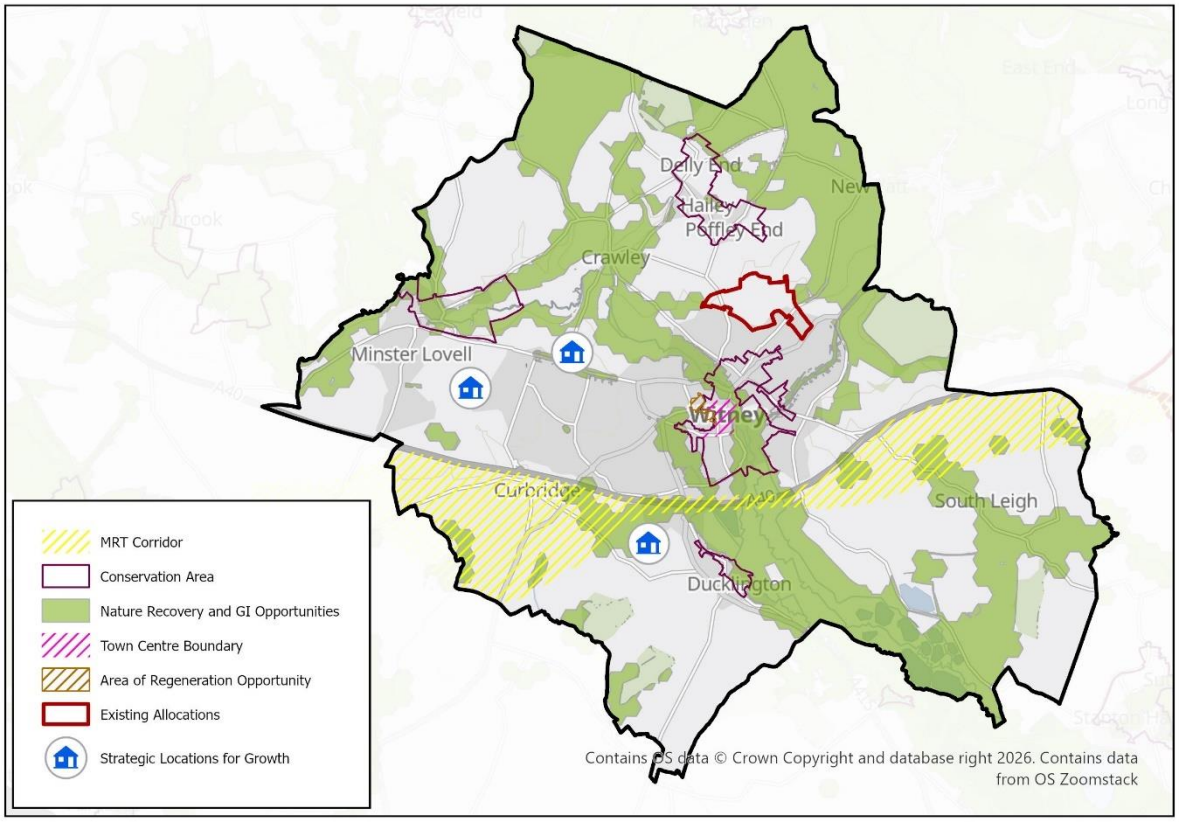

Figure 8.4 – Witney Strategic Development Framework

Policy WIT1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Witney Area

Development proposals within the Witney Area will be supported where they contribute positively towards the delivery of the following objectives, having regard to their scale, nature and location:

1. **Strengthening Witney's role as West Oxfordshire's principal town**

    a. Supporting Witney's role as the district's primary centre for housing, employment, retail, leisure, cultural, health and community services;

    b. Maintaining and enhancing the vitality, viability and attractiveness of Witney town centre as the focus for shopping, business, community activity, culture, entertainment and civic life;

    c. Supporting investment in a diverse and resilient local economy, including opportunities for innovation, technology, professional services, creative industries, advanced manufacturing and other growth sectors;

    d. Encouraging employment development that reduces the need for out-commuting and strengthens the relationship between homes, jobs and services.

2. **Delivering sustainable growth supported by infrastructure**

    a. Prioritising opportunities for regeneration, redevelopment and the efficient use of previously developed and underutilised land within the existing built-up area wherever appropriate;

    b. Accommodating strategic growth through well-planned urban extensions and new communities where required, ensuring that development reflects the character and setting of the area;

    c. Delivering a range of homes that meet identified local needs, including affordable housing, homes for younger households, specialist accommodation and housing suitable for older people and the travelling community;

    d. Ensuring that growth is aligned with the timely delivery of transport, education, healthcare, utilities, wastewater, digital and community infrastructure.

3. **Creating a connected and accessible Witney Area**

    a. Supporting measures that improve movement within Witney and between Witney, surrounding villages and the wider area;

    b. Supporting the delivery of an integrated and sustainable transport network in accordance with the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), Witney Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), Lowlands Movement and Place Plan and other relevant transport strategies;

    c. Delivering improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling networks, including strategic active travel corridors, improved public realm, enhanced crossing points, secure cycle parking and mobility hubs, particularly where they improve access to

employment areas, schools, community facilities, the town centre and neighbouring settlements;

d. Supporting investment that reduces congestion and improves journey time reliability, particularly on routes affected by pressure associated with the River Windrush crossing and the A40 corridor;

e. Supporting enhancements to public transport, including improved bus services, zero-emission buses, bus priority measures, mobility hubs, Mass Rapid Transit infrastructure and improved connections to Oxford, Carterton and other key destinations;

f. Enabling the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, shared mobility solutions and other measures that support the transition to lower-carbon travel;

g. Promoting patterns of development that reduce reliance on private car travel and encourage sustainable travel choices.

4. Protecting and enhancing the River Windrush and natural environment

a. Protecting and enhancing the River Windrush corridor as a key landscape, biodiversity, recreational and green infrastructure asset;

b. Delivering an integrated network of green and blue infrastructure that connects communities with the wider countryside and supports biodiversity recovery, recreation and health and wellbeing;

c. Supporting development that contributes positively towards climate adaptation, flood risk management, sustainable drainage and water resource efficiency;

d. Conserving and enhancing landscape character, ecological assets, important views and the setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape where relevant.

5. Conserving heritage and local distinctiveness

a. Conserving and enhancing Witney's historic character, including its market town heritage, blanket industry legacy, historic core and riverside setting;

b. Ensuring that new development responds positively to local character and creates attractive, distinctive and well-designed places;

c. Safeguarding the separate identity and character of surrounding villages including Curbridge, Ducklington, Hailey, Minster Lovell, Crawley and South Leigh;

d. Preventing inappropriate coalescence of settlements and maintaining important areas of open countryside that contribute to local identity and landscape character.

6. Supporting healthy, inclusive and resilient communities

a. Supporting investment in healthcare, education, sport, leisure, community and cultural facilities to meet the needs of existing and future residents;

b. Enhancing opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles through the provision of accessible open spaces, recreation facilities, active travel routes and high-quality public realm;

c. Supporting the enhancement and modernisation of key community infrastructure, including leisure and recreation facilities where a need is identified;

d. Delivering safe, inclusive and accessible neighbourhoods that promote social interaction, community cohesion and wellbeing;

e. Ensuring that the benefits of growth are shared across the wider Witney Area, including surrounding villages and rural communities.

Witney Town Centre

8.2.26 Witney Town Centre is the principal commercial, cultural and civic centre in West Oxfordshire and performs a vital role within the district's network of centres. As the district's largest town, it serves a wide catchment extending beyond the town itself and provides an important focus for shopping, employment, services, leisure, culture and community activity. The town centre's attractive historic environment, strong independent retail offer, regular markets and range of visitor attractions make it one of the district's most distinctive and successful centres.

8.2.27 The town centre benefits from a diverse mix of national retailers, independent businesses, cafés, restaurants, community facilities and public services centred on the High Street, Market Square, Woolgate Centre, Marriotts Walk, Corn Street and surrounding streets. Vacancy rates remain comparatively low and the centre continues to perform an important role as a destination for residents, workers and visitors. Its historic character, shaped by the town's blanket-making heritage and market town origins, provides a strong sense of identity and contributes significantly to its attractiveness and economic success.

8.2.28 Despite these strengths, Witney Town Centre faces many of the challenges affecting town centres nationally. Changing shopping habits, the growth of online retail, competition from larger centres such as Oxford and Bicester, and changing expectations regarding leisure, culture and public space require the centre to continue evolving. Whilst the centre remains healthy overall, there are opportunities to make better use of vacant and underutilised premises, diversify uses, strengthen the evening economy and improve the quality of the public realm.

8.2.29 Accessibility and movement are also important considerations. Whilst the town centre is relatively compact and walkable, traffic congestion, the quality of some pedestrian environments and the need for improved connections between key destinations can affect its attractiveness and ease of use. Consultation on the Local Plan has highlighted the importance of focusing on movement within Witney itself, including improvements to walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport access and the overall quality of streets and public spaces.

8.2.30 Significant investment is already planned through Oxfordshire County Council's Witney High Street and Market Square enhancement scheme. This project will deliver improvements to the public realm, including wider and improved footways, new seating, trees and planting, enhanced accessibility, upgraded public transport facilities, improved crossing opportunities and changes to the Welch Way junction. Together, these measures will help create a safer, more attractive and welcoming town centre environment that supports local businesses, markets, visitors and community activity whilst respecting Witney's historic character.

8.2.31 Looking ahead, the continued growth of the wider Witney Area presents a significant opportunity to strengthen the town centre's role as the district's principal centre. New investment can help support local businesses, improve public spaces, encourage a broader mix of retail, leisure, cultural and community uses and create a more vibrant and resilient destination that remains attractive throughout the day and evening.

8.2.32 Through a combination of public realm enhancement, heritage-led regeneration, improved accessibility and a more diverse mix of uses, Witney Town Centre has the potential to reinforce its position as the commercial, cultural and civic heart of West Oxfordshire whilst retaining the qualities that make it a distinctive and attractive market town centre.

Key Priorities

8.2.33 Key priorities for Witney Town Centre include:

- Maintaining and strengthening Witney's role as West Oxfordshire's principal town centre and commercial hub;
- Supporting a diverse and resilient mix of retail, leisure, hospitality, cultural, community and service uses that respond to changing consumer behaviour and market conditions;
- Enhancing the vitality and viability of the High Street, Market Square, Corn Street, Welch Way, Woolgate Centre and Marriotts Walk as complementary parts of a successful town centre;
- Delivering the planned High Street and Market Square enhancement scheme and securing complementary investment in the wider public realm, including improved accessibility, seating, planting, wayfinding and public spaces;
- Improving walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport access and strengthening connections between key destinations within the town centre;
- Supporting the adaptive re-use and regeneration of vacant, underutilised or opportunity sites through high-quality mixed-use development;
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, including the Conservation Area, listed buildings and the town's blanket-making heritage;

- Supporting a vibrant, safe and inclusive evening economy and a year-round programme of markets, events and cultural activities;
- Strengthening Witney's role as a visitor destination through heritage interpretation, improved visitor facilities and better connections between key attractions; and

- Supporting climate resilience through urban greening, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable drainage and low-carbon design.

A Strategy for Witney Town Centre

8.2.34 Building on the Strategic Development Framework for the Witney Area (Policy WIT1), the purpose of Policy WIT2 is to maintain and enhance Witney Town Centre as the principal commercial, cultural and civic centre in West Oxfordshire, ensuring that it continues to serve the needs of residents, businesses, visitors and surrounding communities.

8.2.35 The policy seeks to support a vibrant, diverse and resilient town centre that responds positively to changing economic, retail and social trends whilst reinforcing the qualities that make Witney a distinctive and attractive market town. It promotes investment in the built environment, public realm, heritage assets and community infrastructure, whilst encouraging a broader mix of retail, leisure, cultural, community, employment and residential uses that support activity throughout the day and evening.

8.2.36 A key priority will be the delivery of high-quality public realm and accessibility improvements, including Oxfordshire County Council's planned High Street and Market Square enhancement scheme and complementary improvements elsewhere within the town centre. Together, these measures will help create a more attractive, accessible and people-focused environment, improve connections between key destinations, support sustainable travel choices and enhance the overall visitor and customer experience.

8.2.37 The policy also seeks to strengthen Witney's role as a visitor destination and cultural centre, building on its historic market town character, blanket-making heritage, regular markets, independent businesses and proximity to the Cotswolds. Opportunities for heritage-led regeneration, the re-use of vacant and underutilised buildings, town centre living and the enhancement of key spaces such as the High Street, Market Square, Corn Street and Welch Way will be supported where they contribute positively to the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centre.

8.2.38 Through a combination of investment, public realm enhancement, heritage-led placemaking, sustainable transport improvements and a more diverse range of uses and activities, Witney Town Centre will continue to evolve as a thriving and distinctive destination at the heart of West Oxfordshire, supporting the long-term prosperity, wellbeing and identity of the wider Witney Area.

Policy WIT2 – Witney Town Centre

1. Witney town centre will be maintained and enhanced as the principal town centre in West Oxfordshire, serving as the primary hub for commercial, retail, community, leisure, cultural, visitor and evening activity within the district.

2. Development will support a diverse and resilient town centre economy, deliver high-quality placemaking and public realm improvements and enhance the accessibility and historic character of Witney.

3. Development proposals within the town centre will:

    a. Support a strong and diverse retail and service offer, with an emphasis on the High Street as the primary pedestrian spine linking the Woolgate Centre and Marriotts Walk, including protection of the defined Primary Shopping Area for active town centre uses.

    b. Promote the vitality of secondary areas including Market Square, Corn Street and Welch Way by delivering a broad mix of retail, leisure, hospitality, community and cultural uses. Where planning permission is required, proposals leading to harmful concentrations of single uses or the loss of active ground floor frontages will be resisted.

    c. Enable flexible and adaptive reuse of vacant units to respond to market trends and changing consumer and community needs, including mixed-use schemes with co-working, community facilities, healthcare, residential uses, pop-ups, youth facilities and cultural uses, where consistent with town centre function and amenity.

    d. Enhance the Market Square and High Street as a multi-functional civic space and cultural heart of the town, supporting regular markets, seasonal events, performance and community activities and acting as a focal point for inclusive community life. Where relevant, proposals should support 'events-ready' public realm. For example, flexible space, power/water provision, lighting and seating, without harming the significance of heritage assets.

    e. Support sensitive and appropriately scaled redevelopment opportunities, including along Welch Way, maintain or improve pedestrian permeability, reinforce key frontages and respect historic context and townscape character.

    f. Conserve and enhance Witney's historic character, particularly the Witney Conservation Area and listed buildings, through high-quality design, materials, and heritage-led placemaking.

    g. Support investment in and delivery of public realm improvements, including decluttering of signage, enhancements to surfacing, seating, greenery and street trees, lighting, and pedestrian and cycling accessibility, to create welcoming, legible and inclusive streets and spaces, particularly in and around the High Street, Market Square and Corn Street. Proposals should incorporate, or safeguard the ability to incorporate, wayfinding and other measures that improve legibility for residents and visitors.

    h. Promote active and sustainable travel, including improved walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport access, supported by public realm investment and the

delivery of the Oxfordshire County Council-funded High Street and Market Square improvement scheme. Development proposals should integrate with, contribute towards where appropriate, and not prejudice the delivery or effectiveness of these improvements

i. Ensure accessible and well-integrated town centre infrastructure, including safe walking and cycling routes, appropriate car parking provision and management, electric vehicle charging, improved bus interchange and clear wayfinding. Development should also support visitor facilities such as a coach drop-off and a future visitor centre, and, where relevant, provide workable servicing and loading arrangements that minimise harm to amenity, pedestrian priority areas and heritage streetscapes.

j. Support a vibrant, diverse and inclusive evening economy, including initiatives that improve safety, extend the hours and range of activity, and broaden the cultural and leisure offer in pursuit of Purple Flag accreditation. Where relevant, proposals should demonstrate how impacts, including noise, servicing, litter and dispersal, will be appropriately managed, and how inclusive access and personal safety have been considered in the design of routes and spaces.

k. Protect the distinct historic character of the Buttercross/Church Green area, with proposals for intensified commercial or retail activity in this area resisted unless incidental to the main permitted use.

l. Enable climate resilience and sustainability, including the incorporation of greening, sustainable drainage, and low-carbon measures into town centre schemes where these also deliver public realm, biodiversity and townscape benefits.

m. Support Witney's role as a visitor and cultural destination, encouraging development and initiatives that strengthen the town centre's tourism, leisure and cultural offer, drawing on its historic character, riverside setting, proximity to the Cotswolds and role as the principal town centre in the district. Proposals should improve visitor legibility and interpretation, including links between key destinations and heritage assets, and align with wider district marketing and visitor strategies so that Witney's success complements the role of other centres and rural settlements.

Policy WIT3 – Windrush Valley

8.2.39 The Windrush Valley is one of West Oxfordshire's most important environmental, landscape and heritage assets. Extending from the Cotswold uplands in the west through Burford and Witney to the Lower Windrush Valley in the east, the valley provides a distinctive setting for many of the district's settlements and contains a rich network of habitats, historic landscapes, watercourses and recreational assets.

8.2.40 The River Windrush and its tributaries form the backbone of a connected green infrastructure network that supports biodiversity, landscape character, recreation, tourism and community wellbeing. The valley contains extensive floodplain habitats, water meadows, wetlands, gravel pit restoration sites, historic mills, bridges and archaeological features, many of which make an important contribution to local distinctiveness and environmental quality.

8.2.41 The valley also performs a critical role in water management. Its floodplains help to store water, reduce flood risk and support wider catchment processes. At the same time, the River Windrush faces ongoing pressures associated with water quality, habitat fragmentation, climate change and development pressures. Protecting and enhancing the ecological health and functioning of the valley is therefore essential to the long-term resilience of both the river and the communities it supports.

8.2.42 Within Witney, the River Windrush forms a defining feature of the town's character and identity. The Windrush in Witney Project recognises the river corridor and associated floodplain landscape as a strategic environmental asset, providing an important setting for the town whilst supporting biodiversity, recreation, heritage and public wellbeing. The project promotes the conservation and enhancement of the area's landscape character, ecological value, historic water meadows, cultural heritage and public access network through a coordinated and long-term management approach. These objectives remain highly relevant and continue to provide an important framework for future investment, restoration and development affecting the river corridor.

8.2.43 The Lower Windrush Valley Project aims to improve nature conservation, land management and public access throughout the gravel extraction areas to the south of Witney and Ducklington. The Project helps to manage two nature reserves restored from gravel workings and works with local landowners and communities to improve access, biodiversity and landscape in the valley. The reserve has a variety of habitats including lakes with gently sloping banks, extensive gravel beaches and shallow areas that benefit a range of wildlife.

8.2.44 Where applicable, particularly in close proximity to project areas, development will be expected to have regard to the aims and objectives of the Windrush in Witney Project and Lower Windrush Valley Project and where appropriate, make a positive contribution either directly as part of the development or through an appropriate financial contribution.

8.2.45 The Council will support a landscape-scale approach to the conservation, restoration and enhancement of the Windrush Valley, recognising its importance for nature recovery, climate resilience, flood management, heritage conservation, recreation and public enjoyment. Development and land management proposals should contribute positively to these objectives whilst respecting the distinctive landscape character of the valley and its role within the wider environmental network of West Oxfordshire.

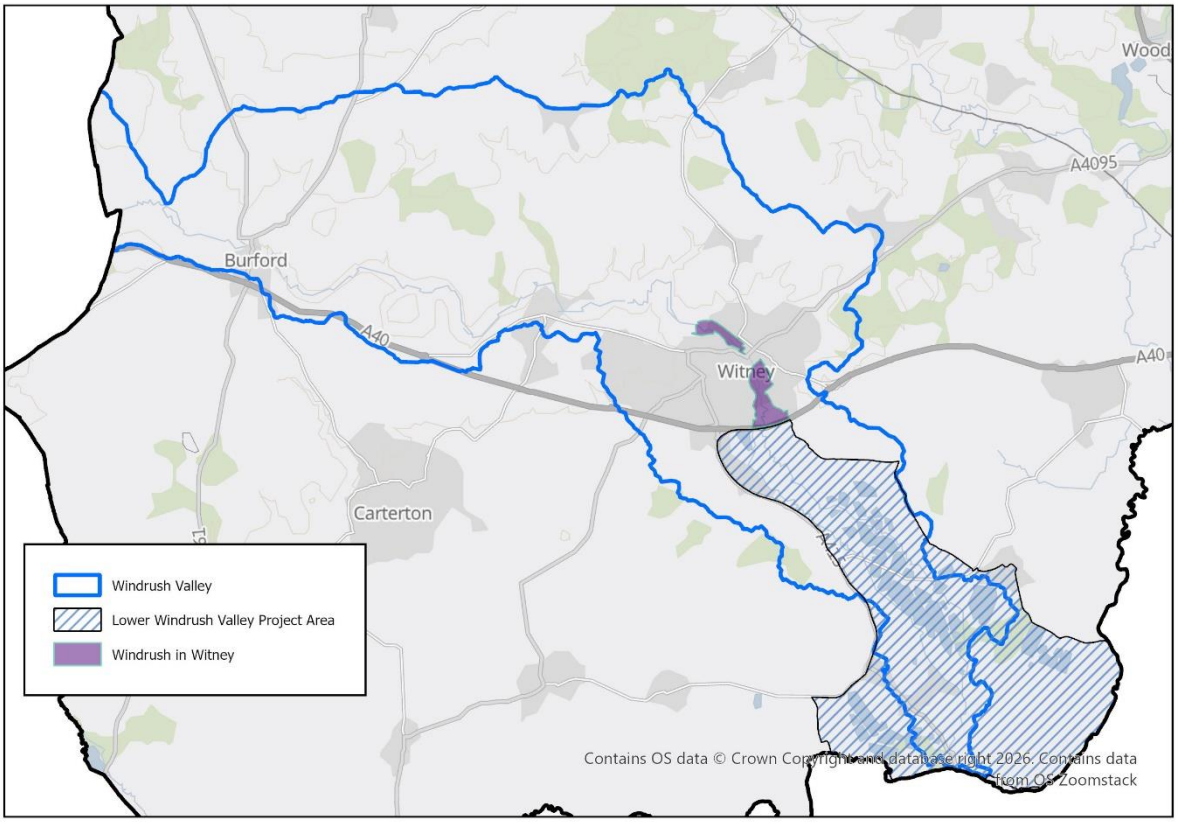

Figure 8.4 – Windrush Valley and Project Areas

Policy WIT3 – Windrush Valley

1. Within the Windrush Valley, as defined on the Policies Map, development and land management proposals will be supported where they conserve and enhance the valley's landscape, ecological, hydrological, heritage and recreational value.

2. Where relevant and applicable to the scale and form of development proposed, proposals must:

    a. Conserve and enhance the landscape character, scenic quality and visual amenity of the Windrush Valley, having regard to relevant Landscape Character Assessments and, where applicable, the setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

    b. Protect, restore and enhance ecological networks, priority habitats, river corridors and green and blue infrastructure, contributing to nature recovery and improved ecological connectivity.

    c. Protect and enhance the ecological and hydrological functioning of the River Windrush and its tributaries, including measures to improve water quality, reduce pollution, support natural river processes and maintain floodplain connectivity.

d. Avoid development that would result in the loss, fragmentation or deterioration of floodplain habitats, wetland habitats or areas important for natural flood management, unless it can be demonstrated that there would be no unacceptable adverse effects and appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures are secured.

e. Conserve and enhance heritage assets, archaeological remains, historic landscapes and other features that contribute to the cultural significance and distinctiveness of the valley.

f. Demonstrate how long-term management and maintenance arrangements will secure the ongoing delivery of ecological, landscape and water management objectives.

3. Particular support will be given to proposals that:

a. Contribute towards landscape-scale habitat creation, restoration or enhancement consistent with the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Catchment Based Approach priorities and relevant conservation or restoration strategies.

b. Restore former mineral workings and other previously disturbed land to create wetlands, species-rich grasslands, accessible natural greenspace and other multi-functional habitats.

c. Improve public access, recreation and interpretation where compatible with ecological, landscape and heritage interests.

d. Contribute to flood resilience through natural flood management and catchment-based approaches to water management.

Development proposals that would result in significant harm to the ecological integrity, floodplain function, landscape character or heritage significance of the Windrush Valley, either individually or cumulatively, will not be supported.

Priority Growth Locations

8.2.46 A key component of the Witney Area Strategy is to provide clarity on where future growth and investment will be focused over the plan period to 2043. The scale of development proposed for the Witney Area reflects its role as one of the most sustainable locations in West Oxfordshire for accommodating growth and its importance as a key service, employment and community centre.

8.2.47 The strategy seeks to ensure that growth is delivered in a coordinated and infrastructure-led manner that supports the continued evolution of Witney whilst protecting the character and identity of surrounding villages and enhancing the area's environmental assets.

8.2.48 Future development will contribute towards the delivery of new homes, employment opportunities, infrastructure, community facilities, green infrastructure and sustainable transport improvements, helping to create a more self-sustaining, prosperous and resilient place.

8.2.49 The priority growth locations identified below are based on four main components:

- Major existing commitments of 10+ homes and 1,000 sqm+ commercial floorspace
- Extant West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 site allocations
- Welch Way Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)
- Strategic Locations for Growth (SLG)

8.2.50 Major existing commitments are sites that as of 1st April 2026, have planning permission or a resolution to grant planning permission for more than 10 homes or 1,000 sqm of commercial floorspace. These are effectively already in the development 'pipeline' and are expected to make an important contribution towards meeting local and wider housing, employment and infrastructure needs. They are included below for information with the residential permissions reflected in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2.

8.2.51 Extant site allocations are those site allocations from the adopted Local Plan 2031 which have not yet secured planning permission including land at North Witney and the Woodford Way Car Park in Witney.

8.2.52 The Welch Way Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO) reflects the 'brownfield first' commitment of the Plan's overall Spatial Strategy (Policy SP2) and the Witney Strategic Development Framework (Policy WIT1). It establishes a supportive policy framework to enable and guide the potential future redevelopment, regeneration and enhancement of land and buildings where opportunities arise within a defined area of land at Welch Way, Witney.

8.2.53 The Strategic Locations for Growth (SLG) comprise three broad locations which are illustrated on the Plan's Key Diagram and have been identified as being suitable areas within which to accommodate strategic-scale housing and employment growth in the period up to 2043 and potentially beyond.

Major Existing Planning Commitments (10 or more homes)

8.2.54 Major existing commitments with planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission in the Witney area as of 1st April 2026 include the following:

- 450 Dwellings – Land south-east of Oxford Hill, Witney (20/02654/OUT)
- 134 Dwellings – Land East of Minster Lovell (22/03240/OUT)
- 36 Dwellings – Land south of Standlake Road, Ducklington (25/00423/OUT)
- 75 Dwellings – Land at Windrush Place, Witney (21/03342/FUL)
- 75 Dwellings – Land west of Downs Road, Witney (21/03342/OUT)
- 39 Dwellings – Land east of Isabelle Spencer Way, Witney (23/01203/RES)

8.2.55 The most significant of these is the land south-east of Oxford Hill (450 homes). The site was allocated in the adopted Local Plan 2031 as the 'East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)' to accommodate a 'sustainable, integrated community that forms a positive addition to Witney'.

8.2.56 The site secured outline planning permission in July 2024 and is currently being actively marketed ahead of a detailed reserved matters application being submitted. The expected delivery timetable is reflected in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2.

8.2.57 A key pre-requisite of the East Witney allocation was the need for development to be phased in accordance with essential infrastructure - in particular improvements to the Shore's Green junction onto the A40. Having secured a combination of developer and central Government funding, Oxfordshire County Council is currently in the process of delivering those improvements with construction well advanced and the junction scheduled to open in summer 2026.

Extant West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 site allocations

8.2.58 The majority of site allocations identified in the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 have been completed, are under construction or have secured planning permission and due to commence shortly.

8.2.59 Within the Witney Area, there are however two site allocations which are yet to come forward including the North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) and Woodford Way Car Park. Both are being actively progressed and the current position for each site is briefly outlined below.

North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)

8.2.60 The North Witney SDA is allocated in the adopted Local Plan 2031 for a sustainable urban extension of Witney, accommodating around 1,400 homes, with comprehensive development led by an agreed masterplan and development to be phased in accordance with timing of provision of supporting infrastructure including the essential delivery of the West End Link (WEL) and Northern Distributor Road (NDR).

8.2.61 The site is being actively promoted by the North Witney Land Consortium with an outline planning application having been submitted in February 2024 (24/00482/OUT). The application is for residential led mixed-use development including a new primary school, community space, northern distributor road and provision of public open space with associated infrastructure.

8.2.62 The outline application is supported by an illustrative masterplan which is based on a housing capacity assumption of 1,250 homes – slightly less than the 1,400 homes identified in the Local Plan. This reduction is a result of more detailed technical assessment undertaken as part of the planning application process and also reflects the fact that the current application does not include the part of the allocation west of Hailey Road.

8.2.63 In response to concerns raised in relation to flood risk and transport, the consortium has recently submitted a revised package of application documentation which, at the time of writing, is currently the subject of a period of statutory consultation.

8.2.64 Following this, it is anticipated that the application will be able to be determined later in the year.

8.2.65 Because active progress is being made with bringing the North Witney SDA allocation forward, it will not be superseded by a new policy within this Plan. As such, the existing site allocation policy from the adopted 2031 Local Plan will remain extant for the purposes of decision-making.

8.2.66 Without prejudice to the determination of the current outline planning application, in relation to the overall housing land supply, it has been assumed that 1,250 homes are capable of being delivered in the period to 2043 as set out in the housing trajectory attached at Appendix 2.

Woodford Way Car Park

8.2.67 Woodford Way is a much smaller, non-strategic site allocation of 50 homes. The site is currently in active use as a surface level car park and provides the opportunity for the redevelopment of a brownfield site in a highly sustainable location close to Witney Town Centre.

8.2.68 The District Council owns the site and is making active progress towards the preparation and submission of a planning application for a scheme of 100% new affordable homes, together with the retention of an appropriate quantum of public parking spaces.

8.2.69 As with the North Witney SDA, because active progress is being made, the existing site allocation for Woodford Way will not be superseded by the new Local Plan 2043 and will therefore remain extant for the purposes of decision-making.

8.2.70 In terms of the overall housing land supply, it has been assumed that 50 homes are capable of being delivered in the period to 2043 as set out in the housing trajectory attached at Appendix 2.

Welch Way Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)

8.2.71 The Welch Way Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO) occupies a highly accessible location on the edge of Witney town centre and contains a diverse mix of uses including community facilities, public services, healthcare / hospital facilities, employment uses, commercial premises, telecommunications infrastructure and public car parking.

8.2.72 The area includes the Woodford Way Car Park outlined above, together with a wider collection of sites to the south. Collectively, this potential area of future regeneration presents a significant, longer-term opportunity to improve the functionality and viability of the wider Witney town centre.

8.2.73 The area performs an important role in serving the town and surrounding communities and represents one of the most significant brownfield regeneration opportunities within central Witney. Its location adjacent to the town centre, close to shops, services, employment opportunities and public transport, makes it particularly well suited to the delivery of sustainable development.

8.2.74 There is strong potential to make more efficient use of land, enhance and diversify public services, increase town centre living, improve the quality of the built environment and public realm, and strengthen connections between the town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.

8.2.75 Redevelopment and regeneration within the area could provide opportunities to modernise ageing buildings, consolidate community services where appropriate, improve operational efficiency and create development capacity for new homes, employment space, community uses including healthcare and other town centre activities. The Council will support proposals that demonstrate how existing facilities can be retained, enhanced or appropriately re-provided whilst also delivering wider regeneration and economic benefits.

8.2.76 Given the variety of land uses, ownerships and operational requirements within the area, redevelopment is likely to come forward incrementally over an extended period.

8.2.77 Different sites may progress at different times depending on the aspirations of landowners and occupiers, service requirements, funding opportunities and market conditions.

8.2.78 The Welch Way ARO is therefore intended to provide a flexible and positive framework that supports coordinated change where opportunities arise rather than prescribing a fixed redevelopment scheme.

8.2.79 Importantly, the designation of the ARO does not in any way imply that any existing landowner, occupier or service provider will be required to relocate or cease operations. Rather, it recognises that over the plan period opportunities may arise through investment decisions, operational changes, service modernisation, redevelopment proposals, land assembly or partnership working that could facilitate more efficient and co-ordinated use of land.

8.2.80 The Council will encourage collaboration between landowners, infrastructure providers, public sector bodies and other stakeholders to explore opportunities for regeneration, land assembly and service integration.

8.2.81 Comprehensive planning across multiple sites may help unlock wider benefits including improved public spaces, enhanced connectivity, more efficient use of land, greater development viability and improved service provision.

8.2.82 Future proposals should contribute towards the creation of a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable town centre environment. Development should deliver high standards of design, support active travel, incorporate green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements, respond appropriately to flood risk considerations and conserve the historic character and significance of the area, including its relationship with the Witney Conservation Area and surrounding heritage assets.

8.2.83 In the longer term, the Welch Way ARO has the potential to accommodate a significant amount of residential-led mixed-use development whilst modernising and enhancing the important civic, community and commercial functions that currently serve the town.

8.2.84 The precise scale, form and mix of development will be determined through future master planning, stakeholder engagement, detailed technical assessments and the aspirations of individual landowners and occupiers.

Figure 8.5 – Welch Way Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)

Policy WIT4 – Land at Welch Way Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)

1. The Welch Way Area of Redevelopment Opportunity, as identified on the Policies Map, is designated as a location where opportunities for regeneration, redevelopment, intensification and environmental improvement will be supported where they contribute towards the quality of life of residents and the vitality, viability and sustainability of Witney.

2. The Council will support the comprehensive or phased redevelopment, regeneration and enhancement of land and buildings within the Area of Redevelopment Opportunity where opportunities arise through redevelopment proposals, investment decisions, service reconfiguration, land assembly or other initiatives.

3. Proposals within the Area of Redevelopment Opportunity must seek to:

    a. make efficient and effective use of previously developed and underutilised land, in a manner that is appropriate to the town centre context and underpinned by high-quality design and healthy place-shaping principles.

    b. Deliver high-quality, well-designed and sustainable development that contributes positively to the character, appearance and function of Witney town centre and creates a strong sense of place;

    c. provide high-quality new housing, including affordable housing where appropriate and in accordance with other Local Plan policies, helping to meet identified housing needs;

    d. support a vibrant and diverse mix of uses, including residential, retail, leisure, employment, commercial uses and community facilities including healthcare, appropriate to a town centre location;

    e. protect, retain, enhance or appropriately re-provide community facilities and public services that serve the town and surrounding area;

    f. improve the quality, accessibility and attractiveness of public spaces, streets, pedestrian routes and cycle connections, including links between Welch Way, the town centre, Woodford Way and surrounding neighbourhoods;

    g. incorporate green infrastructure across the whole of the Area of Redevelopment Opportunity to enhance biodiversity, urban greening and sustainable drainage measures;

    h. reflect and reinterpret the character and heritage of the Witney town centre, creating a strong and contemporary sense of place; and conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, including the character and appearance of the Witney Conservation Area.

    i. ensure that development is supported by appropriate infrastructure and does not give rise to unacceptable impacts on highway safety, movement, flood risk or the operation of existing services and facilities; and

    j. demonstrate how proposals contribute towards the wider regeneration objectives of the Area of Redevelopment Opportunity.

The Council will encourage the preparation of masterplans or other planning frameworks to help guide the coordinated regeneration of all or part of the Area of Redevelopment Opportunity. Such frameworks should be prepared in collaboration with relevant landowners, service providers, infrastructure operators and other stakeholders.

Strategic Locations for Growth

8.2.85 To further support the delivery of new homes and jobs in the Witney Area, the Plan identifies three Strategic Locations for Growth (SLG) as follows:

- Policy WIT5 - Land South of Witney Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
- Policy WIT6 - Land West of Witney Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
- Policy WIT7 - Land North of Burford Road Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)

8.2.86 These are broad locations which have been identified as being suitable 'in principle' for strategic-scale growth and are illustrated on the Key Diagram. The locations are expected to come forward from Year 6 of the plan period onwards and their identification as broad areas for future growth is consistent with national policy, which recognises the important role of strategic-scale development in meeting longer-term housing, employment and infrastructure needs.

8.2.87 The identification of Strategic Locations for Growth forms an important component of the Plan's overall spatial strategy. Whilst a good proportion of development needs arising during the plan period will be met through existing commitments, site allocations and other opportunities within the built-up areas of the district's towns and villages, the Strategic Locations for Growth provide a framework for accommodating longer-term development requirements in a planned and coordinated manner.

8.2.88 They identify the most sustainable broad locations for strategic-scale growth associated with the Witney Area and help to ensure that future development needs, including those arising beyond the plan period, can be addressed without compromising the achievement of sustainable development objectives or resulting in unplanned and piecemeal growth.

8.2.89 The strategic locations provide a framework for the planned and coordinated expansion of the Witney Area beyond existing commitments, helping to ensure that future growth is delivered in a sustainable manner and aligned with the area's principal town role and strategic location on the A40 corridor. The identification of these broad locations also provides greater certainty for infrastructure providers, landowners, developers and local communities regarding the broad pattern and direction of future growth.

8.2.90 The Plan includes an overarching policy for each location setting out the type of development expected, for example housing, employment or mixed-use development, together with the anticipated form of development, such as a sustainable urban extension or new village. This is accompanied by a more detailed site development template setting out the key requirements and development principles that must be addressed as proposals evolve.

8.2.91 Development in these locations will be guided by a process of community masterplanning. The Plan defines a community masterplan as one which has been informed by a process of demonstrably meaningful and effective community engagement.

8.2.92 This approach will help to ensure that local communities, infrastructure providers, key stakeholders and other interested parties are actively involved in shaping the future extent, form, character and delivery of development, including the provision of supporting infrastructure, services, facilities and green infrastructure.

8.2.93 For each strategic location, a minimum quantum of anticipated development has been identified. The final scale, form and density of development will be informed by further technical evidence, infrastructure capacity assessments and site-specific masterplanning work.

8.2.94 In relation to the land south of Witney in particular, future decisions regarding the overall quantum and density of development are expected to be influenced by the progression of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) proposals and other sustainable transport interventions along the A40 corridor, reflecting the important relationship between planned growth and the delivery of enhanced public transport connectivity. This approach provides flexibility to optimise the use of land whilst ensuring that development remains aligned with the timely provision of supporting infrastructure.

Policy WIT 5 – Land south of Witney Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)

8.2.95 Land south of Witney is identified as a Strategic Location for Growth that will make an important contribution towards delivering the long-term vision for Witney as West Oxfordshire's principal settlement. The allocation reflects the town's role as the district's primary focus for housing, employment and infrastructure growth and provides an opportunity to deliver a comprehensively planned new settlement.

8.2.96 Development should create a high-quality, well-connected and sustainable community that is fully connected to the existing town and supported by the timely provision of infrastructure, services and facilities. Particular emphasis should be placed on promoting active and healthy lifestyles through the provision of attractive walking and cycling routes, accessible green infrastructure, public open space and strong connections to employment areas, schools, community facilities and Witney town centre. Development should also support wider ambitions to improve connectivity along the A40 corridor and reduce reliance on private car travel.

8.2.97 A comprehensive community masterplan approach will be required to ensure that development responds positively to existing community priorities, landscape, environmental and infrastructure considerations, delivers biodiversity net gain and climate resilience objectives, and contributes to the creation of a distinctive, attractive and enduring place that is successful in its own right and supports the continued prosperity of Witney.

8.2.98 Particular consideration will need to be given to the amenity of future occupants, taking account of the potential for noise and odour concerns from adjoining, existing land uses.

Policy WIT5 – Land South of Witney Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)			
Indicative Site Area	108 Ha	**Current Use**	Agricultural
Landowner / Site Promoter	David Wilson Homes		
Overview			
Land South of Witney is identified as a Strategic Location for Growth for residential-led development providing approximately 700 dwellings.			
Development Type	New Village		
Development Requirements			
The development of the SLG must be guided by a comprehensive, community masterplan, supported by an initial development template (attached at Appendix 1), with any such masterplan required to demonstrate how the template has been taken into account. In accordance with Policy DM24, proposed strategic-scale development in this location will be required to assess the potential for including accommodation for travelling communities as part of the overall development mix.			

Policy WIT6 – Land west of Witney Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)

8.2.99 Land west of Witney is identified as a Strategic Location for Growth that will support the sustainable expansion of the town and contribute towards meeting future housing and infrastructure requirements. The allocation forms part of the wider strategy for accommodating growth at Witney through a series of comprehensively planned urban extensions capable of delivering homes, supporting infrastructure, green infrastructure and community facilities alongside development.

8.2.100 The site offers an opportunity to create a high-quality new neighbourhood that is integrated with surrounding development and employment areas and key services through a network of sustainable transport routes. Development should promote healthy lifestyles, support social cohesion and provide accessible green spaces and recreational opportunities that benefit both new and existing residents.

8.2.101 Importantly, there are a number of existing uses in this rural fringe location, including Peashell Farm, the Witney Lakes Resort and Curbridge Business Park. It is expected that are likely to have an impact on the quantum and distribution of different land uses that come forward.

8.2.102 If, for example, some or all of the Witney Lakes Resort were to become available for development (e.g. through relocation to the west) a more comprehensive form of development along the length of Downs Road may be achievable.

8.2.103 In the event that the Witney Lakes Resort remains in situ, there is the possibility of two separate areas of development taking place either side of it on the land at Peashell Farm in the south and the land west of the Curbridge Business Park in the north.

8.2.104 In either scenario, development will be required to take a landscape-led approach, responding sensitively to the setting of Witney and ensuring that Witney does not coalesce with Minster Lovell. In that regard it is essential that environmental assets are protected and enhanced and, as outlined above, the reconfiguration of the golf club may offer key opportunities to deliver development whilst safeguarding the separate identity of Minster Lovell and Witney.

8.2.105 The impact of road noise from the A40 will also need to be factored into decisions as to which land uses are located where within the overall site. Through a comprehensive community masterplan, the allocation should contribute towards nature recovery, climate resilience and sustainable movement objectives whilst helping to reinforce Witney's role as a thriving and attractive place to live, work and visit.

Policy WIT6 – Land West of Witney Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)			
Indicative Site Area	84 Ha	**Current Use**	Agricultural
Landowner / Site Promoter	David Lock / Hallam		
Overview			
Land West of Witney is identified as a Strategic Location for Growth for residential-led development providing approximately 700 dwellings.			
Development Type	Sustainable Urban Extension		
Development Requirement			
The development of the SLG must be guided by a comprehensive, community masterplan, supported by an initial development template (attached at Appendix 1), with any such masterplan required to demonstrate how the template has been taken into account. In accordance with Policy DM24, proposed strategic-scale development in this location will be required to assess the potential for including accommodation for travelling communities as part of the overall development mix.			

Policy WIT7 – Land north of Burford Road Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)

8.2.106 Land north of Burford Road is identified as a Strategic Location for Growth that will make a significant contribution towards meeting future housing needs and delivering the strategic growth objectives for Witney. The allocation provides an opportunity to deliver a substantial urban extension that supports the town's continued prosperity whilst ensuring that growth is accompanied by the infrastructure, services and facilities needed to create a sustainable community.

8.2.107 Development will create a high-quality new neighbourhood with a strong sense of place, incorporating a broad mix of homes, supporting facilities, public open space and green infrastructure, planned to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport use, support healthier lifestyles and provide strong connections to existing neighbourhoods, employment areas, schools and Witney town centre.

8.2.108 A comprehensive community masterplan will be required to ensure that development is integrated with the wider urban area, responds appropriately to landscape and environmental constraints, and contributes positively towards nature recovery and climate objectives.

8.2.109 Ensuring that development does not put undue pressure on the rural road network through Crawley and ensures traffic can move north of the river without undue impacts will be critical. Development will be required to deliver the infrastructure necessary to support growth and create a resilient, inclusive and well-connected community that strengthens Witney's role as West Oxfordshire's principal town.

Policy WIT7 – Land north of Burford Road Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)			
Indicative Site Area	84 Ha	**Current Use**	Agriculture
Landowner / Site Promoter	Mactaggart and Mickel, Savills, Gladman		
Overview			
Land to the north of Burford Road, within the parishes of Curbridge and Witney, is identified as a Strategic Location for Growth (SLG). The SLG is shown on the Key Diagram and represents a broad location that has been identified as being suitable for a residential-led mixed-use development of 700 new homes.			
Development Type	Sustainable Urban Extension		
Development Requirement			
The development of the SLG must be guided by a comprehensive, community-led masterplan, supported by an initial development template (attached at Appendix 1), with any such masterplan required to demonstrate how the template has been taken into account.			

In accordance with Policy DM24, proposed strategic-scale development in this location will be required to assess the potential for including accommodation for travelling communities as part of the overall development mix.

Key Infrastructure Requirements

8.1.111 The key strategic infrastructure requirements currently anticipated for the Witney Area include, but are not limited to;

- A new leisure centre and associated indoor and outdoor sports facilities serving the wider Witney Area;
- Additional sports pitch provision to meet future recreational needs;
- Delivery of a Mobility Hub and Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) infrastructure as part of enhanced sustainable transport connectivity along the A40 corridor;
- Upgrades to the sewerage and water supply network, including new and enhanced pumping station infrastructure where required;
- Strategic green infrastructure providing opportunities for recreation, biodiversity enhancement, landscape integration and climate resilience;
- Flood mitigation and sustainable drainage measures to manage surface water and reduce flood risk;
- Additional health infrastructure capacity to support future population growth;
- Improvements to Witney Town Centre and public realm to enhance vitality, accessibility and sense of place;
- Enhanced walking, wheeling and cycling connectivity both within the Witney Area and to surrounding settlements, services and employment locations; and
- New highway infrastructure provision to address issues of congestion and capacity within the town.

8.2.110 The Council will continue to work collaboratively with infrastructure providers, delivery agencies, neighbouring authorities, landowners, developers and local communities to refine, coordinate and secure the infrastructure necessary to support planned growth.

8.2.111 Development proposals within the Strategic Locations for Growth will be expected to contribute appropriately towards the delivery of infrastructure requirements having regard to their scale, impacts and viability considerations.

Phasing

8.2.112 Given the scale and strategic nature of the proposed Strategic Locations for Growth, careful consideration must be given to the timing and phasing of development. The Council's approach is founded on the principle that growth should be aligned with the timely provision of infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to support sustainable communities and maintain quality of life for existing and future residents.

8.2.113 The Strategic Locations for Growth are intended primarily to meet medium and longer-term development needs and are not expected to make a significant contribution to housing delivery during the initial five years of the plan period. Instead, the majority of development requirements arising in the early years of the Plan will be met through existing commitments, extant permissions, allocated sites and opportunities within settlements.

8.2.114 This provides an opportunity for the Strategic Locations for Growth to be planned comprehensively and brought forward in a co-ordinated manner, rather than through fragmented or piecemeal development.

8.2.115 A phased approach to delivery will enable the necessary masterplanning, technical assessment, stakeholder engagement and infrastructure planning work to be undertaken before substantial development commences. It will also allow key strategic infrastructure requirements, including transport improvements, Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) proposals, utility network enhancements, education provision, health infrastructure, green infrastructure and flood mitigation measures, to be aligned with the scale and pace of development.

8.2.116 The Council requires development proposals within the Strategic Locations for Growth to demonstrate how the delivery of homes, employment opportunities, community facilities and supporting infrastructure will be coordinated over time. Development should be phased to ensure that infrastructure is provided at the appropriate stage and that the impacts of growth do not exceed the capacity of existing networks and services.

8.2.117 In particular, the timing, scale and density of development will need to take account of the delivery of strategic transport interventions along the A40 corridor and other infrastructure identified through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and other evidence base work.

8.2.118 The release of development within the Strategic Locations for Growth will therefore be linked to the demonstrated availability of infrastructure capacity, or firm commitments for its delivery, commensurate with the scale and timing of development proposed.

8.2.119 The phased release of Strategic Locations for Growth will also provide flexibility to respond to changing circumstances over the plan period, including evolving infrastructure requirements, funding opportunities, technological advances and future reviews of the Local Plan. This approach supports the creation of well-planned, sustainable and resilient communities whilst ensuring that growth is delivered in a manner that is both achievable and infrastructure-led.

8.2.120 Accordingly, the Council will use planning conditions, planning obligations, infrastructure funding mechanisms and site-specific masterplans, as appropriate, to secure the timely delivery of infrastructure and ensure that development proceeds in accordance with agreed phasing strategies.

8.3 Chipping Norton Area

The Chipping Norton Area Today

8.3.1 The Chipping Norton Area, for the purposes of the Chipping Norton Area Strategy is defined as the town of Chipping Norton and the neighbouring parish of Over Norton. The extent of this area is shown on Figure 8.6 below.

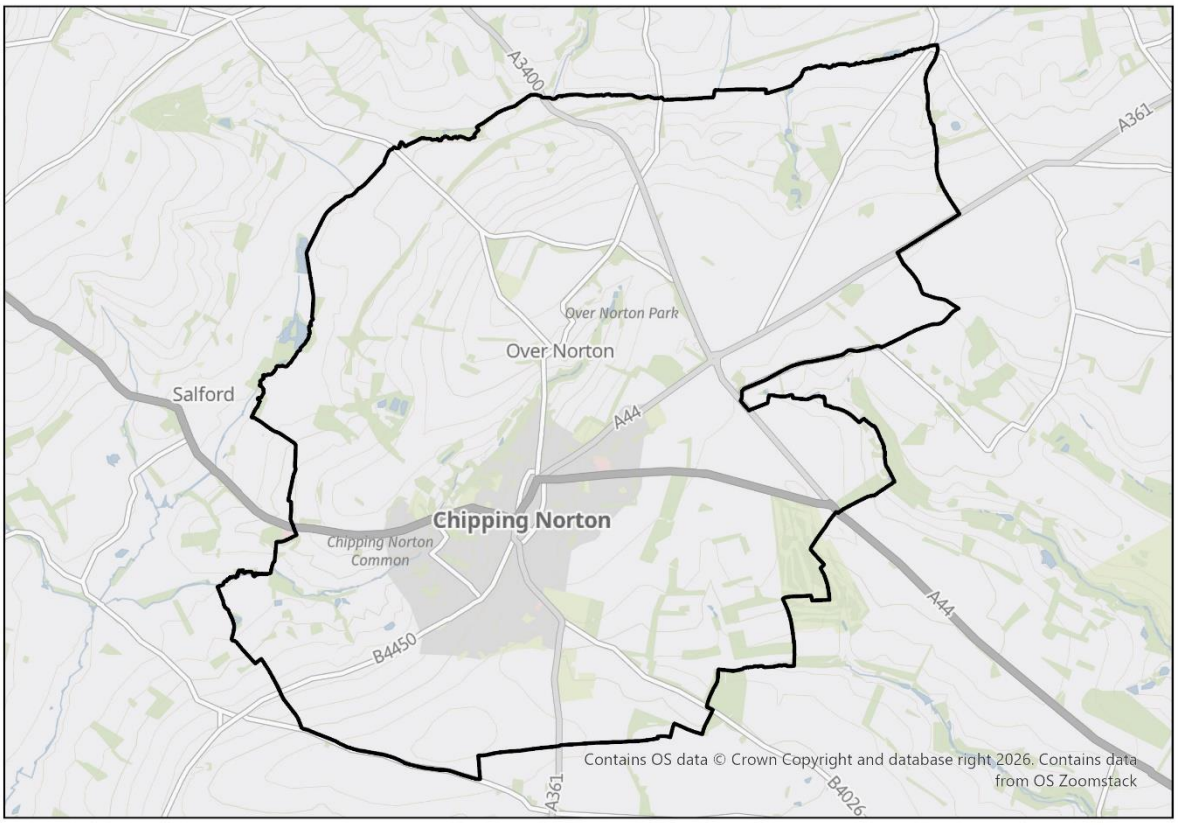

Figure 8.6 – Geographic Extent of the Chipping Norton Area Strategy

8.3.2 The Chipping Norton Area comprises the market town of Chipping Norton together with the adjoining parish of Over Norton. Home to just over 7,000 people, Chipping Norton forms the principal service centre for the northern part of the district and serves a wide rural hinterland extending into neighbouring districts. Located within and adjoining the Cotswolds National Landscape, the area is distinguished by its elevated setting, exceptional landscape quality, rich historic environment and strong sense of community identity.

8.3.3 Chipping Norton is a historic hilltop market town whose origins and prosperity were closely linked to the wool and tweed industries. The town has evolved over time whilst retaining its distinctive character and function as an important centre for shopping, employment, education, healthcare, leisure and community services. Over Norton, immediately adjoining

the northern edge of the town, retains its separate village identity and rural character whilst maintaining close functional links with Chipping Norton.

8.3.4 The area benefits from a high-quality built environment and an exceptional historic legacy. Chipping Norton Conservation Area encompasses a large proportion of the town centre and surrounding historic streets, containing numerous listed buildings and heritage assets. Landmark features such as Bliss Mill, the historic Market Place, St Mary's Church and nearby scheduled monuments contribute significantly to local distinctiveness and sense of place. The extensive use of honey-coloured Cotswold stone and the town's dramatic topography create a distinctive townscape that is recognised throughout the district.

8.3.5 The area's location within and adjoining the Cotswolds National Landscape is one of its most significant defining characteristics. The National Landscape designation reflects the national importance of the area's natural beauty and contributes substantially to its identity, attractiveness and visitor appeal. Chipping Norton occupies a prominent hilltop position overlooking the Evenlode Valley and surrounding countryside, with extensive views into and out of the settlement. The town's form, skyline, historic built environment and relationship with the surrounding landscape are intrinsically linked to this exceptional setting. Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, landscape character and scenic quality of the National Landscape will therefore be a key consideration in accommodating future growth and change.

8.3.6 The area continues to experience demographic change, including an ageing population and changing household structures. Whilst it contains a relatively high proportion of affordable and social housing compared with some parts of West Oxfordshire, housing affordability remains a significant challenge, particularly for younger people and those seeking to enter the housing market. Meeting local housing needs whilst maintaining the area's distinctive character and environmental quality will remain an important consideration in planning for future growth.

8.3.7 Chipping Norton supports a diverse local economy and has a long-standing reputation as a working market town. Employment is concentrated across a range of sectors including healthcare, education, retail, hospitality, personal services, skilled trades and small businesses. Established employment areas on the western and eastern edges of the town continue to provide important job opportunities. However, despite the presence of local employment, many residents continue to commute to larger centres including Oxford, Banbury and beyond. Home and hybrid working are also an increasingly important feature of the local economy and create opportunities for flexible workspace provision and digital infrastructure improvements.

8.3.8 The town centre performs a vital role as the commercial and social heart of the area. Centred on the historic Market Place, it supports a diverse range of independent retailers, cafés, restaurants, professional services and community facilities. The town continues to benefit from a strong local customer base and remains an attractive destination for residents and visitors alike. However, there are opportunities to further enhance its vitality and viability through improvements to the public realm, accessibility, wayfinding and the overall quality of the visitor experience.

8.3.9 The area benefits from a wide range of community facilities and services. These include schools, healthcare provision, leisure facilities, sports clubs, community organisations and cultural assets such as the Chipping Norton Theatre. The War Memorial Community Hospital plays an important role in serving both the town and surrounding rural communities. Together, these facilities contribute significantly to health, wellbeing and quality of life. However, growing demand and an ageing population will place increasing pressure on existing services and infrastructure in the future.

8.3.10 Transport and connectivity remain important issues for the area. Chipping Norton occupies a strategic location at the junction of the A44 and A361 and benefits from road connections to Oxford, Banbury, Stratford-upon-Avon and the wider Cotswolds. However, traffic congestion and the movement of heavy goods vehicles through the town centre continue to affect environmental quality, accessibility and the overall attractiveness of the town. Parts of the town centre remain subject to an Air Quality Management Area due to traffic-related emissions. Whilst bus services provide connections to surrounding towns and villages, public transport options are relatively limited and the area lacks a direct rail connection, with the nearest stations located at Kingham and Charlbury. Improving opportunities for walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport will therefore remain a key priority.

8.3.11 The area is characterised by an exceptional natural environment that contributes significantly to its identity, attractiveness and quality of life. Located within and adjoining the Cotswolds National Landscape, the area benefits from a nationally important landscape setting comprising rolling farmland, wooded valleys, limestone grasslands and extensive panoramic views. The surrounding countryside includes important ecological networks associated with the Evenlode Valley, the Glyme and Dorn Conservation Target Area and other designated and non-designated habitats. These environmental assets provide important opportunities for recreation, biodiversity enhancement and nature recovery whilst also requiring careful management to conserve their special qualities.

8.3.12 Whilst the elevated nature of the area means that it is largely unaffected by fluvial flooding, localised surface water flooding and spring-related drainage issues can occur during periods of heavy rainfall. The effects of climate change are likely to increase these risks over time, highlighting the importance of sustainable drainage, water management and climate resilience measures as part of future development.

8.3.13 Over Norton makes an important contribution to the overall character of the area. Although closely related to Chipping Norton, the village retains a distinct identity derived from its historic form, rural setting and strong sense of community. The open land between the village and the town plays an important role in maintaining this separate character and in providing a transition between the built-up area and the surrounding countryside. Protecting local distinctiveness and avoiding inappropriate coalescence will therefore remain important considerations in managing future growth.

8.3.14 Looking ahead, Chipping Norton is well placed to continue fulfilling its role as a key service centre for the north of the district in accordance with the overall Spatial Strategy (Policy SP2). Continued investment in housing, employment opportunities, community infrastructure, sustainable transport, environmental enhancement and town centre improvements will help support a vibrant, resilient and sustainable future. Achieving this whilst conserving the area's outstanding landscape setting, historic character and strong sense of place will be fundamental to its long-term success.

Statement of Ambition - The Chipping Norton Area in 2043

8.3.15 Chipping Norton will continue to play a vital role in the sustainable future of West Oxfordshire as the principal service centre for the north of the district. Building on its rich heritage, strong community identity and outstanding landscape setting, Chipping Norton will continue to evolve as attractive, vibrant and resilient places that meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors whilst conserving the qualities that make the area distinctive.

8.3.16 As a historic market town located within the Cotswolds National Landscape, Chipping Norton will accommodate carefully planned and sensitively designed growth that responds positively to its nationally important landscape setting, historic environment and townscape character. Development will be directed to the most appropriate and sustainable locations, making efficient use of land whilst protecting important views, heritage assets, green spaces and the separate identity of Over Norton and surrounding settlements.

8.3.17 The area will respond positively to changing demographic needs by delivering a wider range of homes, including affordable housing, accessible and adaptable homes, and accommodation suitable for older people and younger households. New development will be supported by the infrastructure, services and community facilities needed to create healthy and inclusive communities and ensure that growth contributes positively to quality of life.

8.3.18 Chipping Norton will strengthen its role as a thriving working market town and economic hub for the surrounding rural area. Existing employment areas will be supported and enhanced and improved digital infrastructure, flexible workspace and local employment opportunities will help reduce out-commuting, support economic resilience and enable more people to live and work locally.

8.3.19 The town centre will remain the commercial, cultural and social heart of the area. Building on its historic character and strong independent retail offer, investment will be directed towards improving the quality of the public realm, enhancing accessibility and creating a more attractive environment for residents and visitors. The town centre will continue to support a diverse mix of retail, leisure, cultural, community and hospitality uses that reinforce its role as a destination and service centre for the wider rural hinterland.

8.3.20 Improving accessibility, connectivity and environmental quality will be a key priority. The area will benefit from a coordinated approach to transport and movement that seeks to reduce congestion, improve air quality and provide greater opportunities for walking, wheeling and cycling.

8.3.21 The Chipping Norton Area will be a place where healthy and active lifestyles are supported through high-quality environments, accessible services and strong community infrastructure. Existing assets including healthcare facilities, schools, sports clubs, leisure facilities, cultural venues and community organisations will continue to play an important role in supporting wellbeing and social cohesion.

8.3.22 Opportunities will be taken to enhance the area's sports and recreation offer, including the delivery of a new multi-sport hub serving Chipping Norton and the surrounding area, providing modern and accessible facilities capable of meeting existing and future demand and supporting participation in sport, recreation and community activity.

8.3.23 The area's exceptional natural environment will be conserved and enhanced as a defining element of its future character and identity. The landscapes of the Cotswolds National Landscape, the Evenlode Valley and surrounding countryside, together with networks of green infrastructure and ecological assets, will be protected, restored and strengthened. Opportunities will be taken to improve biodiversity, support nature recovery, increase climate resilience and provide greater access to nature whilst conserving the scenic beauty and special qualities of the area.

8.3.24 Through a combination of carefully managed growth, investment in infrastructure and services, environmental enhancement and high-quality design, Chipping Norton will remain a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable place. It will continue to fulfil its important role as a market town serving the north of West Oxfordshire whilst safeguarding the landscape, heritage and community qualities that underpin its unique sense of place.

Strategic Development Framework for the Chipping Norton Area

8.3.25 Building on the area profile and statement of ambition above, Policy CN1 provides a framework for managing growth and investment in the Chipping Norton Area to 2043.

8.3.26 The framework recognises Chipping Norton's role as the principal service centre for northern West Oxfordshire and as a sustainable focus for housing, employment, services and community facilities serving a wide rural hinterland. It seeks to ensure that future growth is carefully planned and delivered alongside the infrastructure, environmental improvements and community facilities necessary to support a thriving community.

8.3.27 The framework also seeks to strengthen Chipping Norton's role as a working market town and local economic hub, support the vitality and attractiveness of the town centre, improve accessibility and connectivity, address congestion and air quality issues, and enhance the area's valued landscape, heritage and ecological assets.

8.3.28 Particular emphasis is placed on conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape, protecting the town's historic character and important views, maintaining the separate identity of Over Norton, and ensuring that new development contributes positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

8.3.29 The Council will work proactively with landowners, developers, infrastructure providers, local communities, Oxfordshire County Council, neighbouring authorities and other stakeholders to secure the coordinated delivery of development and infrastructure in accordance with this framework.

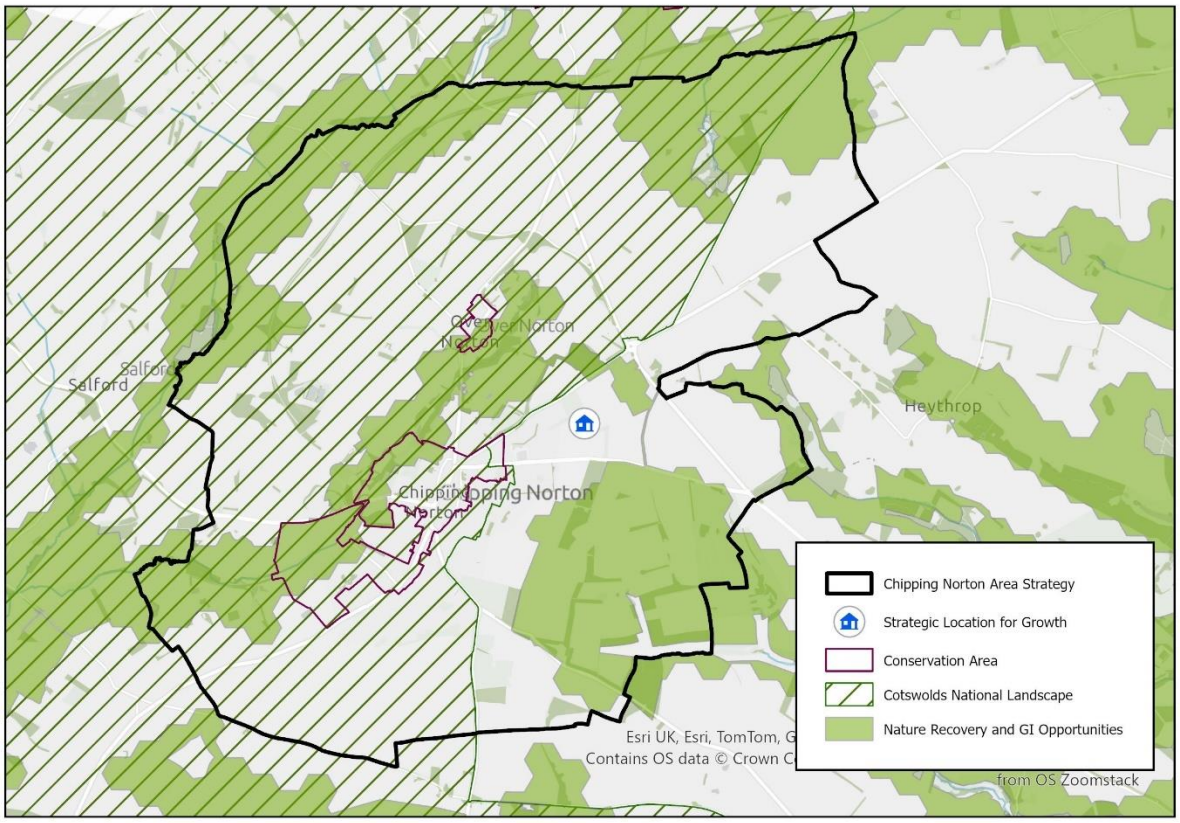

Figure 8.7 – Chipping Norton Strategic Framework

Policy CN1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Chipping Norton Area

Development proposals within the Chipping Norton Area will be supported where they contribute positively towards the delivery of the following objectives, having regard to their scale, nature and location:

1. **Supporting Chipping Norton's role as a principal rural service centre**

    a. Reinforcing Chipping Norton's role as the principal service centre for northern West Oxfordshire through the provision of housing, employment opportunities, services, community facilities and infrastructure;

    b. Supporting investment that strengthens the town's role as a commercial, cultural, leisure and community hub serving both local residents and the wider rural hinterland;

    c. Supporting the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centre in accordance with Policy CN2.

2. **Delivering sustainable and well-integrated growth**

    a. Prioritising the efficient use of land within the existing built-up area through redevelopment, regeneration, infill development and the reuse of previously developed land where appropriate;

    b. Delivering development in locations that relate well to the existing settlement pattern, respect the town's compact form and avoid harmful, excessive encroachment into the wider countryside;

    c. Providing a balanced mix of housing types, tenures and sizes, including affordable housing, homes suitable for older people and accessible and adaptable homes that meet identified local needs;

    d. Ensuring that development is supported by the timely provision of infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to meet the needs arising from growth in accordance with Policy CP4.

3. **Supporting a resilient local economy**

    a. Protecting and enhancing existing employment areas, including Worcester Road, Station Road and other established employment locations in accordance with Policy DM27;

    b. Supporting business growth, innovation, home working, flexible workspace and digital infrastructure improvements;

    c. Supporting tourism, leisure and cultural activities that reinforce the area's role as a destination.

4. **Conserving landscape, heritage and environmental assets**

    a. Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, landscape character and special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape in accordance with Policy SP4;

    b. Protecting the town's distinctive hilltop setting, important views into, out of and across the settlement, and its relationship with the surrounding countryside and Evenlode Valley;

    c. Conserving and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, including the Conservation Area, listed buildings, archaeological assets and the wider historic townscape;

    d. Maintaining the separate identity and character of Over Norton and avoiding harmful coalescence between settlements;

    e. Protecting, enhancing and connecting green infrastructure, biodiversity assets, ecological networks and accessible natural green spaces.

5. **Improving connectivity, environmental quality and climate resilience**

    a. Supporting measures that reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality and enhance the quality of the public realm;

b. Delivering improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling networks, including enhanced connections between residential areas, employment areas, schools, community facilities, the town centre and surrounding countryside;

c. Supporting improvements to public transport services and connectivity with surrounding settlements and nearby rail stations;

6. Creating healthy and inclusive communities

a. Supporting the provision and enhancement of healthcare, education, sports, leisure, recreation, cultural and community facilities including the delivery of a new multi-sport hub to serve Chipping Norton and its rural catchment;

b. Enhancing opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles through the provision of high-quality public realm, open space, recreation facilities and active travel infrastructure;

c. Creating safe, attractive and inclusive places that promote health, wellbeing, social interaction and community cohesion.

Chipping Norton Town Centre Strategy

8.3.30 Chipping Norton Town Centre is the principal retail, leisure, cultural and service centre for the northern part of West Oxfordshire and performs an important role within the district's hierarchy of centres. Serving both the town itself and a wide rural hinterland, it provides an important focus for shopping, employment, services, culture, leisure and community activity. Its historic market town character, attractive built environment and strong independent business sector contribute significantly to its distinctiveness and appeal.

8.3.31 The town centre is characterised by a compact and walkable historic core focused on the High Street, Market Place and West Street. It contains a diverse mix of national retailers, independent shops, cafés, restaurants, professional services and community facilities. The weekly market continues to play an important role in supporting vitality and footfall and contributes to the town's identity as a traditional market town serving the surrounding rural area.

8.3.32 Chipping Norton also benefits from a distinctive cultural offer that helps differentiate it from many centres of a similar size. The Chipping Norton Theatre, Living Room Cinema and a range of community events, festivals and activities contribute to a vibrant cultural life and support the town's role as a destination for both residents and visitors. Together with its historic environment and location on the edge of the Cotswolds National Landscape, these assets create opportunities to strengthen the town's visitor economy and cultural profile.

8.3.33 Despite these strengths, the town centre faces a number of challenges. Vacancy rates remain above the national average and footfall has declined in recent years, reflecting wider changes in shopping behaviour, the growth of online retail and changing consumer expectations. There is a need to ensure that the town centre remains adaptable and resilient by encouraging a broader range of uses, supporting entrepreneurship and making effective use of vacant and underutilised buildings.

8.3.34 Accessibility and movement also remain important issues. The A44 passes directly through the town centre and, whilst providing important strategic connectivity, can create congestion, severance and environmental impacts that affect the quality of the public realm and pedestrian experience. Opportunities exist to improve walking, wheeling and cycling connections, strengthen wayfinding and create a more attractive, accessible and people-focused environment.

8.3.35 The historic environment is one of the town centre's greatest assets. The Conservation Area, Listed Buildings, traditional shopfronts and historic burgage plot pattern all contribute to its special character and sense of place. Ensuring that investment, regeneration and change are carefully managed to conserve and enhance these assets will be essential to maintaining the town centre's attractiveness and distinct identity.

8.3.36 Looking ahead, there is a significant opportunity to strengthen Chipping Norton's role as a thriving market town, cultural destination and service centre for northern West Oxfordshire. Investment in the public realm, heritage-led regeneration, cultural activity, sustainable transport and town centre living can help support a more vibrant and resilient centre that continues to serve residents, businesses and visitors whilst retaining the qualities that make it distinctive.

Key Priorities

8.3.37 Key priorities for Chipping Norton Town Centre include:

- Maintaining and strengthening Chipping Norton's role as the principal retail, leisure and service centre for northern West Oxfordshire;
- Supporting a diverse and resilient mix of retail, leisure, hospitality, cultural, community and service uses that respond to changing economic and consumer trends;
- Protecting and enhancing the Primary Shopping Area and maintaining active town centre frontages;
- Supporting the adaptive reuse and regeneration of vacant, underutilised and upper-floor premises through high-quality mixed-use development;
- Strengthening the town's market function and supporting a vibrant and inclusive evening economy;
- Improving the quality of the public realm, including opportunities for enhanced seating, planting, greening, accessibility and wayfinding;
- Improving pedestrian, wheeling and cycling connectivity, particularly across the A44 corridor and between key destinations within the town centre;
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, including the Conservation Area, traditional shopfronts, burgage plots and heritage assets;

- Supporting Chipping Norton's role as a cultural destination through investment in cultural venues, events, festivals and community activities;
- Strengthening the town's role as a visitor destination and gateway to the Cotswolds through improved visitor facilities, interpretation and promotion; and
- Supporting climate resilience through urban greening, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable drainage and low-carbon design.

A Strategy for Chipping Norton Town Centre

8.3.38 Building on the Strategic Development Framework for the Chipping Norton Area (Policy CN1), the purpose of Policy CN2 is to maintain and enhance Chipping Norton Town Centre as the principal retail, leisure, cultural and service centre for northern West Oxfordshire, ensuring that it continues to meet the needs of residents, businesses, visitors and surrounding rural communities.

8.3.39 The policy seeks to support a vibrant, diverse and resilient town centre that responds positively to changing economic, retail and social trends whilst reinforcing the qualities that make Chipping Norton a distinctive and attractive market town. It promotes investment in the built environment, public realm, heritage assets and community infrastructure, whilst encouraging a broader mix of retail, leisure, cultural, community, employment and residential uses that support activity throughout the day and evening.

8.3.40 A key priority will be the enhancement of the town centre environment through targeted public realm, accessibility and movement improvements. This includes measures to improve pedestrian connectivity, accessibility and wayfinding, reduce the impacts of traffic congestion, strengthen links across the A44 corridor and create a more attractive, inclusive and people-focused environment. Together, these improvements will help enhance the visitor experience, support local businesses and reinforce the town centre's role as the social and commercial heart of the community.

8.3.41 The policy also seeks to strengthen Chipping Norton's role as a cultural destination and gateway to the Cotswolds, building on its historic market town character, strong independent business sector, weekly market, heritage assets, cultural venues and location within and adjoining the Cotswolds National Landscape.

8.3.42 Opportunities for heritage-led regeneration, the reuse of vacant and underutilised buildings, town centre living and the enhancement of key spaces such as the High Street, Market Place and West Street will be supported where they contribute positively to the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centre.

8.3.43 Particular emphasis will be placed on protecting and enhancing the town centre's distinctive historic character. The Conservation Area, historic burgage plot pattern, traditional shopfronts and numerous heritage assets collectively create a strong sense of place and are fundamental to the town's attractiveness as both a service centre and visitor destination. Where relevant, development will therefore be expected to conserve and enhance these qualities whilst helping the town centre adapt to changing needs and opportunities.

8.3.44 Through a combination of investment, public realm enhancement, heritage-led regeneration, cultural activity, sustainable transport improvements and a more diverse range of uses and experiences, Chipping Norton Town Centre will continue to evolve as a thriving and distinctive market town centre, supporting the long-term prosperity, wellbeing and identity of the wider Chipping Norton Area.

Policy CN2 – Chipping Norton Town Centre

1. Chipping Norton Town Centre will continue to serve as a key service, retail, leisure, and cultural hub for northern West Oxfordshire, building on its historic character, strong independent offer and distinctive cultural scene.

2. Development proposals will be supported where they contribute to the following overarching aims and help deliver a more attractive, inclusive and well-connected town centre for residents, businesses, and visitors:

    a. Enhancing vitality and viability through mixed-use development and adaptive reuse by:

        i. Protecting the vitality and viability of the Primary Shopping Area by supporting active town centre uses at ground floor level. Proposals resulting in the unjustified loss of retail or other active town centre uses within the Primary Shopping Area will not be supported where they would harm the vitality, viability or function of the town centre.
        ii. Supporting the reuse of vacant, under-used and upper-floor buildings for flexible mixed uses, including residential, cultural, educational, health and wellbeing, and workspaces, where they contribute to an active and resilient town centre and do not create amenity issues.
        iii. Promoting the weekly market as a distinctive feature of the town centre, including through themed markets and stronger links with local producers and events.
        iv. Encouraging family-friendly evening economy uses that support a safe and inclusive night-time environment.
        v. Supporting temporary and meanwhile uses, and adaptable spaces for entrepreneurs, start-ups, creatives and small-scale local enterprises.

    b. Improving accessibility, movement and connectivity by:

        i. Enhancing pedestrian safety and connectivity through upgraded crossings, traffic calming measures and improved links across the A44 corridor and wider town centre, particularly at key pinch points.
        ii. Improving cycling infrastructure and secure cycle parking to support active travel.
        iii. Improving public transport accessibility, signage and wayfinding to better connect the town centre with key destinations, including attractions, cultural venues and green spaces.

    c. Enhancing placemaking, the public realm and the historic environment by:

        i. Delivering high-quality, inclusive and heritage-led public realm improvements focused on key streets and spaces, including High Street, Market Place and West Street, incorporating greening, tree planting, seating, surface upgrades, improved accessibility, wayfinding and opportunities for community activity and events.
        ii. Enhancing existing public spaces and creating improved civic and community focal points that support gathering, events and a welcoming visitor experience.

iii. Conserving and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and their settings, including the Conservation Area, historic burgage plot pattern, traditional shopfronts and locally distinctive architectural features, through high-quality design and sensitive adaptation.
iv. Supporting the development and promotion of heritage trails and guides as part of the visitor offer.

d. Supporting local enterprise, tourism and cultural identity by:

i. Promoting Chipping Norton as a distinctive cultural and heritage destination serving the wider rural area.
ii. Coordinating tourism, branding and promotion in partnership with local organisations to strengthen its role within the wider West Oxfordshire and Cotswolds visitor offer.
iii. Supporting cultural venues to broaden and diversify family-friendly programming that attracts residents and visitors.
iv. Enhancing the town's cultural calendar through coordinated events, festivals, themed markets and seasonal programming, supported by effective branding and digital promotion.

Priority Growth Locations

8.3.45 A key component of the Chipping Norton Area Strategy is to provide clarity on where future growth and investment will be focused over the plan period to 2043.

8.3.46 Under the Plan's overall Spatial Strategy (Policy SP2) whilst Chipping Norton will be a key focus for future growth alongside Carterton and Witney, the level of planned growth will be more modest, reflecting the fact that much of the town falls within or adjacent to the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL).

8.3.47 In accordance with the Spatial Strategy, the primary focus will be on the efficient re-use of previously developed (brownfield) land within the built area, complemented by a sustainable urban extension to the north-east of the town.

8.3.48 Within this context, priority growth locations at Chipping Norton have been identified as follows:

- Major existing commitments of 10+ homes and 1,000 sqm+ commercial floorspace
- Land North of London Road Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)

8.3.49 Major existing commitments are sites that as of 1st April 2026, have planning permission or a resolution to grant planning permission for more than 10 homes or 1,000 sqm of commercial floorspace. These are effectively already in the development 'pipeline' and are expected to make an important contribution towards meeting local and wider housing, employment and infrastructure needs. They are included below for information with the residential permissions reflected in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2.

8.3.50 The Land North of London Road Strategic Location for Growth (SLG) comprises a broad area of land between London Road and Banbury Road which has been identified as being suitable to accommodate strategic-scale housing growth along with supporting community services and facilities in the period up to 2043.

8.3.51 The SLG supersedes Policy CN1 of the adopted Local Plan 2031 which allocated land to the east of Chipping Norton for around 1,200 homes but is no longer able to be delivered in its previously envisaged form due to significant archaeological constraints.

Major Existing Planning Commitments (10 or more homes)

8.3.52 Major existing commitments with planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission in the Chipping Norton area as of 1st April 2026 include the following:

- 104 dwellings – Land south of Charlbury Road, Chipping Norton (24/00769/OUT)
- 86 dwellings – Land at Hit or Miss Farm, Banbury Road, Chipping Norton (24/00921/RES)
- 14 dwellings – Former Chipping Norton War Memorial Hospital (17/02814/FUL)

8.3.53 The largest of these schemes on the land south of Charlbury Road (104 dwellings) was granted outline planning permission in September 2025 and is the subject of a current reserved matters application which is pending determination. As indicated in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2, all of these homes are expected to be completed by 2031.

8.3.54 Land at 'Hit or Miss' Farm is now under construction by CALA Homes with all 86 dwellings expected to be complete by 2028.

Land North of London Road Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)

8.3.55 During the preparation of the adopted Local Plan 2031, it was agreed in principle that Chipping Norton should be a key focus for future growth given its status as a Main Service Centre alongside Witney and Carterton.

8.3.56 It was further agreed that because much of the town falls within the Cotswold National Landscape - a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - the most logical direction for any future expansion of the town would be to the east on land which falls outside of the CNL and is therefore much less constrained.

8.3.57 A strategic urban extension of around 600 homes was initially proposed but through Main Modifications published in November 2016, the Council proposed to increase this to around 1,400 homes to help meet a significant uplift in the plan's overall housing requirement. The increase was coupled with a proportionate increase in supporting infrastructure including a proposed eastern link road that would connect through the site from Banbury Road in the north to the Burford Road in the south. It was also proposed that 5 hectares of land to the north of London Road would be designated for employment use to complement the provision of new homes.

8.3.58 Through the examination hearing sessions, the Inspector concluded that the quantum of development should be reduced from 1,400 to 1,200 to better reflect more detailed analysis of site capacity by the site promoters but that otherwise, the proposed allocation was sound and legally compliant. The East Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area (SDA) was duly incorporated into the final version of the Local Plan 2031 which was formally adopted in September 2018.

8.3.59 However, since then, there has been relatively little progress in bringing the site forward. Two small parts of the site have been completed including 100 homes on land at 'The Pillars' and 73 homes on land to the south of London Road and west of the Parker's Circus development.

8.3.60 Progress with the rest of the site has been slow - initially hampered by difficulties with land assembly and co-ordination. In early 2022, the two principal landowners, Oxfordshire County Council and CALA Homes agreed to work together to prepare a joint masterplan with an initial stakeholder meeting held in March 2022.

8.3.61 Shortly afterwards however, the process was effectively abandoned due to the discovery of significant roman and iron age remains across much of the southern part of the site. Following further assessment and consultation by Historic England, a large proportion of the site to the east of Chipping Norton School was formally designated as a Scheduled Monument in February 2024.

8.3.62 The designated area is shown below along with the previously designated Chipping Norton motte and bailey castle, and fishpond.

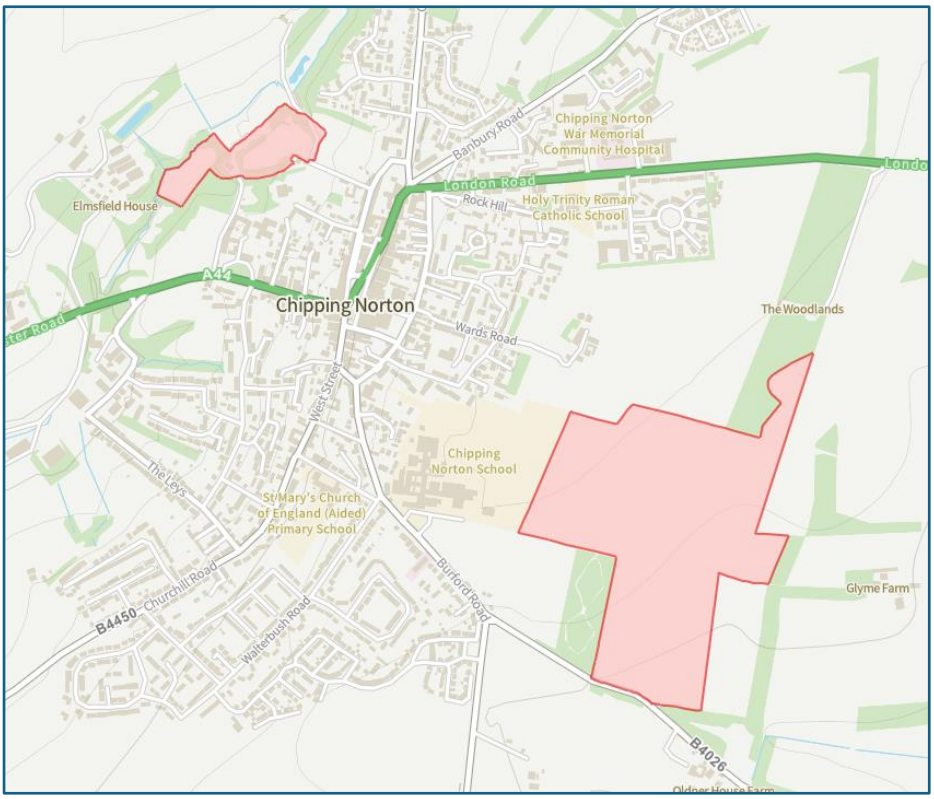

Figure 8.8 - Chipping Norton motte and bailey castle, and fishpond and Romano-British rural settlement and Iron Age remains, on the eastern edge of Chipping Norton

8.3.63 The extent of the scheduled monument designation (and the possibility of there being further archaeological remains to the north) has led Oxfordshire County Council to focus on the land in their ownership to the north of London Road and they have indicated that any development south of London Road will be relatively limited because of the potential for further archaeological constraints.

8.3.64 The position taken by Oxfordshire County Council, along with the significant archaeological constraints imposed by the scheduling itself, renders it impossible for the other main landowner CALA Homes to bring forward development on their part of the site.

8.3.65 On this basis, it is not possible for the East Chipping Norton SDA to be delivered in the form envisaged in the adopted Local Plan 2031.

8.3.66 Consequently, the District Council proposes to supersede Policy CN1 of the adopted Local Plan 2031 with a new policy, Policy CN3 - Land North of London Road Strategic Location for Growth (SLG). As indicated on the Plan's Key Diagram, the proposed SLG is focused primarily on the triangle of land between London Road, Banbury Road and the A3400.

8.3.67 This is considered to represent a logical and sustainable evolution of the current allocation, reflecting both the change in circumstances affecting the site and the pattern of development that has already been established on the eastern side of the town.

8.3.68 Development will be guided by a process of community masterplanning. The draft Plan defines a community masterplan as one which has been informed by a process of demonstrably meaningful and effective community engagement. This approach will help to ensure that local communities, infrastructure providers, key stakeholders and other interested parties are actively involved in shaping the future form, character and delivery of development, including the provision of supporting infrastructure, services, facilities and green infrastructure.

8.3.69 A more northern-focused approach would allow new development to integrate effectively with both existing neighbourhoods and recent development. The area benefits from close proximity to a range of existing services and facilities, including Chipping Norton Health Centre on Russell Way, local schools, existing employment areas and recently completed commercial development south of London Road, including the Costa Coffee drive-through and M&S Foodhall. These facilities already serve a growing population and provide a strong foundation for the creation of a sustainable and well-connected community.

8.3.70 The location also offers opportunities to deliver improved walking, cycling and vehicular connections between existing and new neighbourhoods, creating the potential to create an holistic and cohesive urban extension rather than a series of disconnected development parcels.

8.3.71 The location of the SLG between two established road corridors – London Road and Banbury Road – provides flexibility in relation to access arrangements and opportunities to create a permeable movement network linked to the wider town.

8.3.72 Importantly, a more northern-focused approach also creates the opportunity to plan comprehensively for supporting infrastructure. This includes the potential delivery of a new multi-sport hub serving both Chipping Norton and its wider rural catchment, together with areas of open space, green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancement and sustainable drainage.

8.3.73 The sports hub proposal is being actively promoted by a local community group and the District Council's Leisure Team has offered their 'in principle' support for the concept. The provision of a multi sports hub has number of advantages including the ability to meet different needs in a single location, in turn, helping to alleviate existing problems in other locations such as the Greystones pitches to the south of the town which suffer from traffic congestion on match days due to the accommodation of both football and rugby.

8.3.74 Policy CN3 therefore includes a requirement for any community masterplan within the SLG to incorporate the provision of a multi-sports hub in a suitable, central location with high levels of accessibility including walking, cycling and wheeling.

8.3.75 Any built development to the south of London Road is expected to be relatively limited in depth (i.e. no further than the current extent of Parker's Circus) and complemented by supporting facilities including public open space.

8.3.76 The extent of built development in the east is expected to extend no further than the existing public right of way which runs north-south from the A3400 to London Road.

8.3.77 Overall, concentrating future growth on the land between London Road and Banbury Road is considered to represent a logical response to the circumstances that have emerged since the adoption of the current Local Plan.

8.3.78 It builds upon the established direction of growth to the east of the town, makes effective use of land that is well-related to existing development and infrastructure, responds appropriately to archaeological constraints, and provides the opportunity to deliver a comprehensively planned and sustainable extension to Chipping Norton.

Policy CN3 – Land east of Chipping Norton at London Road

Land east of Chipping Norton is identified as a strategic location for growth that will contribute towards meeting housing needs whilst supporting the long-term vitality and sustainability of one of West Oxfordshire's principal settlements. Reflecting Chipping Norton's location within the Cotswolds National Landscape and its distinctive historic character, the allocation represents a carefully planned and proportionate opportunity for growth that balances development needs with environmental stewardship.

The site provides an opportunity to deliver a comprehensively planned urban extension that strengthens Chipping Norton's role as a service centre for surrounding rural communities whilst supporting local services, facilities and businesses. Development will be expected to provide a mix of homes, public open space, green infrastructure and supporting facilities that contribute towards the creation of a healthy, inclusive and sustainable community.

A comprehensive master planned approach will be required to ensure that development integrates successfully with the existing town and responds positively to the sensitivities of the surrounding landscape. Particular emphasis should be placed on landscape-led design, conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape, protecting ecological networks and biodiversity assets, and supporting active travel connections to the town centre, schools, employment opportunities and community facilities.

Development should demonstrate how it will support climate resilience, deliver measurable biodiversity net gains and secure the infrastructure necessary to support growth. The allocation should contribute towards creating a distinctive and attractive new neighbourhood that reflects the character of Chipping Norton, enhances environmental quality and supports the town's long-term social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

Policy CN3 – Land east of Chipping Norton at London Road Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)			
Indicative Site Area	37 Ha	**Current Use**	Agricultural
Site Promoter	Oxfordshire County Council / Rainier		
Overview			
Land North of London Road / East of Chipping Norton is identified as a Strategic Location for Growth for residential-led development providing approximately 750 dwellings.			
Development Type	Sustainable Urban Extension		
Development Requirements			
The development of the SLG must be guided by a comprehensive, community masterplan, supported by an initial development template (attached at Appendix 1), with any such masterplan required to demonstrate how the template has been taken into account. In accordance with Policy DM24, proposed strategic-scale development in this location will be required to assess the potential for including accommodation for travelling communities as part of the overall development mix.			

Key Infrastructure Requirements

8.3.79 Chipping Norton is supported by a range of established community, cultural and healthcare infrastructure. The War Memorial Community Hospital provides both primary care and a range of secondary services. The town also benefits from a variety of cultural and community facilities, including the Chipping Norton Theatre, leisure centre, outdoor pool, youth centre, sports clubs and a range of local societies. However, the town's ageing population and associated increase in health and mobility needs are placing additional pressure on existing infrastructure. Identified gaps in provision include a shortfall of one full-sized rugby union pitch, limited accessibility to greenspace, and a library facility that is widely considered to be inadequate in terms of its size, layout and accessibility.

8.3.80 The town benefits from connections to the wider strategic road network via the A44 and A361. Notwithstanding this, Chipping Norton experiences congestion and a high proportion of HGV movements, which adversely affect accessibility, highway safety and environmental quality. Public transport provision is relatively limited, with bus services providing connections to nearby centres including Banbury and Oxford. Parking constraints within the town centre remain an ongoing issue for residents, businesses and visitors. Deficiencies in active travel infrastructure have also been identified, including poor cycling links and insufficient cycle parking provision, although these matters are currently being progressed through Oxfordshire County Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

8.3.81 Planned development will increase pressure on existing infrastructure and will require appropriate mitigation and enhancement. Key requirements include the delivery of a

additional primary school capacity to serve development at land east of Chipping Norton, improvements to green infrastructure provision, and enhancements to formal sports facilities in the form of a multi-sports hub to serve Chipping Norton and the surrounding area.,. In addition, Thames Water has identified the need for upgrades to the Chipping Norton Sewage Treatment Works to ensure sufficient capacity is available to accommodate future growth and to maintain environmental standards.

Phasing

8.3.82 Infrastructure provision in Chipping Norton will be aligned with the timing and scale of development to ensure that growth is supported by appropriate and timely investment. In the early part of the plan period, priority will be given to addressing existing capacity constraints and enabling development to come forward. This will include securing additional primary school capacity to serve development to the east of the town, alongside targeted highway improvements, early active travel measures and enhancements to existing community facilities. Engagement with Thames Water will also be required to programme necessary upgrades to the Sewage Treatment Works.

8.3.83 As development progresses, additional infrastructure will be delivered to meet growing demand. This will include provision of enhanced sports and green infrastructure, and ongoing improvements to sustainable transport, parking and community facilities.

8.3.84 In the longer term, infrastructure provision will respond to the full extent of planned growth and changing local needs, including further transport improvements, potential expansion or reconfiguration of healthcare and community services, and completion of green infrastructure networks. Any further upgrades to wastewater infrastructure will be delivered in line with development requirements to ensure sufficient capacity and environmental compliance.

8.4 Bampton Area Strategy

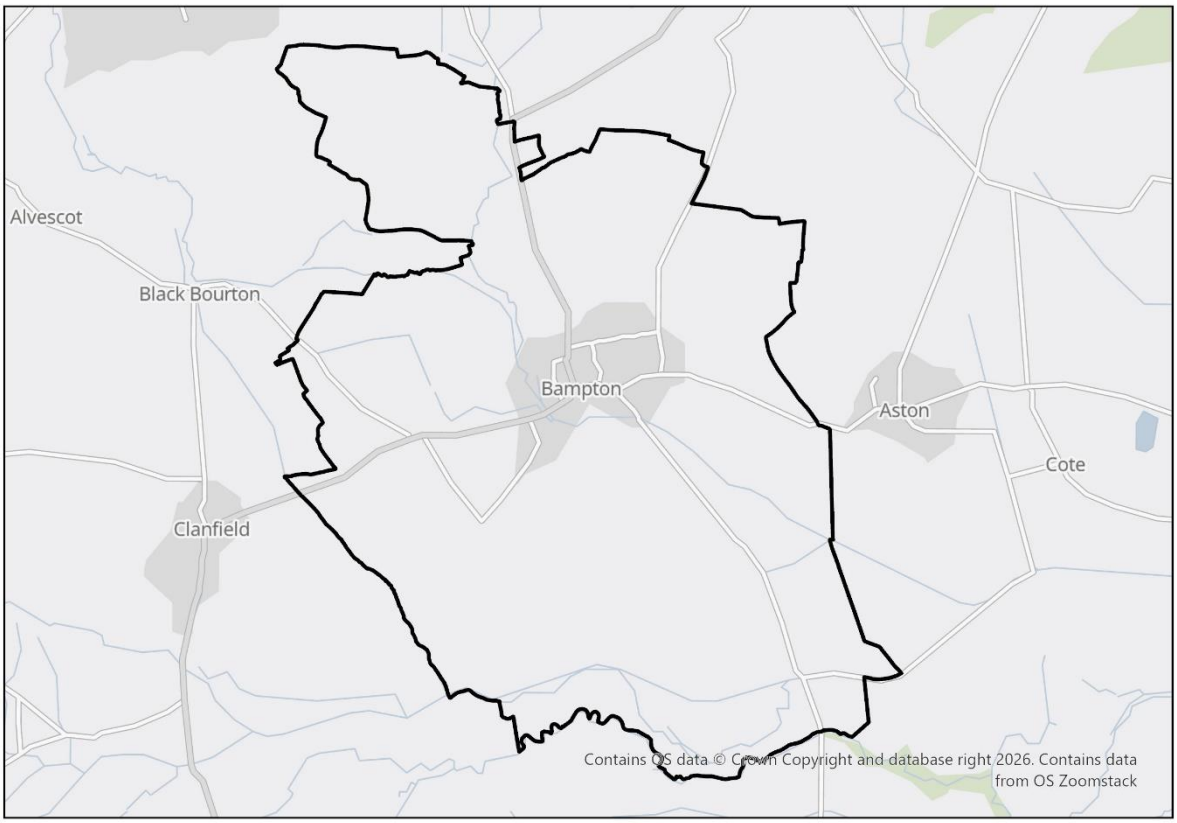

Figure 8.9 – Geographical Extent of Bampton Area Strategy

The Bampton Area Today

8.4.1 Bampton is a large, historic village located approximately 7km (4.5 miles) southwest of Witney. With a 2021 population of around 3,000 residents and 1,300 households, Bampton has experienced growth in recent years, including new residential development to the north and east of the village.

8.4.2 Whilst this growth has helped meet housing needs, concerns have been raised locally regarding the cumulative impact of recent development on infrastructure, services and the village's character. The age profile is broadly in line with national trends, although there is a slight underrepresentation of residents aged 15–24.

8.4.3 Levels of deprivation are low and employment levels are high, with over a third of the working-age population working from or mainly from home. Car ownership and car-based commuting are relatively high, reflecting both the rural nature of the area and limited public transport options.

8.4.4 Bampton is served by the Pulhams No. 19 bus route, providing hourly services to Carterton, Witney and neighbouring settlements six days a week. However, there are no Sunday services and limited evening services, with stakeholders identifying poor public transport provision and high car dependency as key local challenges. Train access is also limited, with the nearest station offering an hourly service located at Hanborough, approximately 14 miles away.

8.4.5 The village boasts a strong historic and cultural character, with the majority of the settlement designated as a conservation area (since 1976), containing numerous listed buildings. This includes the Grade I listed Church of St Mary the Virgin, a landmark with Saxon origins, Norman and Gothic additions, and a prominent spire.

8.4.6 Historic buildings such as Ham Court, Weald Manor, and The Deanery underscore Bampton's significance as one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in Oxfordshire, with origins stretching back to the Iron Age and references in the Domesday Book of 1086.

8.4.7 Bampton retains a well-defined nucleated layout, with some dispersed housing on its edges, including provision for gypsy and traveller communities. Most housing consists of traditional stone or brick-built houses that contribute positively to the village's distinctive character and sense of place.

8.4.8 The village core sits on gravel terraces and, whilst the majority of Bampton lies within Flood Zone 1, parts of the southern and western fringes are located within Flood Zone 3 due to their proximity to the Shill Brook. Flood risk is therefore an important consideration in planning for the future growth and resilience of the village.

8.4.9 Bampton benefits from a good range of community facilities for a rural settlement of its size, including a primary school, pre-school, GP surgery, library, shop and post office and a variety of pubs and eateries. However, concerns have been expressed regarding pressure on local services and infrastructure, including education, healthcare and wastewater capacity.

8.4.10 Cultural life remains vibrant, supported by organisations such as Bampton Classical Opera and West Ox Arts Gallery, together with the village's longstanding Morris dancing tradition celebrated annually on the late May Bank Holiday. Bampton was also a key filming location for the popular television series Downton Abbey, helping to raise its profile as a visitor destination.

8.4.11 The village supports a range of recreational activities, including Bampton Town Football Club, a skatepark and the Bampton & District Aunt Sally Association, reflecting a strong sense of community engagement and local tradition.

8.4.12 Bampton's rich heritage, strong community identity and range of local services reinforce its role as an important rural service centre. However, future change will need to be carefully managed to ensure that development remains proportionate to the village's size and character, respects heritage and environmental constraints, addresses infrastructure capacity issues and supports the long-term sustainability of the community.

Statement of Ambition - The Bampton Area in 2043

8.4.13 The Bampton Area will continue to evolve as a thriving and sustainable rural community, building on its rich heritage, strong sense of identity and important role as a local service centre for surrounding rural communities.

8.4.14 Future change will be carefully managed to ensure that the distinctive character, historic environment and setting of Bampton are protected and enhanced. Growth will be proportionate to the scale and role of the village, respecting its conservation area, listed buildings, historic street pattern and surrounding landscape whilst maintaining its unique sense of place.

8.4.15 New development will contribute towards meeting local housing needs, including the provision of affordable homes and housing suitable for younger people, families and older residents wishing to remain within the community.

8.4.16 Growth will be aligned with the timely provision of infrastructure and services. Particular emphasis will be placed on ensuring that wastewater infrastructure and other essential community facilities are able to accommodate future needs, helping to maintain a high quality of life for existing and future residents.

8.4.17 The area will become better connected through improvements to sustainable transport infrastructure and services. Opportunities will be taken to enhance walking, wheeling and cycling connections, improve access to public transport and reduce reliance on the private car where possible, helping to support healthier lifestyles and reduce carbon emissions.

8.4.18 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment will be a key priority. Green infrastructure, biodiversity networks, habitat restoration, tree planting and sustainable drainage measures will help strengthen nature recovery, improve climate resilience and support the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors.

8.4.19 Bampton's local economy will continue to benefit from small-scale enterprise, home working, rural businesses and sustainable tourism, building on the village's cultural heritage and visitor appeal whilst ensuring that economic activity remains compatible with its rural character.

8.4.20 Community facilities, recreational spaces, cultural assets and heritage buildings will continue to play a central role in village life. Opportunities will be taken to maintain and enhance these important assets.

8.4.21 Through carefully managed growth, investment in infrastructure, environmental enhancement and community-led planning, including any future Neighbourhood Plan, the Bampton Area will remain a resilient, attractive and inclusive rural community that helps meet identified development needs whilst safeguarding the qualities that make it distinctive.

Strategic Development Framework for the Bampton Area

8.4.22 Building on the area profile and statement of ambition above, Policy BA1 provides a framework for managing change and development within the Bampton area to 2043.

8.4.23 The framework recognises Bampton's role as an important rural service centre, providing homes, services, facilities and employment opportunities for both its own residents and the surrounding villages and countryside. It seeks to ensure that future development is proportionate to the scale and character of the village and is supported by the infrastructure, services and environmental improvements necessary to maintain a sustainable and resilient community.

8.4.24 The framework also seeks to ensure that growth is carefully balanced with the conservation of Bampton's rich historic environment, distinctive village character and landscape setting. Particular emphasis is placed on protecting heritage assets, respecting flood risk constraints, enhancing biodiversity and green infrastructure, and ensuring that development contributes positively to local infrastructure, connectivity and community wellbeing.

8.4.25 The Council will work proactively with Bampton Parish Council, local communities, landowners, developers, infrastructure providers and other stakeholders to support the coordinated delivery of development and infrastructure in accordance with this framework, including through the preparation of any future Neighbourhood Plan.

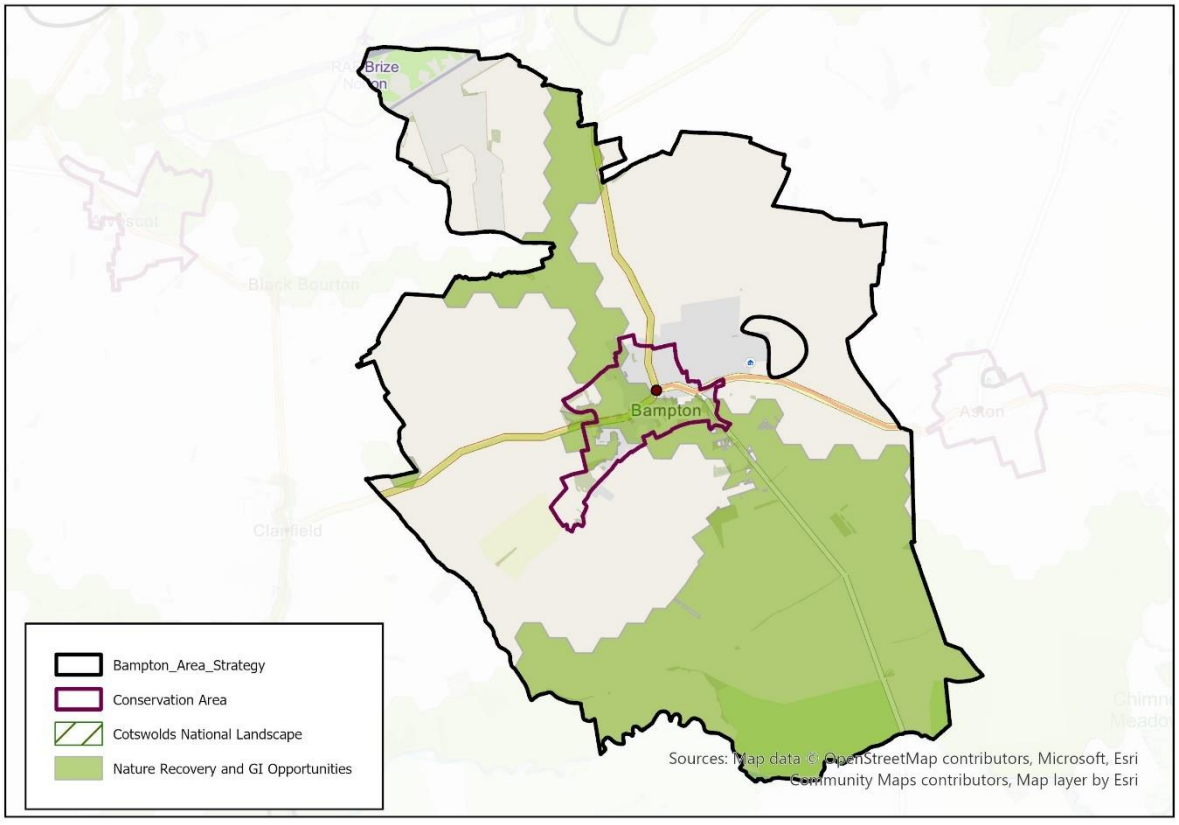

Figure 8.10 – Bampton Area Strategy

Policy BA1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Bampton Area

Development proposals within the Bampton Area will be supported where they contribute positively towards the delivery of the following objectives, having regard to their scale, nature and location:

1. **Supporting Bampton's role as a sustainable rural service centre**

    a. Reinforcing Bampton's role as a rural service centre through the provision, retention and enhancement of local services, community facilities, employment opportunities and infrastructure that support the needs of the village and its rural hinterland;

    b. Supporting the vitality and viability of Bampton village centre and maintaining its function as the focus for community, commercial and cultural activity;

    c. Supporting the sensitive reuse, adaptation and enhancement of existing buildings, including heritage assets, where this secures their long-term viable use.

2. **Delivering proportionate and infrastructure-led growth**

    a. Ensuring that development is proportionate to the scale, character and role of the village and does not result in unacceptable pressure on local infrastructure, services or environmental assets;

    b. Prioritising the efficient use of land and buildings within the existing built-up area through redevelopment, infill development and the reuse of previously developed land where appropriate;

    c. Providing a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, including affordable homes and housing that meets the needs of younger people, families and older residents;

    d. Ensuring that development is supported by the timely provision of infrastructure, services and utilities where required to mitigate the impacts of development.

3. **Conserving and enhancing the historic environment and local character**

    a. Conserving and enhancing the significance, setting and special character of Bampton's Conservation Area, listed buildings and other heritage assets;

    b. Respecting the historic settlement pattern, scale, form and vernacular character of the village and ensuring that new development responds positively to local distinctiveness;

    c. Safeguarding the separate identity, rural setting and important views into and out of the village;

    d. Securing high-quality design that reinforces local character and creates attractive and well-integrated places.

4. **Protecting and enhancing the natural environment**

    a. Protecting and enhancing green infrastructure, biodiversity assets, ecological networks and landscape features within and around the village;

    b. Delivering biodiversity enhancements, habitat creation, tree planting and multifunctional green infrastructure as an integral part of development proposals;

    c. Conserving and enhancing the landscape setting of the village and the environmental qualities that contribute to its distinctive rural character;

    d. Supporting opportunities to improve public access to nature and green spaces where appropriate.

5. **5. Improving connectivity and supporting climate resilience**

    a. Supporting improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling connections within the village and to other key destinations;

    b. Supporting improvements to public and community transport services and infrastructure where opportunities arise;

    c. Avoiding inappropriate development in areas at highest risk of flooding and ensuring that development incorporates sustainable drainage systems, flood mitigation measures and wider climate resilience measures

    d. Supporting high standards of sustainable design, energy efficiency and low-carbon development.

Priority Growth Locations

8.4.26 As outlined above, Bampton has accommodated a good level of growth in recent years including land to the north and east of the village. As a defined, rural service centre, it is reasonable to expect further growth to come forward in the period up to 2043.

8.4.27 However, in accordance with the overall spatial strategy (SP2) the level of future growth at Bampton is expected to be more modest than at other service centres such as Eynsham, Woodstock and Long Hanborough.

8.4.28 Additionally, under Policy BA1 above, future growth will be expected to be proportionate to the scale, character and role of the village.

8.4.29 There are no planning permissions currently in place at Bampton for major residential or employment development (i.e. more than 10 homes or more than 1,000 sqm of commercial floorspace).

8.4.30 However, a total of 11 land parcels to the north, east and south-east of the village have been put forward by landowners and site promoters for consideration through the Council's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

8.4.31 The HELAA concludes that three parcels of land to the east of the village are suitable, in part, for development.

8.4.32 Through the Council's 'Spatial Options' consultation in November/December 2025, views were sought on the principle of further extending Bampton to the east to accommodate around 150 new homes.

8.4.33 Consultation responses expressed mixed views with many respondents raising concerns about existing infrastructure capacity, including healthcare, education, drainage, flooding, transport and parking, questioning whether the village can accommodate further growth without significant investment.

8.4.34 Concerns were also raised regarding the impact of cumulative development, the risk of coalescence with Aston, and constraints relating to minerals safeguarding, archaeology and flood risk.

8.4.35 Opinion was divided on the scale and location of future growth with some respondents considering the proposed allocation to be appropriate and sustainable, helping to distribute growth more evenly across the district, while others argued that the proposed scale was either too large or too small and suggested alternative sites or directions for expansion.

8.4.36 Several responses highlighted opportunities to improve public transport and active travel connections as part of any future development.

8.4.37 Taking account of the responses received and further evidence and analysis, the Council remains of the view that the eastern expansion of Bampton represents the most appropriate and sustainable option for accommodating further planned growth in the period up to 2043.

Policy BA2 – Land East of Bampton

8.4.38 Policy BA2 allocates land to the east of Bampton for a residential-led development of up to 150 dwellings, including affordable housing, public open space, green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements and associated infrastructure.

8.4.39 The allocation represents a proportionate extension to the village and has been identified as a suitable location for growth, relating well to the existing built-up area whilst providing opportunities to meet local housing needs and support Bampton's continued role as a service centre. The site is capable of being integrated with the existing settlement and offers the opportunity to deliver a well-designed and landscape-led development that respects the character and setting of the village.

8.4.40 The policy seeks to ensure that development is comprehensively planned and delivered alongside the infrastructure, services and environmental enhancements necessary to support sustainable development. Key requirements include the provision of affordable housing, the protection and enhancement of landscape and biodiversity assets, the conservation of the historic environment and the delivery of sustainable transport connections.

8.4.41 Development of the site will be dependent upon the availability of sufficient wastewater treatment capacity or the delivery of necessary upgrades to the wastewater network

8.4.42 The policy also places particular emphasis on creating a sensitive transition between the village and the surrounding countryside, responding appropriately to the site's landscape and heritage context, and ensuring that development does not place unacceptable pressure on local infrastructure. Together, these requirements will help ensure that the site delivers a high-quality and sustainable extension to Bampton that contributes positively to the village whilst respecting its distinctive character and setting.

Policy BA2 – Land East of Bampton

Site area: 18 Hectares

Developable area: 6.5 Hectares

Current use: Agricultural

Landowner/site promoter: L & Q Estates

Allocation: Residential development of up to 150 dwellings, 40% affordable housing, public open space and informal recreation areas, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements and supporting infrastructure including access, drainage, and utilities.

In addition to the general policies of this Local Plan, development proposals will be expected to accord with the following site-specific requirements:

1. **Key Design Principles**

   Development should:

   a. Be guided by a comprehensive masterplan prepared with the local community in general accordance with an indicative concept plan.
   b. Positively integrate with existing development to the west, taking into account the presence of established landscape buffers.
   c. Respond positively to the edge-of-settlement location, creating a sensitive transition to open countryside.
   d. Establish a clear sense of place with legible street hierarchy and distinct character areas.
   e. Create clear layout and active frontages providing overlooking and natural surveillance of streets and open spaces.
   f. Provide meaningful physical and visual connections between the site and adjoining development to the west.
   g. Respect the historic character of Bampton.
   h. Address the identified wastewater capacity constraints at Bampton Sewage Treatment Works (STW), where sufficient wastewater infrastructure capacity cannot be demonstrated, planning permission will be refused.
   i. Respect existing landscape features such as hedgerows and trees where possible.

2. **Transport and Movement**

   a. Primary vehicular access to be taken from the existing highway network, with detailed access arrangements subject to transport assessment.
   b. Safe and direct pedestrian and cycle connections to Bampton Town Centre.
   c. Successful integration with and, where necessary, contributions towards enhancements to public transport services and infrastructure.
   d. Appropriate parking provision in accordance with local standards, incorporating EV charging.
   e. The alignment of the existing public right of way (including any bridleway) shall be retained, enhanced or where necessary sensitively diverted, provided that:

      i. the resulting route is safe, direct, attractive and well-integrated within the development and overlooked by active frontages;
      ii. the alignment facilitates the delivery of a comprehensive and coherent layout, avoiding the creation of small, isolated or poorly related parcels of land;

iii. development makes efficient use of the site, ensuring that land crossed by the existing route is capable of being integrated into the overall scheme; and
iv. any diversion results in a route of equal or improved quality and accessibility for users.

3. Heritage

a. Development must conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of nearby heritage assets, including the wider historic landscape setting of the Bampton Conservation Area and Church.
b. Proposals should be informed by a heritage impact assessment and archaeological assessment.

4. Landscape

a. A landscape-led approach shall be taken to the design, layout and massing of development.
b. Retention and reinforcement of existing hedgerows and field patterns where appropriate.
c. Creation of a strong landscaped edge to the countryside particularly along the eastern and northern boundaries, to minimise visual impact and provide long-term containment.
d. Create a successful relationship to existing landscape buffers to the west.
e. Sensitive treatment of site boundaries, particularly to the north and east.

5. Housing

a. Provide 40% on site affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM20
b. Provide 10% custom and self-build plots in accordance with Policy DM22.
c. The development shall provide a balanced mix of housing types and tenures to meet identified local needs.

6. Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

a. Delivery of a multifunctional green infrastructure network, including public open space, play areas and ecological corridors.
b. Achievement of measurable biodiversity net gain in line with national policy.
c. Protection and enhancement of existing habitats.
d. Integration of SuDS features as ecological assets.

7. Flood Risk and Drainage

a. Development to be informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment.
b. Use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water runoff.
c. Runoff rates to be restricted to greenfield levels.
d. Incorporation of attenuation features such as swales and basins.

8. Climate change and sustainability

a. Development shall demonstrate the use of:
    i. renewable and low-carbon energy sources;
    ii. sustainable design and construction methods; and
    iii. high standards of energy efficiency in new buildings.

9. Infrastructure Requirements

a. Successfully address wastewater capacity constraints.
b. Provide contributions towards education healthcare services and local community facilities.
c. Delivery of on-site open space and play provision.
d. Public open space, children's play space and informal recreation shall be provided on-site, with long-term management arrangements secured.

e. Long-term management arrangements shall be secured for open space, green infrastructure, drainage features, biodiversity mitigation and landscape buffers.
f. Proposals should be accompanied by a site specific Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

10. Phasing and Delivery

a. Development shall be phased in accordance with the delivery of necessary infrastructure
b. Development will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that sufficient wastewater treatment capacity is available; or necessary upgrades to the wastewater treatment network have been secured and will be delivered in advance of development.
c. Development shall be brought forward in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

Key Infrastructure Requirements

8.4.43 There are infrastructure capacity issues in the village that would need to be addressed in order for any new development to be accommodated.

8.4.44 Capacity in the waste treatment network is identified as a particular issue in the locality. Bampton Sewage Treatment Works has exceeded its permitted Q80 Dry Weather Flow (DWF) discharge permit in 4 out of the last 5 years. Bampton STW has insufficient hydraulic and storm tank capacity for the current population served.

8.4.45 Improvements to Bampton STW have been identified and funded through the Thames Water Asset Management Plan between 2025 and 2030, to increase Flow to Full Treatment. This is to ensure the STW is able to cope with maximum dry day peak flows to prevent spills to or from the storm tanks on dry days. Improvements are due to be delivered by 2028.

8.4.46 Additional flows connecting to Bampton STW before this scheme is completed risk increasing the number and duration of storm overflows into the Shill Brook. Phasing of any new development will therefore be crucial to ensure adequate infrastructure capacity.

8.4.47 New development is this location will also need to demonstrate that suitable flood mitigation measures will be taken, including provision of SuDS.

8.4.48 Bampton and Clanfield is one of the district's wards identified as having poor accessibility to greenspace[15]. Development will need to provide green spaces such as allotments, orchards, formal and informal green space,

8.4.49 Development will also need to be supported by improvements to public transport, in particular bus service provision, as well as walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure

Phasing

8.4.50 As a result of the need for upgraded wastewater infrastructure, it is anticipated that growth in Bampton will need to be delivered in a phased manner. Development on the proposed

[15] Oxfordshire's greenspace-deprived neighbourhoods, March 2024

allocation at Land East of Bampton is likely to come forward in years 6 – 15 of the plan period post-adoption.

8.5 Burford Area Strategy

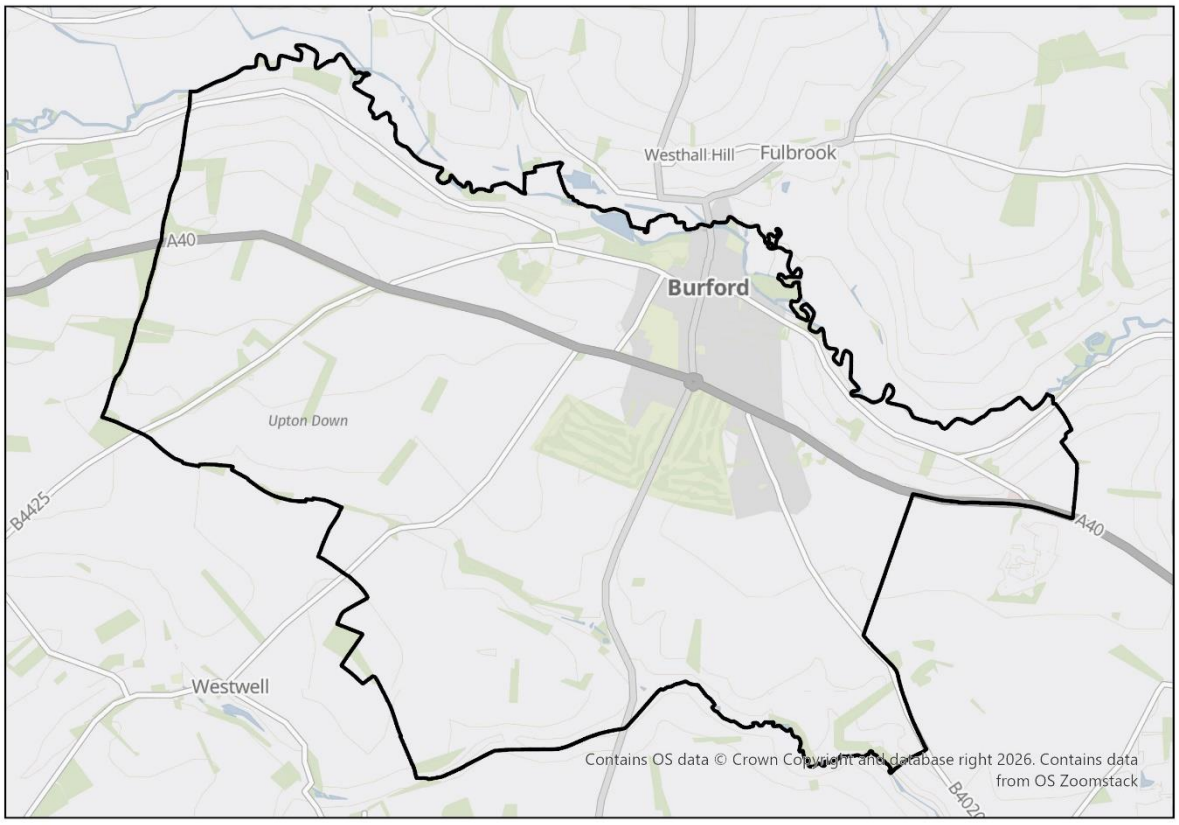

Figure 8.11 – Geographical Extent of Burford Area Strategy

The Burford Area Today

8.5.1 Burford is a small market town located in the western part of West Oxfordshire, approximately 18km (11 miles) west of Witney. With a population of around 2,000 residents and 885 households, it is the smallest of the district's service centres but performs an important role in supporting surrounding rural communities.

8.5.2 Situated on the River Windrush, Burford is widely recognised for its historic character and attractive built environment. The town's distinctive High Street, which slopes down towards the medieval bridge crossing of the Windrush, contains a rich collection of historic buildings reflecting its development as an important market and wool trading centre.

8.5.3 The town has a strong heritage significance, with much of the built-up area designated as a conservation area and containing numerous listed buildings. Notable landmarks include the Grade I listed Church of St John the Baptist, parts of which date from the twelfth century, together with the Tolsey, which historically served as the town's market house and administrative centre.

8.5.4 Burford supports a diverse local economy centred on independent retail, hospitality and tourism. Despite its relatively small size, the town centre contains a wide range of shops, cafés, restaurants and visitor-focused businesses. Independent retailers contribute to the town's distinctive character and economic vitality.

8.5.5 Tourism forms a significant part of the local economy, with visitors attracted by the town's historic streetscape, cultural heritage and proximity to destinations such as the Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens. The hospitality sector, including hotels, inns and restaurants, plays an important role in supporting employment and sustaining the local economy.

8.5.6 Whilst Burford benefits from a strong local economy and attractive environment, housing affordability remains a significant challenge. Limited opportunities for new development, combined with high demand and environmental constraints, have contributed to rising house prices and difficulties for some local people, particularly younger households.

8.5.7 Most of the town falls within the Cotswolds National Landscape which, when coupled with its extensive heritage assets and surrounding countryside, places a significant constraint on future development.

8.5.8 Burford experiences significant traffic pressures, particularly along the A361 which passes directly through the historic High Street and across the River Windrush bridge. Traffic congestion, including heavy goods vehicle movements, has been identified as a longstanding issue, affecting both the operation of the town centre and the quality of the local environment.

8.5.9 Public transport is relatively limited, contributing to a high degree of car dependency amongst residents and visitors. Stakeholders have identified opportunities to improve walking, cycling and public transport connections, including links between Burford and neighbouring Fulbrook, in order to encourage more sustainable travel patterns.

8.5.10 The River Windrush and its associated floodplain form an important landscape feature and environmental asset. Whilst much of the built-up area lies outside areas of highest flood risk, flood risk remains an important consideration in some locations.

8.5.11 Burford benefits from a range of community facilities and services, including a primary school, library, places of worship, healthcare provision, shops, cafés and public houses. These facilities help support day-to-day needs and contribute to the town's role as an important service centre for surrounding rural communities.

8.5.12 Burford's combination of historic character, environmental quality, strong visitor economy and range of local services underpins its importance within West Oxfordshire. However, future change will need to be carefully managed to balance the need for housing, economic vitality and improved accessibility with the protection of the town's heritage, landscape setting and overall character.

Statement of Ambition - The Burford Area in 2043

8.5.13 The Burford Area will continue to evolve as a thriving and sustainable market town, building on its rich historic character, strong community identity and important role as a service centre and visitor destination within West Oxfordshire and the Cotswolds National Landscape.

8.5.14 Future change will be carefully managed to ensure that the distinctive character, historic environment and landscape setting of Burford are protected and enhanced. Growth will be proportionate to the scale and role of the town, respecting its conservation area, listed buildings, historic street pattern, surrounding countryside and location within the Cotswolds National Landscape whilst maintaining its unique sense of place.

8.5.15 New development will contribute towards meeting identified local housing needs, including the provision of affordable homes and housing suitable for younger people, families and older residents wishing to remain within the community. Development will be small-scale and sensitively designed.

8.5.16 Growth will be aligned with the timely provision of infrastructure and services helping to maintain a high quality of life for residents and supporting the town's role as a visitor destination.

8.5.17 The area will become better connected through improvements to sustainable transport infrastructure and services. Opportunities will be taken to enhance walking, wheeling and cycling connections, improve access to public transport and reduce reliance on the private car where possible. Measures will also be pursued to help manage traffic congestion, improve safety and reduce the impacts of heavy vehicle movements on the historic town centre and surrounding communities.

8.5.18 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment will be a key priority. Green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancement, habitat restoration, tree planting and sustainable drainage measures will help strengthen nature recovery, improve climate resilience and support the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors.

8.5.19 Burford's historic environment will play a central role in supporting a low-carbon future. Opportunities will be taken to improve the environmental performance of existing buildings through sensitive adaptation and retrofitting, whilst ensuring that the significance and character of heritage assets are conserved.

8.5.20 The local economy will continue to benefit from independent retail, hospitality, tourism, small-scale enterprise and home working. Economic activity will build upon the town's heritage, cultural attractions and visitor appeal whilst ensuring that tourism remains sustainable, supports local businesses and is managed in a way that protects residential amenity and the quality of the historic environment.

8.5.21 Community facilities, cultural assets, recreational spaces and heritage buildings will continue to play a central role in town life. Opportunities will be taken to maintain and enhance these assets, supporting community wellbeing and social inclusion.

8.5.22 Through carefully managed growth, investment in infrastructure, environmental enhancement and community-led planning, including any future Neighbourhood Plan, the Burford Area will remain a resilient, attractive and inclusive community that helps meet identified local needs whilst safeguarding the environmental and heritage qualities that make it distinctive.

Strategic Development Framework for the Burford Area

8.5.23 Building on the area profile and statement of ambition above, Policy BU1 provides a framework for managing change and development within the Burford area to 2043.

8.5.24 The framework recognises Burford as one of West Oxfordshire's most distinctive settlements; an historic market town of exceptional architectural and environmental quality, situated within the Cotswolds National Landscape and serving as both an important rural service centre and nationally recognised visitor destination. These qualities are fundamental to the town's identity, attractiveness and economic success and must continue to underpin future decision-making.

8.5.25 The framework seeks to ensure that future growth and investment are carefully managed so that they contribute positively to the town's social, economic and environmental wellbeing whilst conserving and enhancing the qualities that make Burford special. In particular, it recognises the importance of safeguarding the town's historic environment, supporting a thriving and sustainable visitor economy, maintaining a vibrant and inclusive community and protecting the nationally important landscape and environmental assets that surround the town.

8.5.26 Given the environmental and heritage sensitivities that influence Burford's future growth, development will be expected to be proportionate to the scale and role of the town, respond positively to local character and be supported by appropriate infrastructure, services and environmental improvements. Particular emphasis is placed on addressing local housing needs, improving accessibility and sustainable transport choices, managing the impacts of traffic congestion and heavy vehicle movements, enhancing biodiversity and green infrastructure, and supporting climate resilience.

8.5.27 The framework provides an overarching basis for decision-making in the Burford Area and will be used alongside the strategic and development management policies of this Plan to guide future development.

8.5.28 The Council will work proactively with Burford Town Council, local communities, landowners, developers, infrastructure providers and other stakeholders to support the coordinated delivery of development and infrastructure in accordance with this framework, including through the preparation of any future Neighbourhood Plan.

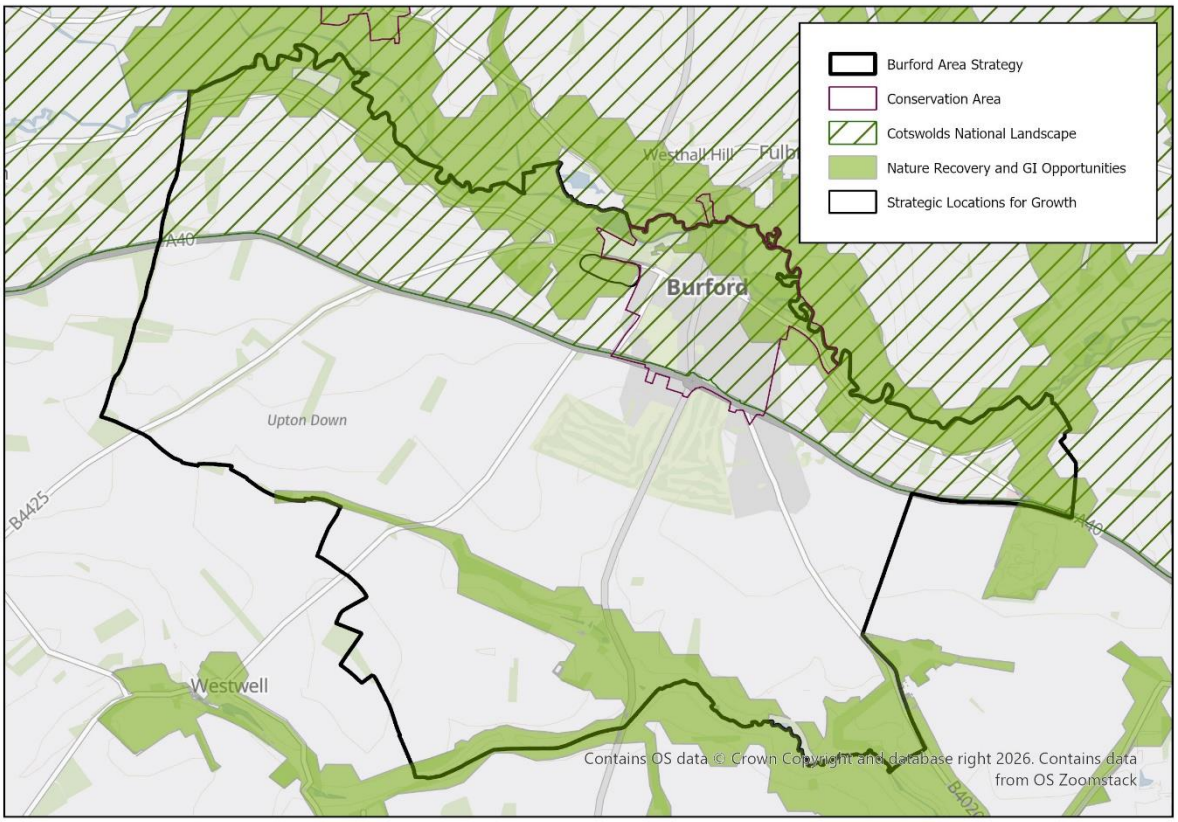

Figure 8.12 – Burford Area Strategy

Policy BU1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Burford Area

A map showing the outline of the area included in the Bampton Area Strategy, outlining conservation areas, the Cotswold National Landscape and nature recovery and GI opportunities. Burford will continue to function as a distinctive market town, rural service centre and visitor destination, valued for its exceptional historic character, rich heritage, strong community identity and outstanding landscape setting within the Cotswolds National Landscape. Development will be supported where it sustains and enhances the town's social, economic and environmental wellbeing in accordance with the following objectives.

Development proposals within the Burford Area will be supported where they contribute positively towards the delivery of the following objectives, having regard to their scale, nature and location:

1. Conserving Burford's Historic Character and Sense of Place

Development should:

a. Conserve and enhance the significance, setting and special character of Burford's Conservation Area, listed buildings and other heritage assets;

b. Respect the town's historic street pattern, built form, scale, vernacular architecture and distinctive sense of place, ensuring that new development responds positively to local character and distinctiveness;

c. Support the sensitive re-use, adaptation and enhancement of existing buildings, including heritage assets, where this secures their long-term viable use and contribution to the town's vitality;

d. Safeguard important views, gateways and the landscape setting of the town, including its relationship with the River Windrush and surrounding countryside;

e. Deliver high-quality design that reinforces local character and contributes positively to the quality and attractiveness of the built environment.

2. Supporting a Thriving Market Town and Sustainable Visitor Economy

Development should:

a. Support the vitality and viability of Burford town centre, including its independent retail, hospitality, tourism and cultural offer;

b. Promote a balanced and sustainable approach to tourism that supports the local economy whilst managing visitor pressures, protecting residential amenity and conserving the historic environment;

c. Support independent businesses, cultural initiatives, home-working opportunities and improved digital connectivity that strengthen local employment and economic resilience;

d. Retain and enhance community, cultural and visitor facilities that contribute to the town's role as a service centre and visitor destination.

3. Homes and Infrastructure

Development should:

a. Provide modest, proportionate and well-designed development that is appropriate to the scale, character and role of the town;

b. Contribute towards meeting identified local housing needs, including affordable housing and homes suitable for younger people, local workers, families and older residents;

c. Ensure that new development is integrated successfully with the existing settlement;

d. Be supported by the timely provision of infrastructure, services and utilities necessary to mitigate development impacts.

4. Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment and Landscape Setting

Development should:

a. Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, landscape character and special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape and further its statutory purposes;

b. Avoid, minimise and where necessary mitigate adverse impacts on the National Landscape, including those arising from excessive lighting, visual intrusion or inappropriate development;

c. Protect and enhance the River Windrush corridor, biodiversity assets, ecological networks and green infrastructure;

d. Support nature recovery, environmental enhancement and improved public access to green spaces where appropriate.

5. Improving Movement, Accessibility and Climate Resilience

Development should:

a. Support measures that help manage traffic congestion, parking pressures and the impacts of heavy goods vehicle movements on the historic town centre, local communities and environmental quality;

b. Strengthen safe, attractive and convenient walking, wheeling and cycling connections within the town and to neighbouring communities;

d. Avoid inappropriate development in areas at highest risk of flooding and incorporate sustainable drainage systems, flood mitigation measures and wider climate resilience measures;

e. Support high standards of sustainable design, energy efficiency, low-carbon development and the sensitive retrofit of existing and historic buildings where this can be achieved without unacceptable harm to their significance or character.

Burford Town Centre

8.5.29 Burford Town Centre is one of West Oxfordshire's most distinctive centres, performing an important role as both a rural service hub and a nationally recognised visitor destination.

8.5.30 Whilst relatively small in scale, the town centre serves a wide rural catchment and supports a thriving mix of independent retail, hospitality, tourism, community and cultural uses. Its historic High Street, which slopes towards the River Windrush, forms the focus of commercial and social activity and is widely regarded as one of the most attractive market town streets in the Cotswolds.

8.5.31 The town centre benefits from a strong independent retail offer, with a diverse range of boutique shops, galleries, specialist retailers, cafés, restaurants, inns and visitor-focused businesses. Vacancy rates remain consistently low, reflecting the centre's attractiveness and economic resilience. Tourism plays a particularly important role in supporting local businesses, helping to sustain a level of commercial activity that would not ordinarily be expected in a settlement of Burford's size.

8.5.32 The centre's exceptional historic environment is one of its defining strengths. Burford's Conservation Area, extensive collection of listed buildings and well-preserved historic streetscape create a strong sense of place and contribute significantly to its attractiveness for residents, businesses and visitors alike. Heritage is therefore both an important environmental asset and a key driver of economic vitality.

8.5.33 Despite these strengths, the town centre faces a number of challenges. Traffic congestion associated with the A361, including heavy goods vehicle movements through the High Street and across the River Windrush bridge, can affect environmental quality, pedestrian movement and the visitor experience. Limited parking provision and relatively limited public transport services also contribute to a reliance on private vehicle travel. At the same time, the town centre must continue to adapt to changing patterns of retail, leisure and tourism.

8.5.34 Looking ahead, there are opportunities to enhance the quality and attractiveness of the town centre through targeted public realm improvements, better management of movement and accessibility, sensitive reuse of historic buildings and support for a diverse mix of retail, hospitality, cultural, community and service uses.

8.5.35 There is also scope to strengthen Burford's role as a sustainable visitor destination through improved interpretation, wayfinding, heritage-led initiatives and measures that encourage longer stays and more sustainable travel choices.

Key Priorities

8.5.36 Key priorities for Burford Town Centre include:

- Maintaining and strengthening Burford's role as an important rural service centre and visitor destination;
- Supporting a vibrant and resilient mix of independent retail, hospitality, tourism, cultural, community and service uses;
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, including the Conservation Area, listed buildings, historic shopfronts and public realm;
- Supporting the sensitive reuse and adaptation of historic and underutilised buildings to provide a wider range of commercial, cultural, community and workspace opportunities;
- Improving the quality of the public realm through appropriate enhancements to streets, spaces, seating, planting, signage and wayfinding;
- Addressing the impacts of traffic congestion, heavy goods vehicle movements and parking pressures on the town centre environment and visitor experience;
- Improving walking, wheeling and cycling conditions and strengthening connections between key destinations, attractions, services and surrounding communities;
- Supporting a sustainable approach to tourism that strengthens the local economy whilst protecting residential amenity, environmental quality and the historic environment;
- Strengthening Burford's role as a gateway to the Cotswolds through improved visitor facilities, heritage interpretation and sustainable travel opportunities; and
- Supporting climate resilience through urban greening, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable drainage and the sensitive retrofit of historic buildings where appropriate.

A Strategy for Burford Town Centre

8.5.37 Building on Strategic Development Framework for the Burford Area (Policy BU1), the purpose of Policy BU2 is to maintain and enhance Burford Town Centre as a thriving market town centre, rural service hub and visitor destination, ensuring that it continues to serve the needs of residents, businesses, visitors and surrounding communities.

8.5.38 The policy seeks to support a vibrant, diverse and resilient town centre that responds positively to changing economic, retail and tourism trends whilst reinforcing the qualities that make Burford one of West Oxfordshire's most distinctive centres. It promotes the vitality and viability of the High Street and surrounding areas through the retention and enhancement of independent retail, hospitality, cultural, community and service uses, whilst supporting the sensitive adaptation and reuse of historic buildings and underutilised premises.

8.5.39 Priority will be given to improving the quality, accessibility and attractiveness of the town centre environment. Particular emphasis is placed on addressing the impacts of traffic congestion, heavy goods vehicle movements and parking pressures associated with the A361 corridor, whilst supporting improvements to walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport accessibility, wayfinding and the overall visitor experience. Together, these measures will help create a safer, more accessible and more welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike.

8.5.40 The policy also seeks to conserve and enhance Burford's exceptional historic environment, recognising that its Conservation Area, listed buildings, historic streetscape and wider landscape setting are fundamental to the town's identity and economic success. Opportunities for heritage-led regeneration, high-quality public realm enhancement and the sensitive adaptation of historic buildings will be supported where they contribute positively to the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centre.

8.5.41 Burford’s role as a visitor destination within the Cotswolds National Landscape will continue to be supported through a balanced and sustainable approach to tourism. This includes encouraging investment that enhances the visitor experience, supports local businesses and cultural activity, promotes sustainable travel choices and strengthens Burford's role within the wider Cotswolds visitor economy whilst carefully managing visitor pressures and protecting residential amenity and environmental quality.

Policy BU2 - Burford Town Centre

Burford Town Centre will continue to serve as a distinctive market town centre, rural service hub and visitor destination, building on its exceptional historic character, independent retail offer, and location within the Cotswolds National Landscape. Development will be supported where it enhances vitality, resilience, environmental quality, and inclusive access, while safeguarding the town's unique identity.

Development proposals will be supported where they:

1) Support vitality and viability by:

   a) Maintaining a strong mix of uses, prioritising independent retail, hospitality, local services and community and cultural uses.
   b) Where possible, protecting active ground-floor uses in the Primary Shopping Area.
   c) Encouraging reuse of vacant or underused buildings for flexible and mixed uses, including workspace and community uses.
   d) Supporting safe, inclusive day and evening activity and small-scale local enterprise.

2) Improve safe movement and accessibility by:

   a) Addressing traffic impacts on the A361, including congestion, safety, and air quality.
   b) Enhancing walking, wheeling and cycling links between key areas.
   c) Improving wayfinding, accessibility, and sustainable travel options including bus improvements.

3) Conserve heritage and enhances the public realm by:

   a) Ensuring development respects the Conservation Area, Listed Buildings, historic shopfronts and landscape setting, including the Cotswolds National Landscape.
   b) Delivering high-quality public realm improvements.
   c) Supporting heritage conservation and sensitive adaptation of historic buildings.

4) Promote sustainable tourism and local identity by:

   a) Supporting Burford as a high-quality, sustainably managed visitor destination.
   b) Encouraging cultural activity and local events.
   c) Strengthening its role within the wider Cotswolds visitor economy while managing visitor pressures.

Overall, development should balance conservation with sustainable growth, ensuring Burford remains vibrant, accessible, and distinctive.

Priority Growth Locations

8.5.42 Burford's location within the Cotswolds National Landscape places constraints on the scale and extent of development. As a result, growth in recent years has been relatively limited with 218 new homes built since 2011.

8.5.43 In accordance with the overall spatial strategy (Policy SP2) as a defined service centre, Burford will be required to provide for a proportionate level of development which is appropriate to the size of the town and its capacity to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner that demonstrably supports its service centre function.

8.5.44 Because of its location within the Cotswolds National Landscape, the level of growth envisaged at Burford will be proportionately more limited than Eynsham, Long Hanborough and Woodstock.

8.5.45 There are no planning permissions currently in place at Burford for major residential or employment development (i.e. more than 10 homes or more than 1,000 sqm of commercial floorspace).

8.5.46 However, a total of 9 land parcels to the east, west and south of the town have been put forward by landowners and site promoters for consideration through the Council's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

8.5.47 The HELAA concludes that four of these land parcels are potentially suitable for housing development.

8.5.48 Through the Council's 'Spatial Options' consultation in November/December 2025, views were sought on the principle of one of these site options – the land south of Sheep Street – as being potentially capable of accommodating up to 70 new homes along with the provision of additional public car parking.

8.5.49 Consultation responses expressed significant concerns regarding the principle of development at this location. Key matters raised included the potential impact on the Cotswolds National Landscape, heritage assets, ancient woodland and biodiversity; the capacity of local infrastructure including roads, schools, healthcare and drainage; traffic congestion and highway safety; flood risk; the scale of development relative to Burford's role and character; the need for additional housing; and potential impacts on tourism, landscape quality and the local economy.

8.5.50 A number of respondents advocated alternative brownfield or smaller-scale development opportunities elsewhere, although a limited number of responses supported the site's potential to deliver housing and associated infrastructure improvements.

8.5.51 Taking account of the responses received and further evidence and analysis, the Council remains of the view that the land south of Sheep Street is suitable for accommodating future housing growth as a logical extension of the existing built area but that the quantum of development should be reduced significantly to around 30 dwellings to take account of the acknowledged sensitivities of the site.

Policy BU3 – Land South of Sheep Street, Burford

8.5.52 Policy BU3 allocates the land south of Sheep Street for a residential-led development of up to 30 dwellings, including affordable housing, together with a new public car park, public open space, green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements and associated infrastructure.

8.5.53 The allocation has been identified as a suitable location for modest and proportionate growth that can help meet local housing needs whilst supporting Burford's continued role as a service centre and visitor destination.

8.5.54 The site adjoins the existing built-up area and offers an opportunity to deliver a high-quality, landscape-led development that responds positively to the town's historic character, its location within the Cotswolds National Landscape and the sensitivities of the surrounding environment.

8.5.55 A key element of the allocation is the provision of a new public car park to help address longstanding parking pressures within the town centre and support the effective management of visitor activity. Together with improvements to walking and cycling connectivity, this has the potential to enhance accessibility, reduce pressure on existing parking provision and contribute towards a more attractive and sustainable town centre environment.

8.5.56 The policy seeks to ensure that development is comprehensively planned and delivered through a master planned approach, with careful consideration given to design quality, landscape character, heritage assets, biodiversity, drainage, transport and infrastructure requirements. Particular emphasis is placed on conserving the setting of Burford and the wider Cotswold National Landscape, retaining and enhancing existing landscape features, protecting important views and ensuring a sensitive transition between the built-up area and surrounding countryside.

8.5.57 Development of the site will be expected to deliver appropriate infrastructure, environmental enhancements and mitigation measures, including biodiversity net gain, sustainable drainage systems, public open space and contributions towards local services and facilities where required. Development will also be dependent upon the availability of sufficient wastewater treatment capacity or the delivery of any necessary upgrades to the wastewater network.

8.5.58 Together, these requirements will help ensure that the site delivers a high-quality and sustainable extension to Burford that contributes towards local housing needs, supports the vitality of the town, assists in addressing parking pressures and respects the exceptional landscape, heritage and environmental qualities that define the town and its setting.

Policy BU3 – Land South of Sheep Street Burford

Site area: 3 hectares (gross)

Developable area: Approx. 1 hectare (net, excluding car park, structural landscaping, drainage, and buffers)

Current use: Agricultural land (predominantly pasture) with field boundaries and a prominent tree belt along the site frontage

Landowner/site promoter: N Mills

Allocation: Residential-led development of up to 30 dwellings alongside a new town car park and to include 40% affordable housing, public open space and informal recreation areas, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements and supporting infrastructure including access, drainage, and utilities.

In addition to the general policy requirements of this Local Plan, development proposals will be expected to accord with the following site-specific requirements:

1. **Key Design Principles**

   Development should:

   a. Be informed by a comprehensive masterplan prepared with the local community in general accordance with the indicative concept plan.
   b. Respond positively to the edge-of-settlement CNL location, creating a sensitive transition to open countryside and respecting the residential amenities of the houses to the east
   c. Establish a clear sense of place with built form of the highest quality respecting the location within the CNL.
   d. Provide overlooking and natural surveillance of streets and open spaces.
   e. Incorporate and enhance the existing landscape features (such as the boundary trees hedgerows and the existing tree belt) wherever possible including measures for their future maintenance.

2. **Transport and movement**
   a. Primary vehicular access is to be taken from the existing highway network, with detailed access arrangements subject to transport assessment. In preference a combined pedestrian and vehicular access would be taken to Sheep Street with a pedestrian only access in the NE corner of the site
   b. Traffic calming, pavement improvement and speed limiting measures will be required to enable safe pedestrian access to the town centre
   c. Appropriate car and cycle parking provision shall be provided in accordance with local standards, incorporating EV charging.
   d. The public car park shall be designed and managed to support the operational needs of Burford Town Centre and to minimise traffic, visual and environmental impacts on surrounding residential areas and the historic environment.

3. **Heritage**

a. Development must conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of nearby heritage assets, including the wider historic landscape setting of the Conservation Area
b. Proposals should be informed by a heritage impact assessment.
c. Layout, design and scale should respect key views and settlement character with the car park located on the rising land to the south of the site and residential development along the northern frontage.

4. **Landscape**
   a. Retention and reinforcement of existing hedgerows and field patterns where appropriate.
   b. Creation of a strong landscaped edge to the countryside to protect the landscape of the CNL.
   c. Provision of structural planting to mitigate visual impacts.
   d. Sensitive treatment of site boundaries, particularly to the south and west.

5. **Green Infrastructure (GI) and Biodiversity**
   a. Delivery of a multifunctional green infrastructure network, including public open space, play areas and ecological corridors.
   b. Achievement of measurable biodiversity net gain in line with national policy.
   c. Protection and enhancement of existing habitats.
   d. Integration of SuDS features as ecological assets.

6. **Flood risk / drainage**
   a. Development to be informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment.
   b. Use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water runoff.
   c. Runoff rates to be restricted to greenfield levels.
   d. Incorporation of attenuation features such as swales and basins.

7. **Infrastructure**
   a. Contributions towards education healthcare services and local community facilities.
   b. Delivery of on-site open space and play provision.
   c. Utilities infrastructure (water, electricity, broadband) to be provided/upgraded as necessary.
   d. Proposals should be accompanied by a site-specific Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

8. **Phasing / Delivery**
   a. Development to be brought forward in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
   b. Development shall be phased in accordance with the delivery of necessary infrastructure
   c. Phasing to ensure timely provision of infrastructure and early delivery of key access routes and green infrastructure.

Key Infrastructure Requirements

8.5.59 The West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan Baseline Report 2025 highlights a range of infrastructure pressures and requirements in the Burford area, particularly relating to transport, education, health, and community facilities.

8.5.60 While Burford benefits from existing bus connections to surrounding towns and some parking provision, capacity constraints, especially during peak tourist periods, indicate a need for improved transport management and sustainable travel options.

8.5.61 In education, primary schools in the wider Burford area are generally at or near capacity with limited scope for expansion, while Burford Secondary School is already operating above capacity and requires significant investment to meet demand.

8.5.62 Healthcare provision is currently served by Burford Surgery, but ongoing growth may increase pressure on local services.

8.5.63 Recreation infrastructure also shows gaps, notably a shortage of a full-sized 3G pitch in the Burford/Charlbury area.

8.5.64 Overall, the key infrastructure priorities relate to managing transport and visitor pressures, expanding education capacity, addressing gaps in sports provision, and ensuring health and community services can accommodate future growth.

Phasing

8.5.65 Development will be phased to align with the timely provision of supporting infrastructure, including additional parking capacity, wastewater treatment provision, education and healthcare services for the town.

8.5.66 Where appropriate, development will be required to contribute to, or directly facilitate, necessary upgrades to infrastructure, including but not limited to, parking provision, sewerage infrastructure (including the Sewage Treatment Works), education, healthcare, and recreation facilities.

8.5.67 Ongoing monitoring and review of infrastructure capacity will be required to ensure that delivery remains coordinated and aligned with local needs.

8.5.68 A development trajectory is presented at appendix 2 to show the anticipated delivery of housing in the Buford over the lifetime of the Plan.

8.5.69 Development will be delivered in a phased manner in accordance with Policy CP4 and the delivery of infrastructure to support planned growth. The Infrastructure delivery Plan will be kept under review and updated on an annual basis in accordance with the Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement,

8.6 Charlbury Area

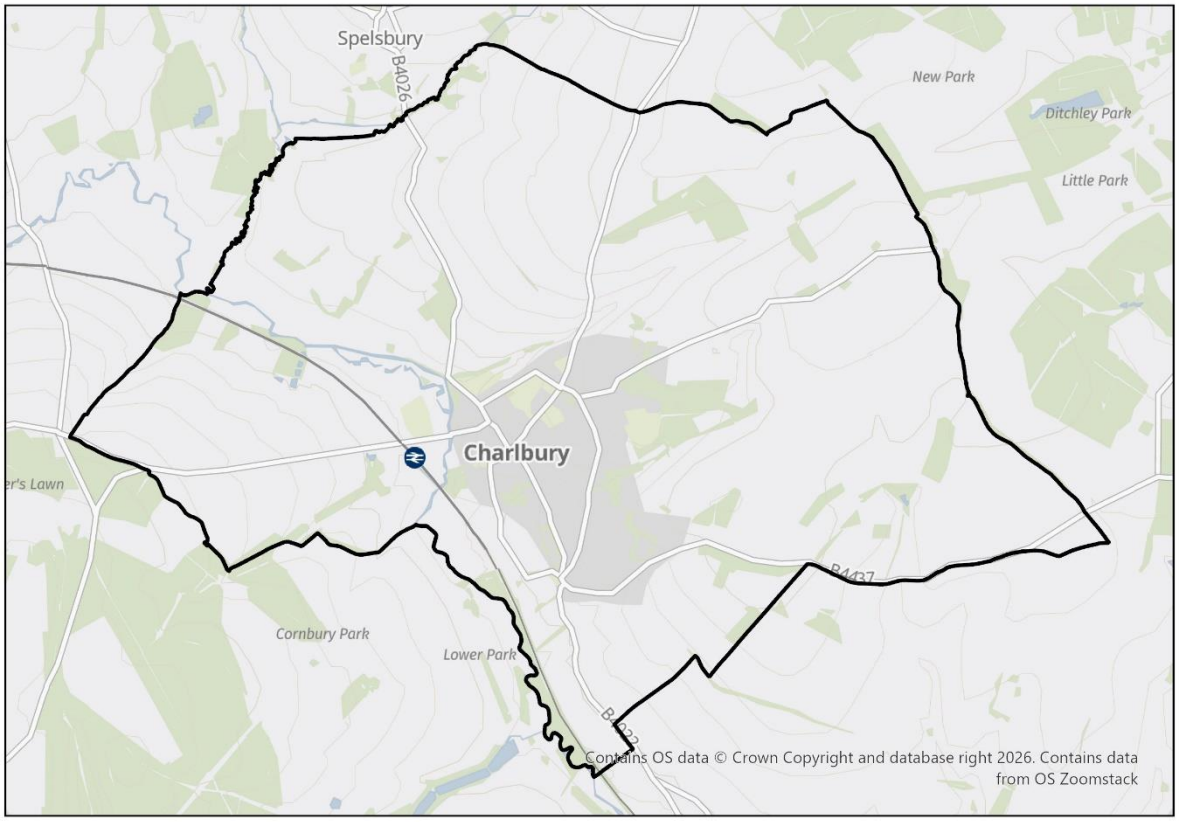

Figure 8.13 – Geographical extent of the Charlbury Area Strategy

The Charlbury Area Today

8.5.70 Charlbury is a historic market town located in the Evenlode Valley, approximately 10km north of Witney. With a population of around 3,100 residents living in approximately 1,400 households (2021 Census), it is one of the district's designated Tier 2 Service Centres and performs an important role in supporting surrounding rural communities.

8.5.71 The town lies wholly within the Cotswolds National Landscape, which has a strong influence on its character and future development potential. Its landscape setting, characterised by the upper Evenlode Valley, Cornbury Park and the Wychwood Forest, forms a key part of its identity and environmental quality.

8.5.72 Charlbury has a strong historic character, with much of the built-up area designated as a Conservation Area and containing a significant number of listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Church of St Mary the Virgin. The historic core retains a traditional street pattern and vernacular architecture, contributing to a distinctive sense of place.

8.5.73 The local economy reflects a relatively high degree of self-employment and home working, supported by good digital connectivity. There has however been a long-term reduction in retail and employment premises, with some units lost to residential use or remaining vacant, limiting local employment opportunities.

8.5.74 Transport connectivity is strong for a settlement of this size. Charlbury railway station, located on the North Cotswold Line, is the busiest station in West Oxfordshire and provides regular direct services to Oxford, London, Worcester and beyond. The station serves a wide catchment area extending beyond the town itself, including neighbouring settlements such as Chipping Norton. However, its popularity generates localised pressures, particularly in relation to parking, congestion and access.

8.5.75 Bus services provide connections to Witney, Chipping Norton and Oxford, although usage is relatively limited and some services rely on public subsidy. Car dependency remains high, and opportunities exist to improve walking, wheeling and cycling connectivity, particularly between the town centre, railway station and surrounding areas.

8.5.76 Charlbury benefits from a strong community and a wide range of services and facilities, including a primary school, GP surgery, library, retail provision and community amenities. A key asset is the Charlbury Community Centre and Nine Acres recreation ground, which together provide an important focus for sport and recreation serving both the town and a wider catchment. These facilities are well-used but place additional pressure on local infrastructure, particularly parking.

8.5.77 The town has experienced increasing popularity as a place to live and visit, contributing positively to the local economy but also creating pressures on infrastructure, including traffic, parking and the capacity of local services.

8.5.78 Flood risk is a constraint in some locations, particularly to the west of the town along the River Evenlode and in land between the town and railway station. These areas are not suitable for development and reinforce the need for careful site selection and robust drainage measures.

8.5.79 Overall, Charlbury faces the challenge of balancing its strong environmental and heritage constraints, particularly its location within the Cotswolds National Landscape with the need to maintain a socially inclusive and economically sustainable community. Guided by the Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan, future development is expected to be carefully managed to reflect the town's character and respond to the climate emergency declared by the Town Council in 2019. Emphasis is placed on sustainable, community-led growth that protects valued landscapes and heritage assets while contributing to West Oxfordshire's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Statement of Ambition - The Charlbury Area in 2043

8.5.80 The Charlbury Area will continue to evolve as a distinctive and sustainable rural town, building on its strong community identity, historic character and important role as a service centre and transport hub within West Oxfordshire.

8.5.81 Future change will be carefully managed to ensure that the town's environmental and heritage assets, including its location within the Cotswolds National Landscape, are conserved and enhanced. Development will be proportionate to the scale and role of the town and will respect its landscape setting, conservation area and historic form.

8.5.82 New development will contribute towards meeting identified local housing needs, including the provision of affordable homes and smaller dwellings suitable for younger people, local workers and older residents. This will support a more balanced and inclusive community.

8.5.83 The strategic role of Charlbury railway station will be recognised and supported. Improvements to accessibility, integration with other transport modes and the management of associated parking pressures will be pursued to maximise its benefits for the district.

8.5.84 Growth will be aligned with the timely provision of infrastructure and services, ensuring that development supports the capacity of the town and maintains a high quality of life. Opportunities will be taken to improve walking, wheeling and cycling connectivity within the town and to key destinations, alongside support for public transport, helping to reduce reliance on the private car.

8.5.85 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment will be a priority. Development will contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation through low-carbon design, sustainable drainage, biodiversity net gain and the enhancement of green infrastructure. The natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape will be conserved and enhanced, including through the protection of important views and the reduction of light pollution to safeguard dark skies.

8.5.86 The town centre will remain a vibrant focus for community life, supported by the retention of retail and employment uses and a balanced approach to tourism that supports the local economy while managing its impacts. Through carefully managed growth and coordinated investment, Charlbury will remain a resilient, inclusive and environmentally responsible community.

Strategic Development Framework for the Charlbury Area

8.5.87 Building on the area profile and statement of ambition above, Policy CH1 provides a framework for managing change and development within the Charlbury area to 2043.

8.5.88 The framework recognises Charlbury as a distinctive rural service centre of high environmental and heritage value, located entirely within the Cotswolds National Landscape and supported by strong strategic transport connections. These characteristics define the town's role within the district but also impose important constraints on future development.

8.5.89 The framework seeks to ensure that growth is carefully managed so that it supports the town's social and economic sustainability whilst conserving and enhancing its landscape, heritage and community assets. In particular, it recognises the need to address housing affordability, support local services and employment, manage transport pressures associated with the railway station, and respond to the impacts of climate change.

8.5.90 Given the environmental sensitivities affecting Charlbury, development will be expected to be proportionate, well-located and supported by appropriate infrastructure. Particular emphasis is placed on conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape, supporting a balanced and inclusive community, strengthening sustainable transport connections, and maintaining a vibrant town centre and community life.

8.5.91 The Council will work proactively with Charlbury Town Council, local communities, infrastructure providers and the Cotswolds National Landscape Board to support the coordinated delivery of development and infrastructure in accordance with this framework.

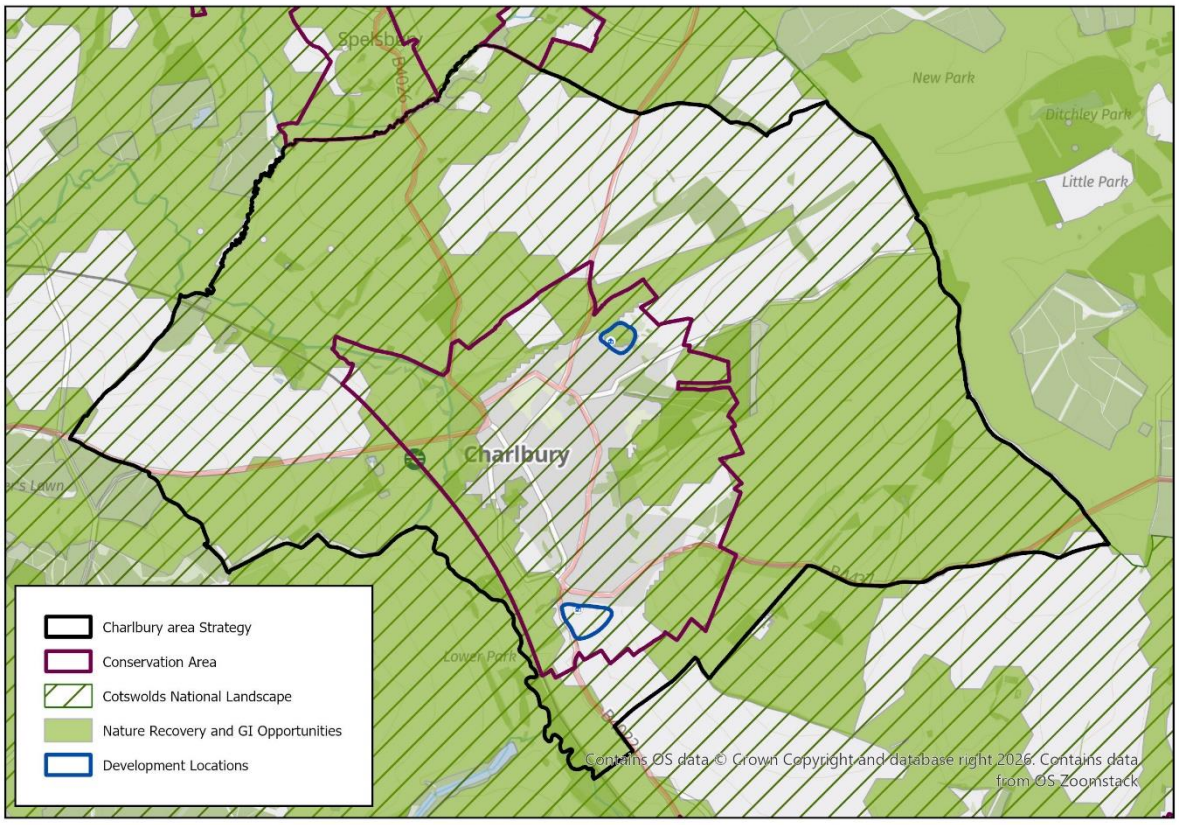

Figure 8.14 - Strategic Development Framework for the Charlbury Area

Policy CH1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Charlbury Area

Charlbury will continue to function as a distinctive rural service centre and strategic transport hub, valued for its strong community, historic character and outstanding landscape setting within the Cotswolds National Landscape.

Development proposals within the Charlbury Area will be supported where they contribute positively towards the delivery of the following objectives, having regard to their scale, nature and location:

Development proposals will be supported where they:

1. **Conserving Character, Heritage and Landscape Setting**

    a. Conserve and enhance the significance, setting and character of the Conservation Area, listed buildings and other heritage assets;
    b. Respect the town's historic form, scale, materials and vernacular architecture;
    c. Safeguard important views and the wider landscape setting, including the Evenlode Valley, Cornbury Park and surrounding countryside;
    d. Conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape, including the protection of dark skies;
    e. Be informed by appropriate landscape, visual and environmental assessments

2. **Supporting a Balanced Community and Local Economy**

    a. Provide a mix of housing that contributes towards identified local needs, including affordable and smaller homes;
    b. Address imbalances in the housing stock, including the loss of smaller dwellings and the impacts of short-term letting;
    c. Support the retention and enhancement of retail, employment and community uses;
    d. Promote local employment opportunities, home working and economic resilience.

3. **Delivering Sustainable and Proportionate Growth**

    a. Be proportionate to the scale and role of the town and reflect its environmental constraints;
    b. Be located on sites that are well-related to the existing built-up area;
    c. Avoid areas at risk of flooding and areas of high landscape sensitivity;
    d. Integrate successfully with the existing settlement.

4. **Supporting Sustainable Transport and Connectivity**

    a. Support and enhance the role of Charlbury railway station, including improved access and integration with other transport modes;
    b. Address parking and congestion pressures associated with the station and town centre;
    c. Strengthen safe and convenient walking, wheeling and cycling connections;
    d. Support public transport provision and reduce reliance on private vehicles where possible.

5. **Climate Resilience and Environmental Enhancement**

    a. Deliver high standards of energy efficiency and low/zero carbon design;

b. Incorporate sustainable drainage systems and avoid increasing flood risk;
c. Achieve biodiversity net gain and support nature recovery;
d. Enhance green infrastructure and ecological networks.

6. Infrastructure and Community Assets

a. Be supported by the timely provision of infrastructure, services and utilities;
b. Contribute towards improvements in local infrastructure, including transport and community facilities;
c. Support key community assets, including the Community Centre and Nine Acres recreation ground;
d. Maintain and enhance the town's role as a service centre for the surrounding rural area.

The Council will work proactively and collaboratively with relevant partners to ensure that development in Charlbury is delivered in a coordinated, distinctive, inclusive and resilient manner, and accords with the policies and objectives of the Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan.

Priority Growth Locations

8.5.92 Charlbury has experienced relatively modest levels of residential development in recent years. In line with the proposed spatial strategy (Policy SP2), the town is expected to accommodate a proportionate level of growth that reflects its size and supports its role as a local service centre.

8.5.93 Charlbury's location within the Cotswolds National Landscape places constraints on the scale and extent of development. Growth must therefore be carefully managed to conserve and enhance the area's distinctive landscape character.

8.5.94 Within this context, two relatively modest development areas have been identified; land at Jefferson's Piece and land south of Hydac.

Policy CH1 – Land at Jeffersons Piece

8.5.95 Policy CH1 allocates the land at Jefferson's Piece for a residential-led development of up to 30 dwellings, including affordable housing, together with public open space, green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements and associated infrastructure.

8.5.96 The allocation has been identified as a suitable location for modest and proportionate growth that can help meet local housing needs whilst supporting Charlbury's continued role as a service centre.

8.5.97 The site adjoins the existing built-up area and offers an opportunity to deliver a high-quality, development that responds positively to the town's historic character, its location within the Cotswolds National Landscape and the sensitivities of the surrounding environment.

8.5.98 The policy seeks to ensure that development is comprehensively planned and delivered through a master planned approach, with careful consideration given to design quality, landscape character, heritage assets, biodiversity, drainage, transport and infrastructure requirements. Particular emphasis is placed on conserving the setting of Charlbury and the wider Cotswold National Landscape, retaining and enhancing existing landscape features and contributing to nature recovery.

8.5.99 Development of the site will be expected to deliver appropriate infrastructure, environmental enhancements and mitigation measures, including biodiversity net gain, sustainable drainage systems, public open space and contributions towards local services and facilities where required. Development will also be dependent upon the availability of sufficient wastewater treatment capacity or the delivery of any necessary upgrades to the wastewater network.

Policy CH2 – Land at Jeffersons Piece

Site area: Approx. 2 Ha

Developable area: 1.4 Ha

Current use: Paddock

Landowner/site promoter: Lagan Homes

Allocation: Residential-led development of up to 30 dwellings to include 40% affordable housing, public open space and informal recreation areas, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements and supporting infrastructure including access, drainage, and utilities.

In addition to the general policy requirements of this Local Plan, development proposals will be expected to accord with the following site-specific requirements;

1. Key Design Principles

Development should:

a. Be informed by a comprehensive masterplan prepared with input from the local community.
b. Respond positively to the edge-of-settlement location, creating a sensitive transition to open countryside and conserving the wider Cotswolds National Landscape.
c. Create a development with a sense of place that conjoins the existing residential development to the west by incorporating local design features.
d. Conserve and enhance the special characteristics of the Charlbury Conservation Area.
e. Respect the residential amenities of existing properties neighbouring the site
f. Provide a mixture of tenure and property sizes should be provided in line with the local need.
g. Provision of safe and suitable vehicular access from Jeffersons Piece and improved pedestrian and cyclist connectivity to adjoining areas and key destinations.

2. Transport and movement

a. Vehicular access via Hundley Way will not be supported. Primary vehicular access should instead be provided from the existing highway network at Jeffersons Piece, located to the south of the site. Detailed access arrangements will be subject to a Transport Assessment.

b. Pedestrian connectivity should however be incorporated to link with the existing Public Right of Way along Hundley Way.

c. The site lies within 1 km of bus stops serving Witney and Chipping Norton. Safe and direct pedestrian and cycle connections must be provided to bus stops on Enstone Road and The Slade, as well as to Charlbury railway station (approximately 1 km from the site), which offers direct services to Oxford, London and Worcester.

d. Parking provision should accord with local standards and include electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure.

e. Separate pedestrian footways and vehicular routes should be provided; shared surface arrangements should be avoided.

3. Heritage and Landscape

a. Development proposals must conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of the Conservation Area, the Cotswold National Landscape, and the wider historic landscape setting.

b. Proposals should be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) prepared in accordance with the Council's Local Plan evidence base.

c. The layout, form and scale of development must respond positively to local character, identifying and respecting key views and the established settlement pattern.

d. Existing landscape features, including trees and planting, should be retained and enhanced, with no net loss of tree cover.

e. Development should be designed to integrate sensitively with the surrounding built form to the east, south and west, while safeguarding important views and the open character of the landscape to the north.

f. Site boundaries must be treated sensitively, with particular care given to the northern edge to ensure an appropriate transition to the open countryside.

4. Green Infrastructure (GI) and Biodiversity

a. Development should be master planned around the provision of a multifunctional green infrastructure network, incorporating public open space and connected ecological corridors.

b. Proposals must deliver measurable biodiversity net gain in accordance with national policy requirements.

c. The site is located within a Nature Improvement Area and there are records of protected species in the vicinity. Development must therefore be informed by appropriate ecological surveys and demonstrate how impacts will be avoided, mitigated or compensated.

d. A comprehensive Nature Recovery Action Plan should be prepared and integrated into the masterplanning of the site, setting out clear measures for habitat creation, enhancement and long-term management.

5. Flood risk / drainage

a. Development proposals must incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage surface water runoff. Runoff rates should be restricted to greenfield levels, with the inclusion of appropriate attenuation features such as swales, basins and other SuDS components.

6. Infrastructure

a. Appropriate utilities infrastructure, including water supply, electricity and high-speed broadband, must be provided to serve the development. It should be noted that Charlbury Sewage Treatment Works currently requires significant upgrades, and development will need to ensure sufficient capacity or contribute to necessary improvements.

b. Development should make appropriate contributions towards education, healthcare provision and local community facilities, in accordance with infrastructure requirements.

c. On-site public open space should be delivered as part of the development. Where justified, off-site contributions towards play provision may be considered acceptable.

d. Development should, where appropriate, support improvements to the accessibility and capacity of Charlbury railway station.

7. Phasing / Delivery

a. Development must be brought forward in a comprehensive and coordinated manner across the site.

b. A phasing strategy should be agreed to ensure the timely provision of supporting infrastructure, including early delivery of key access routes and green infrastructure.

Policy CH3 - Land south of Hydac

8.5.100 Land south of Hydac is allocated for residential development to contribute to the district's identified housing needs and to support the Local Plan's spatial strategy.

8.5.101 The site is located in the Cotswolds National Landscape and development must therefore give great weight to conserving and enhancing its natural beauty, responding sensitively to landscape character, topography and key views.

8.5.102 A landscape-led approach will be required to ensure that housing is well integrated with the existing settlement, with strong green infrastructure and high-quality design that reinforces local distinctiveness.

8.5.103 Proposals must demonstrate that they conserve the setting of the National Landscape while delivering a cohesive and sustainable extension, to Charlbury, supported by appropriate access and infrastructure.

Policy CH3 – Land South of Hydac

Site area: Approx. 5 Hectares

Developable area: Approx 3 Hectares

Current use: Agricultural

Landowner/site promoter: Bamford

Allocation: Residential-led development of up to 40 dwellings, 40% affordable housing, alongside the provision of public open space, informal recreation areas, green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements, and supporting infrastructure, including access, drainage and utilities.

In addition to the general policy requirements of this Local Plan, development proposals will be expected to accord with the following site-specific development requirements;

1. **Key Design Principles**

Development should:

a. Be informed by a comprehensive masterplan prepared with substantive input from the local community.
b. Respond positively to the edge-of-settlement Cotswold National Landscape (CNL) location, creating a sensitive transition to open countryside.
c. Establish a clear sense of place with built form of the highest quality.
d. Respect the residential amenities of existing properties to the north of the site
e. A mixture of tenure and property sizes should be provided in line with the local need.

f. The provision of affordable dwellings to be integrated within development and be tenure blind.
g. Provide overlooking and natural surveillance of streets and open spaces.
h. Incorporate and enhance the existing landscape features (such as boundary hedgerows and the existing tree belt) wherever possible including measures for their future maintenance.
i. Provision of safe and suitable vehicular access and comprehensive connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists to adjoining areas and key destinations.
j. Conserve and enhance the special characteristics of the Charlbury Conservation Area.

2. Transport and movement

a. Primary vehicular access will be taken from the existing highway network, with detailed arrangements informed by a Transport Assessment. A combined vehicular and pedestrian access onto Woodstock Road will be sought. Where this cannot be achieved, a split arrangement comprising pedestrian access to Woodstock Road and vehicular access via Fawler Road will be considered.

b. No pedestrian or cycle connections to Fawler Road will be permitted due to the constrained carriageway width.

c. Parking provision will be made in accordance with local standards and will incorporate electric vehicle charging and secure cycle parking.

3. Heritage and Landscape

a. The site is located entirely within the Cotswold National Landscape and the Charlbury Conservation Area.

b. Development should conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of the Conservation Area, the Cotswold National Landscape, and the wider historic landscape setting including the setting of Cornbury Park.

c. Development should be designed to integrate sensitively with the surrounding built form to the east, south and west, while safeguarding important views and the open character of the landscape to the north.

d. Proposals should be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) prepared in accordance with the Council's Local Plan evidence base.

e. Site boundaries must be treated sensitively with the retention of existing hedgerows and field patterns where appropriate. The creation of a strong landscaped edge to the countryside to protect the landscape of the CNL should be established including the provision of structural planting to mitigate visual impacts. Existing landscape features, including trees and planting, should be retained and enhanced, with no net loss of tree cover.

4. Green Infrastructure (GI) and Biodiversity

a. Development should be master planned around the provision of a multifunctional green infrastructure network, incorporating public open space and connected ecological corridors.

b. Proposals must deliver measurable biodiversity net gain in accordance with national policy requirements.

c. There are records of protected species in the vicinity and therefore development must be informed by appropriate ecological surveys and demonstrate how impacts will be avoided, mitigated or compensated.

d. A comprehensive Nature Recovery Action Plan should be prepared and integrated into the masterplanning of the site, setting out clear measures for habitat creation, enhancement and long-term management.

5. Flood risk / drainage

a. The site is in Flood Zone 1. There is an area of Flood Zone 3 approximately 280m to the west of the boundary of the site, associated with the River Evenlode.

b. Development proposals must incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage surface water runoff. Runoff rates should be restricted to greenfield levels, with the inclusion of appropriate attenuation features such as swales, basins and other SuDS components.

6. Infrastructure

a. Appropriate utilities infrastructure, including water supply, electricity and high-speed broadband, must be provided to serve the development. It should be noted that Charlbury Sewage Treatment Works currently requires significant upgrades, and development will need to ensure sufficient capacity or contribute to necessary improvements.

b. Development should make appropriate contributions towards education, healthcare provision and local community facilities, in accordance with infrastructure requirements.

c. On-site public open space should be delivered as part of the development. Where justified, off-site contributions towards play provision may be considered acceptable.

d. Development should, where appropriate, support improvements to the accessibility and capacity of Charlbury railway station.

7. Phasing / Delivery

a. Development must be brought forward in a comprehensive and coordinated manner across the site.

b. A phasing strategy should be agreed to ensure the timely provision of supporting infrastructure, including early delivery of key access routes and green infrastructure.

c. The development is expected to be delivered over a 1–5 year period, subject to market conditions.

Key Infrastructure Requirements

8.5.104 Charlbury is a vibrant and well-established community, supporting a diverse and accessible range of local facilities and services. These include a primary school, library, GP surgery and post office, alongside a range of shops and community amenities which contribute to the town's role as an important local service centre for both residents and surrounding rural areas. This strong provision of services underpins Charlbury's social sustainability and helps to maintain a high quality of life for its population.

8.5.105 Despite these strengths, evidence indicates that there are some infrastructure and accessibility challenges. In particular, there is a quantitative shortfall of grass playing pitches within the Charlbury area, which places pressure on existing recreational provision. Addressing this deficit will be important in supporting community health and wellbeing, particularly in the context of future growth.

8.5.106 In addition, Charlbury has been identified as having relatively poor accessibility to publicly available greenspace. While the town benefits from a high-quality surrounding landscape, including its location within the Cotswolds National Landscape, access to formal and informal greenspaces within or immediately adjacent to the built-up area is more limited. This highlights the need for future development to incorporate high-quality, accessible green infrastructure, ensuring that new and existing residents can benefit from enhanced opportunities for recreation.

Phasing

8.5.107 Development in Charlbury will be phased to align with the timely provision of supporting infrastructure, including utilities, education, healthcare, transport, and green infrastructure.

8.5.108 Early phases of development will prioritise the delivery of essential infrastructure, including access, drainage and utilities. Particular regard must be given to wastewater infrastructure, noting that Charlbury Sewage Treatment Works currently requires significant upgrades. Development must therefore demonstrate that adequate capacity exists or secure the delivery or funding of necessary improvements.

8.5.109 Subsequent phases will be contingent on the availability of sufficient capacity in key infrastructure, or the delivery of necessary upgrades through on-site works or off-site contributions.

8.5.110 All phases of development must demonstrate a coordinated approach to infrastructure delivery, ensuring that growth is supported by adequate services and facilities and does not place unacceptable pressure on existing provision.

8.7 Eynsham Area

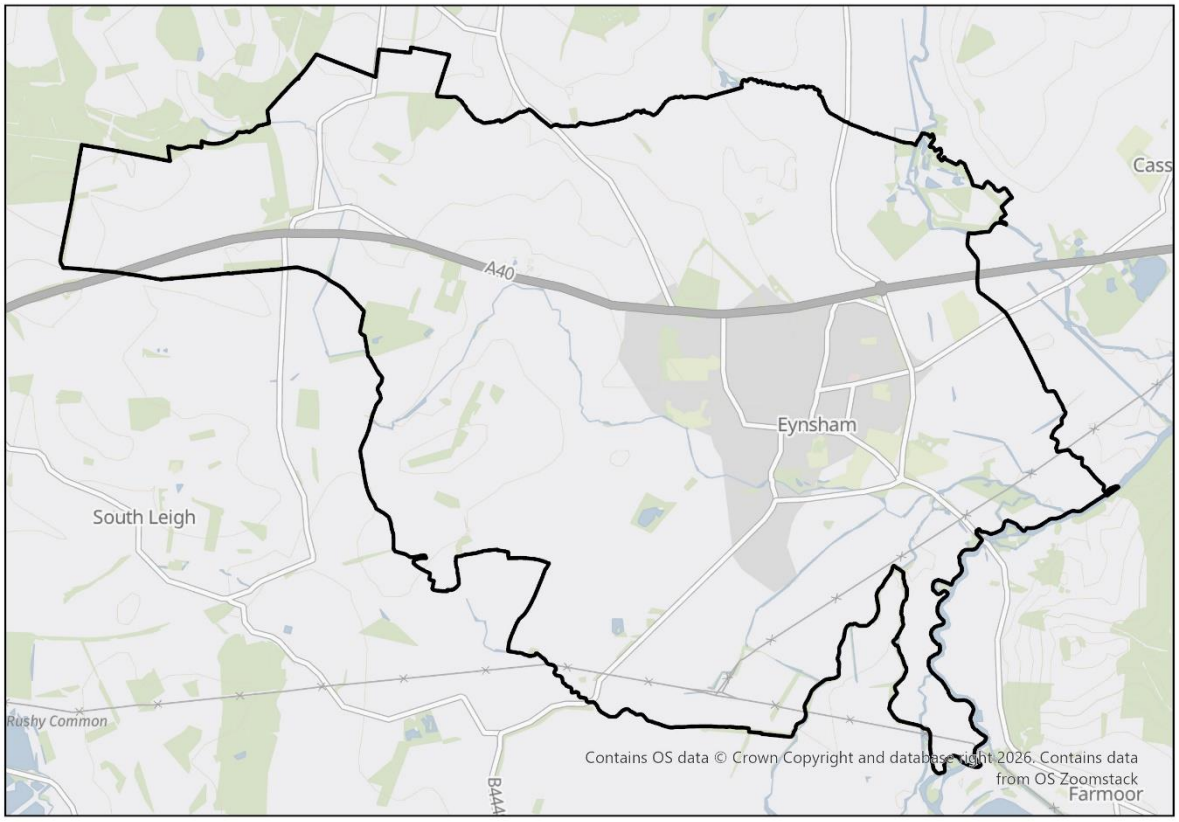

Figure 8.14 – Geographical Extent of Eynsham Area Strategy

The Eynsham Area today

8.7.1 Eynsham is a large and historically significant village located in the eastern part of West Oxfordshire, approximately 8km west of Oxford and south of the A40 corridor. With a population of around 5,300 residents, it is the fourth largest settlement in the District and performs a key role in supporting surrounding rural communities.

8.7.2 Despite its designation as a village, Eynsham functions in many respects as a small town, with secondary education provision, a strong employment base and a wide range of local services. Its scale, accessibility and role in accommodating growth, including unmet needs arising from Oxford, highlight its strategic importance within the settlement hierarchy and is categorised as a Tier 2 settlement.

8.7.3 The village is characterised by a compact and nucleated form, shaped by clear environmental and infrastructure constraints, including the River Thames floodplain to the south and east and the A40 to the north. These features have helped retain a well-defined settlement boundary and strong relationship with the surrounding countryside.

8.7.4 Eynsham has a rich historic legacy, originating as a Saxon settlement and monastic centre. Its historic core, including the Church of St Leonard and associated heritage assets, contributes strongly to its identity and sense of place.

8.7.5 The local economy is relatively strong, supported by major employers such as Siemens and employment areas to the south of the village. However, there are concerns that continued housing growth and commuting patterns could undermine local economic self-sufficiency if not carefully managed.

8.7.6 Transport plays a defining role in the functioning of Eynsham. The A40 provides strategic connectivity but experiences severe congestion, particularly at peak times. This is exacerbated by constraints at the Swinford Toll Bridge and congestion within the village which impact on environmental quality.

8.7.7 While public transport provision is relatively strong, including bus services to Oxford, car dependency remains high. Planned A40 improvements, including bus priority infrastructure, enhanced walking, wheeling and cycling routes and park and ride provision, represent critical infrastructure required to support future growth. However, delivery of these improvements has been subject to delay and uncertainty, raising concerns regarding the timing and capacity of infrastructure to support development.

8.7.8 Eynsham has experienced relatively modest development in recent years. However, it is now expected to accommodate significant growth, including the West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA) – a planned sustainable urban extension to the west of the village and Salt Cross Garden Village, a planned new community to the north of the A40. These developments will have a transformative effect on the area.

8.7.9 Whilst this growth presents opportunities, it also raises important concerns regarding infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, flood risk and the ability to maintain the distinct character and cohesion of the existing village.

8.7.10 Community infrastructure is under pressure, with schools, healthcare and other services experiencing capacity constraints. There is strong support for retaining key services, including GP provision and library facilities, within the existing village centre to maintain accessibility and community cohesion.

8.7.11 Retail provision within the village centre has also been identified as vulnerable, with a need to ensure that new development does not undermine its viability.

8.7.12 Flood risk remains a significant constraint, particularly in areas to the west of recent development and within the Thames floodplain. Surface water and drainage issues have also been identified locally.

8.7.13 Overall, Eynsham faces the challenge of accommodating substantial strategic growth while addressing infrastructure limitations, protecting its identity and ensuring that development is phased and coordinated in a way that supports long-term sustainability.

Statement of Ambition - The Eynsham Area in 2043

8.7.14 The Eynsham Area will continue to develop as one of West Oxfordshire's most important and strategically significant service centres, supporting both local needs and wider growth requirements associated with Oxford.

8.7.15 Future development will be substantial but carefully managed, ensuring that growth is infrastructure-led, coordinated and responsive to identified constraints. Development will support, rather than overwhelm, the existing village and will maintain its compact form, historic character and strong sense of community.

8.7.16 Eynsham will retain its distinct identity, avoiding coalescence with neighbouring settlements and ensuring clear separation from Witney and surrounding villages.

8.7.17 The West Eynsham Strategic Development Area and Salt Cross Garden Village will be delivered in a coordinated manner, ensuring that each function effectively and that infrastructure is shared where appropriate, while maintaining distinct roles and identities.

8.7.18 Development will be supported by the timely delivery of infrastructure, including improvements to the A40 corridor and sustainable transport provision. The occupation of new development will be aligned with the delivery of these improvements.

8.7.19 The village centre will remain the focus for community life, with key services including healthcare, library provision and retail safeguarded and enhanced.

8.7.20 A balanced mix of housing will be delivered to meet a range of needs, supporting a diverse and inclusive community. The area will support a strong and resilient local economy, including employment provision, innovation and home working.

8.7.21 Eynsham's economic role within the A40 science and technology corridor will be strengthened, offering job opportunities at a range of skill levels and sustaining a diverse and resilient economy. Local shops and services will continue to support everyday needs, while residents and visitors alike will benefit from improved access to the countryside, expanded green infrastructure, and an enhanced public realm.

8.7.22 Environmental sustainability will underpin future development, with a focus on climate resilience, flood risk management, biodiversity enhancement and high-quality green infrastructure. Through coordinated planning and investment, Eynsham will remain a vibrant, well-connected and sustainable community.

Strategic Development Framework for the Eynsham Area

8.7.23 Building on the area profile and statement of ambition above, Policy EYN1 provides a framework for managing growth and development within the Eynsham area to 2043. The framework recognises Eynsham's dual role as both a service centre and a key location for accommodating strategic growth. It also acknowledges the significant constraints affecting the area, including transport infrastructure limitations, flood risk, environmental sensitivities and the need to maintain settlement identity.

8.7.24 A central principle of the framework is that development must be infrastructure-led and phased, particularly in relation to the A40 corridor. The delivery of planned transport improvements is critical to supporting growth, and there is a clear expectation that development will not outpace infrastructure provision.

8.7.25 The framework also emphasises the importance of:

1) avoiding coalescence between Eynsham, Witney and surrounding villages;
2) maintaining the role and vitality of the existing village centre;
3) ensuring that Salt Cross Garden Village complements rather than competes with Eynsham;
4) supporting a balanced housing market and local economy;
5) protecting environmental assets and managing flood risk.

8.7.26 The Council will work collaboratively with Oxfordshire County Council, Eynsham Parish Council, developers and infrastructure providers to ensure coordinated delivery.

Policy EYN1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Eynsham Area

Eynsham will continue to play a central role in the district as a Tier 2 service centre, providing homes, services, and infrastructure to meet local and strategic needs while retaining its historic village character and strong sense of community.

The Council will support proposals that contribute to a high-quality, sustainable, and inclusive future for the parish of Eynsham, in line with the objectives of the Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan. Development proposals will be supported where they:

1. **Support Eynsham's role as a key service centre by:**
    a. Maintaining and enhancing community facilities including education, healthcare, cultural venues, and open spaces
    b. Improving access to local services and ensuring that new development is integrated into and well connected with the wider village structure;
    c. Encouraging community uses and small-scale retail that enhance village life and local identity.

2. **Enable infrastructure-led, sustainable growth that meets local and strategic needs by:**
    a. Delivering a balanced mix of housing types and tenures, with a strong emphasis on affordability and lifetime adaptability;
    b. Ensuring that new development is of high design quality and responds positively to local heritage, setting, and landscape character;
    c. Coordinating infrastructure delivery, including schools, health services, and utilities, in parallel with housing growth.

3. **Ensure Salt Cross Garden Village complements rather than competes with Eynsham by:**
    a. Providing shared infrastructure, green space, and services where mutually beneficial;
    b. Ensuring new development avoids harm to the distinct identity and setting of Eynsham village.

4. **Strengthen climate resilience and environmental sustainability by:**
    a. Promoting energy-efficient and zero and low-carbon building standards in line with national climate objectives and the Eynsham CAPZero Community Action Plan;
    b. Incorporating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), water-sensitive design, and nature based solutions;
    c. Enhancing biodiversity, tree cover, and habitat connectivity across the parish.

5. **Improve transport and digital connectivity by:**
    a. Supporting delivery of current proposed and potential future A40 improvements, mass rapid transit (MRT) solutions and active travel links;
    b. Creating safe, direct routes for walking, cycling, and mobility users across Eynsham including effective integration with the West Eynsham SDA and to Salt Cross and Oxford;
    c. Expanding digital infrastructure to support remote working, education, and innovation.

6. **Promote economic vitality and inclusive access to employment by:**
    a. Encouraging a diverse local economy including innovation, light industry, and home based enterprises;
    b. Supporting the continued vitality of Eynsham's shops, markets, and hospitality sector;
    c. Enabling flexible and accessible employment space suited to local skills, education and enterprise needs.

7. **Enhance quality of life, green infrastructure and access to nature by:**
    a. Protecting and enhancing Eynsham's network of green spaces, footpaths, and countryside access;
    b. Providing inclusive and accessible play, leisure, and recreational facilities in line with population growth;
    c. Supporting cultural, community and wellbeing initiatives that bring people together and reinforce a strong village identity.

The Council will work in partnership with Eynsham Parish Council, local communities, developers and infrastructure providers to ensure that growth is coordinated, sustainable, and reflective of Eynsham's unique qualities.

Eynsham Priority Growth Locations

8.7.27 Priority growth locations at Eynsham include:

- Major existing commitments of 10+ homes and 1,000 sqm+ commercial floorspace;
- West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA)

Major Existing Planning Commitments (10 or more homes)

8.7.28 Major existing commitments are sites that as of 1st April 2026, have planning permission or a resolution to grant planning permission for more than 10 homes or 1,000 sqm of commercial floorspace. These are effectively already in the development 'pipeline' and are expected to make an important contribution towards meeting local and wider housing, employment and infrastructure needs.

8.7.29 There are no major existing commitments with planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission in the Eynsham Area as of 1st April 2026.

West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA)

8.7.30 The West Eynsham SDA is allocated in the adopted Local Plan 2031 under Policy EW2 for the provision of a sustainable urban extension of around 1,000 homes supported by a range of facilities including a new primary school, western spine road and public open space.

8.7.31 To date, two parts of the SDA have already been completed, delivering a total of 237 homes including Thornbury Green (160 homes) and the former Eynsham Nursery and Plant centre (77 homes).

8.7.32 In accordance with Policy EW2, to guide the delivery of the remainder of the site, the main landowners jointly prepared a site-wide masterplan which was formally endorsed by the District Council as a material planning consideration in March 2022.

8.7.33 Since then, there have been a number of delays, primarily due to changing land ownerships but also because of uncertainty around the scope of improvement works to the A40 being progressed by Oxfordshire County Council.

8.7.34 In essence, because of inflationary cost pressures and associated funding difficulties, the scope of the A40 improvement works has had to be reconsidered which, in turn, had a knock-on effect on decisions around the most appropriate point of access into the West Eynsham SDA from the A40.

8.7.35 An independent study carried out by Pell Frischmann in 2025 considered a number of different access options in light of the re-scoped A40 improvement works and, in turn, identified a preferred solution.

8.7.36 The additional clarity provided by the Pell Frischmann report has given the site promoters and landowners greater confidence to bring forward planning applications for their parts of the site and a regular developer forum is taking place with officers from both the District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.

8.7.37 Officers anticipate a total of around 950 new homes being brought forward in line with the site-wide masterplan endorsed 2022. As indicated in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2, first completions are expected to take place in 2030/31 with the whole scheme completed in the period to 2043.

8.7.38 As with Salt Cross, it is anticipated that a proportion of any affordable homes completed will be made available to those on Oxford City Council's waiting list to assist with their unmet housing need in accordance with Core Policy 2 – Delivering New Homes.

8.7.39 Because the West Eynsham SDA is being actively progressed, Policy EW2 of the adopted Local Plan 2031 will not be superseded by the policies of this Plan and will therefore remain extant for the purposes of decision-making, alongside the site-wide masterplan endorsed as a material planning consideration by the District Council in 2022.

8.7.40 It is however proposed that a very minor adjustment is made to the site boundary of the West Eynsham SDA as shown on Figures 9.5d and 9.5e of the adopted Local Plan 2031. This minor change is proposed to exclude a small parcel of land in the north-east corner of the site which comprises a residential curtilage that the landowner has requested to be removed from the SDA.

8.7.41 The proposed change is so minor in nature that it is considered to have no material impact on the continued application of Policy EW2 of the adopted Local Plan 2031.

Key Infrastructure Requirements

8.7.42 The Local Plan makes provision for approximately 2,200 new homes, together with about 40 hectares of business land at Salt Cross and an additional 1,000 homes at West Eynsham. Infrastructure issues in the village must be addressed in order to accommodate this strategic scale growth.

8.7.43 Transport is consistently identified as the most significant infrastructure challenge for Eynsham due to its relationship with Oxford, the A40 corridor and existing congestion constraints. Key requirements include:

- Delivery of major A40 corridor improvements, including junction upgrades and enhanced capacity where required.
- Expansion of high-quality bus-based public transport linking Eynsham, Salt Cross, Witney and Oxford.
- Provision of dedicated bus priority measures along the A40 corridor.
- Enhanced Park and Ride capacity serving Oxford-bound trips.
- Delivery of comprehensive walking and cycling routes connecting:
  - Eynsham village;
  - Salt Cross Garden Village;
  - Oxford;
  - Hanborough Station; and
  - surrounding settlements.
- Improvements to public rights of way and active travel networks.
- Measures to reduce car dependency and support modal shift in accordance with Oxfordshire's transport strategy.
- Potential future rail-related enhancements linked to the Hanborough corridor and wider Oxfordshire transport initiatives.

8.7.44 Pressure for early education (nursery and pre-school) has been growing in Eynsham. Eynsham Primary School has already expanded to 2 form entry size and is not assessed as being able to expand further. The school would not be able to absorb the scale of development planned for Eynsham and therefore the new strategic sites in Eynsham will be expected to provide new primary schools.

8.7.45 The County Council has identified that Bartholomew School in Eynsham will experience rising demand over the next few years. It has recently expanded by one form of entry. Additional capacity will be needed to meet demand resulting from proposed additional development to the west of Eynsham and north of the A40 at Salt Cross Village. An additional secondary school site is required within the Salt Cross Garden Village, which (subject to the approval of the DfE Regional Director) may become a satellite site for Bartholomew School.

8.7.46 Electricity generation and distribution - The Eynsham IDP has suggested that previously estimated total load for planned strategic sites (all uses) was 9,000 kilo-volt-amperes (kVA). This would trigger a reinforcement of 2.1 km of 132 kV cable from Headington Grid towards Yarnton Grid. The project is listed in SSEN's reinforcement plans to 2030. Within the Salt Cross Garden Village, infrastructure to support the delivery of renewable energy generation will also be required.

Phasing

8.7.47 Strategic development to the west of Eynsham should be phased in accordance with the delivery of highways infrastructure, particularly the provision of the western spine road and connections to the A40. Significant growth is planned through the A40 corridor and necessary transport and highway improvements should be delivered in order to mitigate the impacts of development at West Eynsham and Salt Cross.

8.7.48 New development must also be phased in such a way to address pressures on sewage infrastructure capacity, to ensure water quality objectives can be met.

Long Hanborough Area Strategy

The Long Hanborough Area Today

8.8.1 The Long Hanborough Area, for the purposes of this Area Strategy, comprises the village of Long Hanborough and its immediate surroundings. Located approximately 6 kilometres north-east of Witney and 10 kilometres north-west of Oxford, Long Hanborough occupies a strategically important position within West Oxfordshire, benefiting from excellent rail connectivity, proximity to Oxford and access to the wider Cotswolds area.

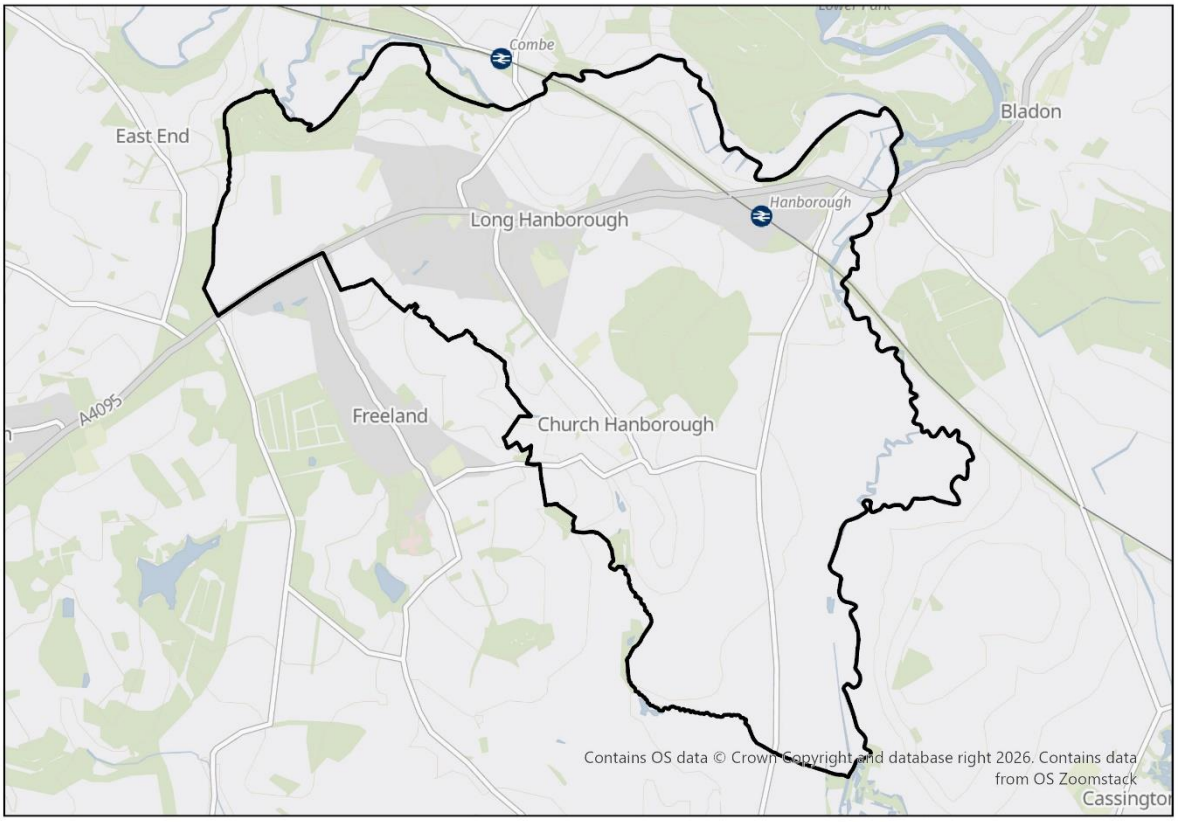

Figure 8.15 – Geographic Extent of Long Hanborough Area Strategy

8.8.2 Home to around 3,000 residents, Long Hanborough is one of the district's largest villages and performs an important role as a service centre, providing a range of facilities and services for local residents and surrounding communities. In recent years the village has experienced significant housing growth through a number of major residential developments which have strengthened its population base and helped support local services and facilities.

8.8.3 Whilst this growth has helped meet housing needs and reinforce Long Hanborough's role within the settlement hierarchy, it has also increased pressure on local infrastructure and highlighted the importance of ensuring that future development is proportionate to the scale and character of the village and supported by appropriate investment in services, facilities and infrastructure.

8.8.4 Long Hanborough benefits from a good range of local services and community facilities including a primary school, healthcare provision, local shops, public houses, recreational facilities and community organisations. These facilities contribute significantly to the village's strong sense of community and help support day-to-day needs. However, continued population growth is expected to place additional demands on existing infrastructure.

8.8.5 One of Long Hanborough's greatest strengths is its excellent connectivity. Hanborough railway station, located on the Cotswold Line, provides direct rail services to Oxford, Worcester, Reading and London Paddington and is one of the district's most important public transport assets. The station plays a significant role in supporting sustainable travel and access to employment opportunities. However, increasing passenger demand has created pressure on station access, parking provision and the surrounding road network, particularly along the A4095 corridor.

8.8.6 Despite the availability of rail and bus services, car ownership and commuting by private vehicle remain relatively high. There are opportunities to improve walking, wheeling and cycling connections within the village and between key destinations including the railway station, local facilities, schools and surrounding settlements, helping to reduce reliance on the private car and support healthier and more sustainable travel patterns.

8.8.7 The local economy is influenced by the village's proximity to Oxford, Witney and other employment centres, resulting in significant levels of out-commuting. Whilst Long Hanborough contains relatively limited employment land, local businesses, home working, rural enterprises and service-based employment make an important contribution to the local economy.

8.8.8 The historic environment forms an important part of the village's identity. Long Hanborough contains a number of listed buildings, historic churches and traditional village streetscapes, with the Millwood End Conservation Area reflecting the area's architectural and historic significance. The village's heritage assets, together with its varied building styles and historic settlement pattern, contribute strongly to local character and distinctiveness.

8.8.9 The surrounding landscape is equally important. Located close to the Cotswolds National Landscape and within the attractive Evenlode Valley, the area benefits from a rich network of river corridors, meadows, woodlands, hedgerows and agricultural land. These assets contribute to biodiversity, recreation, landscape character and local identity. They also provide important opportunities for nature recovery, green infrastructure enhancement and improved public access to the countryside.

8.8.10 Whilst most of the village lies within areas of low flood risk, parts of the surrounding area are affected by floodplain constraints associated with the River Evenlode, Caverswell Brook and other watercourses. Managing flood risk, improving climate resilience and ensuring that development incorporates sustainable drainage and environmental enhancement measures will therefore remain important considerations for future growth.

8.8.11 Long Hanborough also benefits from a number of visitor attractions and heritage assets including the Oxford Bus Museum, the Morris Motors Museum and its proximity to destinations such as Blenheim Palace and North Leigh Roman Villa.

8.8.12 Looking ahead, Long Hanborough is well placed to continue playing an important role within West Oxfordshire's settlement hierarchy. Its strong transport connections, range of local services, attractive environment and proximity to Oxford provide significant opportunities for sustainable development. However, future change will need to be carefully managed to ensure that growth remains proportionate, infrastructure keeps pace with development and the village's distinctive character, heritage assets, landscape setting and environmental quality are conserved and enhanced.

Statement of Ambition - The Long Hanborough Area in 2043

8.8.13 By 2043, the Long Hanborough Area will continue to be a thriving and sustainable rural community, building on its strong sense of place, excellent transport connectivity, rich historic character and attractive environmental setting.

8.8.14 As one of West Oxfordshire's larger villages and a Tier 2 Service Centre, Long Hanborough will continue to play an important role in meeting local housing, employment and service needs. Future growth will be carefully managed and proportionate to the scale and character of the village, ensuring that development supports rather than undermines the qualities that make the area an attractive place to live, work and visit.

8.8.15 A key ambition for the area will be to maximise the benefits of its strategic transport connections. Hanborough Station will continue to develop as an important public transport gateway for West Oxfordshire, supported by improvements to station accessibility, public transport integration, walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure and the potential development of a mobility hub.

8.8.16 Growth will be aligned with the timely provision of infrastructure and services. New development will be expected to contribute positively towards addressing existing infrastructure pressures and ensuring that local facilities continue to meet the needs of residents.

8.8.17 The area's historic environment, landscape setting and environmental assets will be protected and enhanced. The character of Long Hanborough, its conservation area, listed buildings, important green spaces, wildlife habitats and wider countryside setting will continue to define the identity of the area. Particular emphasis will be placed on protecting biodiversity, strengthening ecological networks and conserving valued assets such as Pinsley Wood, the Evenlode Valley and other important landscape features.

8.8.18 Opportunities will be taken to improve access to nature, enhance local green infrastructure and support the health and wellbeing of residents of all ages.

8.8.19 Through a combination of carefully managed growth, infrastructure investment, environmental enhancement and sustainable transport improvements, the Long Hanborough Area will continue to evolve as a well-connected, resilient and attractive rural community.

Strategic Development Framework for the Long Hanborough Area

8.8.20 Building on the area profile and statement of ambition above, Policy LH1 provides a framework for managing change and development within the Long Hanborough Area to 2043.

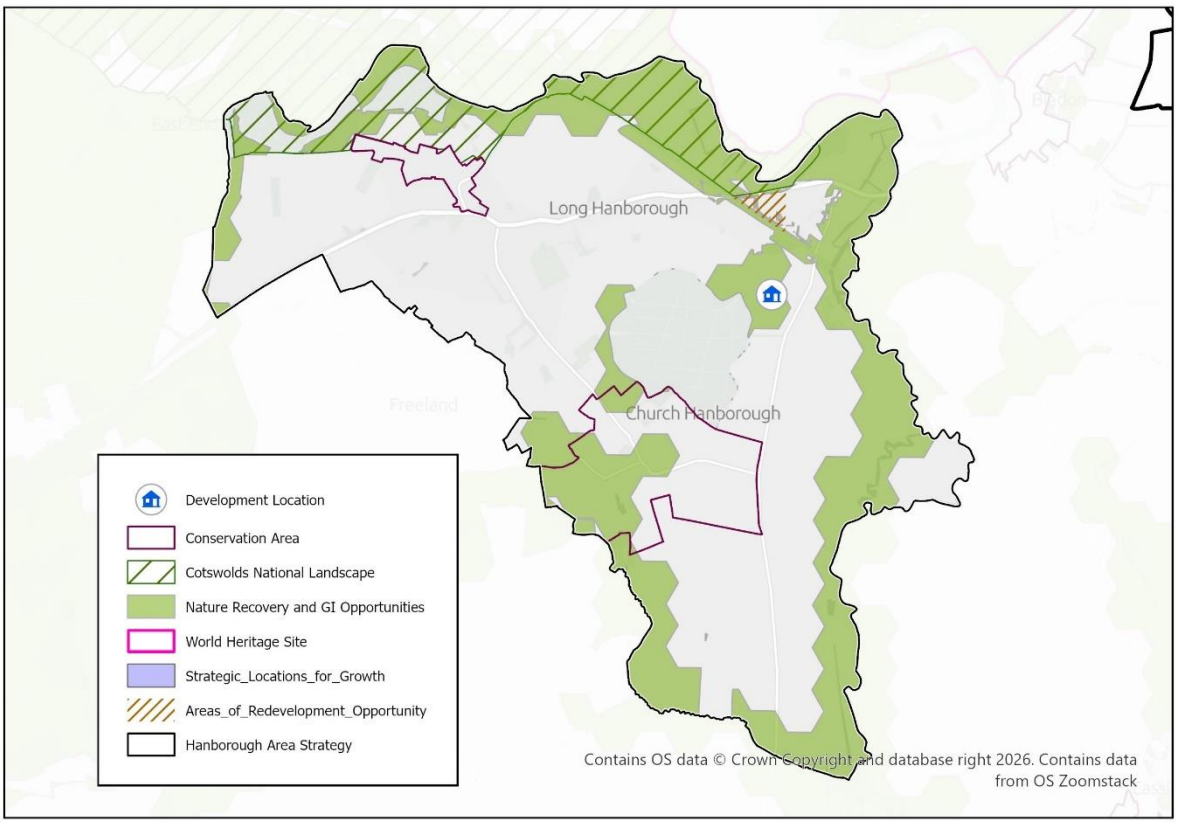

Figure 8.16 – Strategic Framework for the Hanborough Area

8.8.21 The framework recognises Long Hanborough's role as one of West Oxfordshire's larger villages and an important Tier 2 Service Centre. Benefiting from excellent rail connectivity, proximity to Oxford and Witney and a range of local services and facilities, the area is well placed to accommodate carefully planned and proportionate growth in sustainable locations.

8.8.22 The framework seeks to ensure that future development supports the long-term sustainability of the village whilst responding positively to local concerns regarding infrastructure capacity, village character and environmental quality. Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring that growth is aligned with infrastructure delivery, strengthening sustainable transport connections, enhancing access to Hanborough Station, protecting the area's historic and environmental assets and maintaining the distinctive identity of the village.

8.8.23 The Council will work proactively with Oxfordshire County Council, Network Rail, train operating companies, infrastructure providers, landowners, developers, local communities and other partners to secure the coordinated delivery of development, transport improvements, infrastructure investment and environmental enhancement in accordance with this framework.

Policy LH1 - Strategic Development Framework for the Long Hanborough Area

Development proposals within the Long Hanborough Area will be supported where they contribute positively towards the delivery of the following objectives, having regard to their scale, nature and location:

1. Delivering proportionate and infrastructure-led growth

a. Supporting development that is proportionate to the scale, character and role of Long Hanborough as a Tier 2 Service Centre;
b. Ensuring that growth is aligned with the timely provision of transport, education, healthcare, utilities, wastewater, digital and community infrastructure;
c. Delivering a range of homes that meet identified local needs, including affordable housing, homes for younger households, families and older people;
d. Prioritising the efficient use of previously developed, underutilised and sustainably located land where appropriate;
e. Ensuring that new development contributes positively towards maintaining and enhancing local services, facilities and community infrastructure.

2. Maximising the benefits of Hanborough Station and sustainable transport

a. Supporting the continued enhancement of Hanborough Station as a strategic public transport gateway serving Long Hanborough and the wider district;
b. Supporting measures to improve station accessibility, integration with other modes of transport and the potential development of a mobility hub;
c. Delivering improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling networks, particularly where they improve access between the station, village centre, schools, employment areas, community facilities and surrounding settlements;
d. Supporting enhancements to public transport services and infrastructure, including improved bus, rail and community transport provision;
e. Supporting measures to address parking pressures, traffic congestion and highway safety issues associated with station activity and growth within the area;

3. Protecting village character, heritage and local distinctiveness

a. Conserving and enhancing the historic character of Long Hanborough, including the Millwood End Conservation Area, listed buildings and other heritage assets;

b. Ensuring that development responds positively to local character, landscape setting and village identity, creating attractive and distinctive places;

c. Maintaining the separate identity of Long Hanborough and preventing inappropriate coalescence with neighbouring settlements;
d. Protecting important views, settlement edges and areas of open countryside that contribute to local character and sense of place;
e. Supporting high-quality design that reflects local distinctiveness and reinforces the area's rural character.

4. Protecting and enhancing the natural environment

a. Conserving and enhancing biodiversity assets, ecological networks, green infrastructure and landscape features within and around the village;
b. Protecting and enhancing the Evenlode Valley, Pinsley Wood and other important habitats, wildlife corridors and environmental assets;
c. Conserving the setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape and minimising adverse impacts on its special qualities where relevant.

Priority Growth Locations

8.8.24 Long Hanborough has accommodated a significant amount of new development in recent years including land to the west of the village and on land adjacent to Hanborough Station.

8.8.25 The adopted Local Plan 2031 identified two site allocations at Long Hanborough, one of which (Oliver's Garage) has now been completed, whilst in relation to the other site (Land at Myrtle Farm) the landowner has confirmed in writing that they do not intend to bring the site forward for development and wish it to be 'de-allocated'.

8.8.26 As a result, it is proposed that Policy EW6 – Myrtle Farm, Long Hanborough is superseded by the policies of this Plan.

8.8.27 Moving forward, future growth at Long Hanborough is anticipated to comprise the following:

- Major existing commitments of 10+ homes and 1,000 sqm+ commercial floorspace;
- Hanborough Station Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)
- Land south-west of Hanborough Station

8.8.28 Major existing commitments are sites that as of 1st April 2026, have planning permission or a resolution to grant planning permission for more than 10 homes or 1,000 sqm of commercial floorspace.

8.8.29 These are effectively already in the development 'pipeline' and are expected to make an important contribution towards meeting local and wider housing, employment and infrastructure needs. They are included below for information with the residential permissions reflected in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2.

It seeks to coordinate transport investment and complementary development in a way that strengthens Hanborough Station's role as a key gateway to West Oxfordshire, improves integration between different modes of travel and supports wider economic, environmental and accessibility objectives.

8.8.30 Land south west of Hanborough Station is a proposed site allocation of up to 300 homes including affordable housing, public open space, green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements and associated infrastructure.

Major Existing Planning Commitments (10 or more homes)

8.8.31 Major existing commitments with planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission in the Long Hanborough Area as of 1st April 2026 include the following:

- 150 dwellings – Land North of Witney Road, Long Hanborough

8.8.32 As reflected in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2, all of these units are expected to be completed by 2031.

Hanborough Station Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)

8.8.33 Hanborough Station occupies a strategically important position within West Oxfordshire and the wider Oxfordshire transport network. Located on the North Cotswold Line, it provides direct rail connections to Oxford, London Paddington and destinations across the Midlands and South East.

8.8.34 The station serves a wide catchment extending beyond Long Hanborough to include Woodstock, Bladon, Eynsham, Salt Cross, Witney, Carterton and surrounding rural communities. It plays an important role in supporting access to employment, education, services, tourism and leisure opportunities across the district and beyond.

8.8.35 Passenger demand has increased significantly in recent decades and is expected to continue growing as planned development comes forward across West Oxfordshire. In particular, growth at Salt Cross Garden Village, Eynsham, Witney and other locations is likely to increase demand for rail services and strengthen Hanborough's role as a key transport gateway.

8.8.36 The Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO) recognises the potential for Hanborough Station and the surrounding land to evolve into a strategically important transport interchange and mobility hub. This would integrate rail services with bus services, walking and cycling infrastructure, cycle parking, electric vehicle charging, shared mobility services and associated passenger facilities, creating a more accessible and attractive transport gateway for West Oxfordshire.

8.8.37 The Council will support the safeguarding of land and the coordinated planning of development necessary to facilitate the long-term delivery of transport infrastructure, mobility hub facilities and associated improvements, recognising that the precise form and extent of these proposals will evolve over time.

8.8.38 Existing challenges include constrained station facilities, pressure on parking provision, congestion within the station forecourt, poor quality walking and cycling connections and operational constraints associated with the single-track section of railway between Wolvercote Junction and Hanborough. These issues currently limit the station's ability to accommodate future growth and function effectively as a sustainable transport hub.

8.8.39 The Council supports measures to improve passenger experience, accessibility, rail capacity and sustainable transport integration. Potential improvements include enhanced station facilities, improved waiting environments, upgraded accessibility, expanded cycle parking, improved public transport interchange arrangements and enhanced walking and cycling connections to surrounding settlements.

8.8.40 Strategic studies, including the North Cotswold Line Taskforce work, Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study and OxRail 2040 programme, identify the reinstatement of double tracking between Wolvercote Junction and Hanborough as a key long-term infrastructure priority. Associated improvements could include a second platform, new footbridge and lifts, additional track infrastructure and revised station access arrangements, helping to improve service frequency, reliability and capacity.

8.8.41 Given the strategic significance of these proposals, it is important that future development does not prejudice opportunities for rail infrastructure improvements, station expansion or mobility hub delivery. The ARO therefore provides a framework for safeguarding land, coordinating investment and supporting complementary forms of development that contribute positively towards sustainable transport objectives.

8.8.42 Parking will continue to play an important role in the operation of the station given its extensive catchment area. However, the longer-term objective is to create a more balanced transport offer that supports greater use of walking, cycling, bus services and shared mobility options. Future parking provision should therefore form part of an integrated transport strategy for the wider station area.

8.8.43 Hanborough Station also plays an important role in supporting the visitor economy as the nearest rail station to Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site. Improved rail services and onward travel connections have the potential to increase the proportion of visitors arriving by sustainable modes whilst supporting wider economic benefits across the district.

8.8.44 The delivery of the ARO is likely to take place over an extended period and involve a range of public and private sector organisations. The designation therefore provides a flexible and enabling framework rather than a fixed development proposal.

8.8.45 To support its long-term delivery, the Council will encourage the preparation of a Hanborough Station Strategic Framework. Prepared collaboratively with key stakeholders, the Framework should help coordinate transport improvements, mobility hub facilities, active travel infrastructure, parking provision, complementary development and environmental enhancement, whilst safeguarding land requirements and maintaining flexibility to respond to future transport and rail industry priorities.

8.8.46 Through this approach, Hanborough Station has the potential to evolve into one of Oxfordshire's principal strategic transport interchanges, providing a high-quality gateway to West Oxfordshire and supporting a more sustainable, connected and integrated transport network.

Policy LH2 - Hanborough Station Area of Redevelopment Opportunity

The Hanborough Station Area of Redevelopment Opportunity, as identified on the Policies Map, is designated as a strategic location for the enhancement of rail infrastructure, sustainable transport connectivity and associated redevelopment opportunities.

The Council will support the comprehensive or phased redevelopment, enhancement and intensification of land within the Area of Redevelopment Opportunity where proposals contribute towards the delivery of an integrated transport interchange and West Oxfordshire Mobility Hub serving the district and wider Oxfordshire area.

Proposals within the Area of Redevelopment Opportunity should seek to:

a. support the long-term enhancement of Hanborough Station as a strategic rail gateway and transport interchange serving West Oxfordshire;

b. facilitate improvements to rail infrastructure and station facilities, including safeguarding land where necessary for future rail capacity enhancements, station expansion, additional platforms, improved accessibility and associated operational requirements;

c. support the delivery of a high-quality West Oxfordshire Mobility Hub incorporating appropriate provision for bus services, rail replacement services, cycling facilities, walking routes, taxi provision, shared mobility services, electric vehicle infrastructure and other sustainable transport measures;

d. improve integration between rail, bus, walking, cycling and other modes of transport to encourage modal shift and reduce reliance on private car travel;

e. provide enhanced walking and cycling connections to Long Hanborough, Bladon, Woodstock, Eynsham, Salt Cross, Witney and other surrounding settlements where appropriate;

f. ensure that parking provision is appropriately managed and designed to support the role of the station whilst encouraging greater use of sustainable transport modes;

g. support development that contributes positively towards the viability, delivery and operation of transport infrastructure and mobility hub facilities;

h. make efficient use of land through high-quality design, place-making and sustainable development principles;

i. incorporate green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements, sustainable drainage measures and climate resilience measures;

j. demonstrate that development would not prejudice the delivery of planned rail infrastructure improvements, transport interchange facilities or wider strategic transport objectives; and

k. safeguard land, where necessary, for the future delivery and operation of a West Oxfordshire Mobility Hub and associated rail, interchange, parking, active travel and transport infrastructure improvements.

The Council will support the preparation of a Hanborough Station Strategic Framework, jointly prepared with relevant stakeholders, to coordinate investment, safeguard land requirements and guide the long-term delivery of transport infrastructure, mobility hub facilities and complementary development opportunities.

Land South-West of Hanborough Station

8.8.47 Policy LH1 allocates land west of Hanborough Station for a residential-led development of up to 300 dwellings, including affordable housing, public open space, green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements and associated infrastructure.

8.8.48 The allocation reflects the site's highly sustainable location adjacent to Hanborough Station and its proximity to local services and facilities. It provides an opportunity to deliver new homes in a location well connected by public transport whilst supporting the long-term role of Hanborough Station as a strategic transport gateway and mobility hub serving West Oxfordshire.

8.8.49 The policy seeks to ensure that development is comprehensively planned and integrated with Long Hanborough village, Hanborough Station and the wider Area of Redevelopment Opportunity. Particular emphasis is placed on securing high-quality design, sustainable transport connectivity, landscape and heritage protection, nature recovery, green infrastructure and the timely delivery of supporting infrastructure.

8.8.50 Development will be expected to contribute towards improvements to station accessibility, walking and cycling connectivity and wider transport infrastructure, whilst protecting important environmental assets including Pinsley Wood, nearby heritage assets and the setting of Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site.

8.8.51 Together, these requirements will help ensure that the site delivers a sustainable and well-connected new neighbourhood that meets local housing needs, supports the long-term enhancement of Hanborough Station and respects the distinctive landscape, environmental and heritage qualities of the area.

Policy LH3 – Land West of Hanborough Station

Site area: 35 Hectares

Developable area: 13 Hectares

Current use: Agricultural land

Landowner/site promoter: CEG / Blenheim Estate

Allocation:

Residential development of up to 300 dwellings to include 40% affordable housing, public open space and informal recreation areas, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements and supporting infrastructure including access, drainage and utilities.

In addition to the general policy requirements of this Local Plan, development proposals will be expected to accord with the site-specific development requirements set out

1. Comprehensive masterplanning

a. Development proposals shall be informed by a comprehensive site-wide masterplan, prepared in consultation with the Council, relevant infrastructure providers, statutory consultees and the local community.
b. The masterplan shall show the developable area, access arrangements, pedestrian and cycle links, structural landscaping, open space, drainage, ecological buffers, phasing and any necessary infrastructure.
c. The masterplan shall demonstrate how the site will relate positively to Hanborough Station, Long Hanborough village, the surrounding countryside and the wider Hanborough Station Area of Redevelopment Opportunity.

2. Relationship with Hanborough Station

a. The site layout shall respond positively to the site's proximity to Hanborough Station and shall support the role of the station as a sustainable transport hub.
b. Development shall be coordinated with Policy LH2 – Hanborough Station Area of Redevelopment Opportunity, including where relevant meaningful contributions towards station access, interchange, mobility hub, public realm and parking management improvements.
c. Development shall avoid worsening station-related parking, congestion or highway safety issues, including through appropriate on-site parking, cycle parking, electric vehicle charging and parking management measures.

3. Access and movement

a. Vehicular access shall be provided from the local highway network, supported by a transport assessment addressing impacts on Lower Road, the A4095 and the wider local highway network.
b. Direct, safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle connections shall be provided to Hanborough Station, Long Hanborough village, local services and the wider public rights of way network.
c. Development shall provide or contribute towards any necessary active travel, public transport, highway safety and parking management measures required to mitigate its impacts.

4. Design and landscape character

a. The layout, form, scale and design of development shall respond sensitively to the rural edge of Long Hanborough, the setting of Hanborough Station and the proximity of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

b. A structural landscape framework shall be provided, including retention and reinforcement of existing trees, hedgerows and field boundaries, and a strong landscaped edge to the south and west of the site.

c. Development shall avoid unacceptable harm to tranquillity, dark skies, sensitive views and the rural character of the surrounding area, including through appropriate lighting controls.

5. Heritage

a. Development shall conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of nearby heritage assets and their settings, informed by a heritage impact assessment.

b. The heritage impact assessment shall include consideration of the setting and Outstanding Universal Value of Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site, including the role of Pinsley Wood and the surrounding landscape in that setting.

6. Nature Recovery

a. Development shall protect Pinsley Wood ancient woodland, the adjacent Local Wildlife Site and any priority habitat within or adjoining the site, supported by ecological assessment, appropriate buffers, biodiversity net gain and long-term management measures.

b. Contribute to nature recovery by delivering priority measures identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy including woodland creation, as part of the GI framework for the site.

c. Potential effects on Cothill Fen SAC, Oxford Meadows SAC and any relevant SSSI Impact Risk Zones shall be assessed and mitigated, with Natural England consulted where required.

7. Flood risk, drainage and utilities

a. An appropriate surface water drainage strategy shall be provided, incorporating sustainable drainage systems as part of the site's green and blue infrastructure network.

b. Wastewater treatment capacity and other necessary utilities infrastructure shall be confirmed and delivered in step with development.

c. Attenuated discharge to a watercourse or a sewer will also need to be considered as part of a site-specific FRA.

8. Minerals safeguarding

a. Minerals safeguarding considerations shall be addressed, including whether prior extraction is necessary, practicable and environmentally acceptable.

9. Open space and long-term management

a. Public open space, children's play space and informal recreation shall be provided on-site, with long-term management arrangements secured.

b. Long-term management arrangements shall be secured for open space, green infrastructure, drainage features, biodiversity mitigation and landscape buffers.

10. Infrastructure and contributions

a.	Contributions shall be provided to mitigate the impact of development in accordance with the relevant infrastructure and developer contributions policies of the Local Plan.

Key Infrastructure Requirements

8.8.52 Hanborough Station is a focus for investment and there is a strong opportunity to align new residential development with wider plans for a mobility hub at Hanborough Station. Plans include both to improve the frequency of rail services operating from the station and to improve connectivity to it, including providing onward bus and active travel links to key settlements such as Salt Cross, Eynsham and Witney.

8.8.53 It is recognised that the rail infrastructure as it is today could not accommodate the improved service pattern for Hanborough. Included within a second phase of the OxRail 2040 plan, is the reinstatement of a second track on the North Cotswold Line between Hanborough and Wolvercote, including construction of a second platform at Hanborough station.

8.8.54 Waste Water treatment capacity at Hanborough is a significant issue to be resolved affecting the health and wellbeing of communities and the natural environment. Church Hanborough Sewage Treatment works currently has no capacity to accommodate additional flows arising from new development and has been operating outside its permit in recent years. Wastewater treatment capacity therefore needs to be increased to accommodate new development.

8.8.55 As set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Hanborough Primary School has been expanded to 1.5 form entry, and to facilitate this additional land has been secured for the school. If required, due to population growth, it is expected that the school could be expanded again to 2 forms of entry.

8.8.56 Freeland and Hanborough is one of the district's wards identified as having poor accessibility to greenspace. Development must support the provision of green spaces, such as allotments, orchards and formal and informal green space.

Phasing

8.8.57 It is recognised that this location has a number of environmental and heritage sensitivities, relating to its proximity to the Ancient Woodland at Pinsley Wood and its historic landscape character. Development in this location will need to be planned and phased in such a way that it protects and enhances the settlement character of Long Hanborough, contributes to nature recovery and natural capital within the site and adjoining area and is supported by necessary investment in infrastructure.

8.8.58 New development must also be phased in such a way to address pressures on sewage infrastructure capacity, to ensure water quality objectives can be met.

8.8 Woodstock Area Strategy

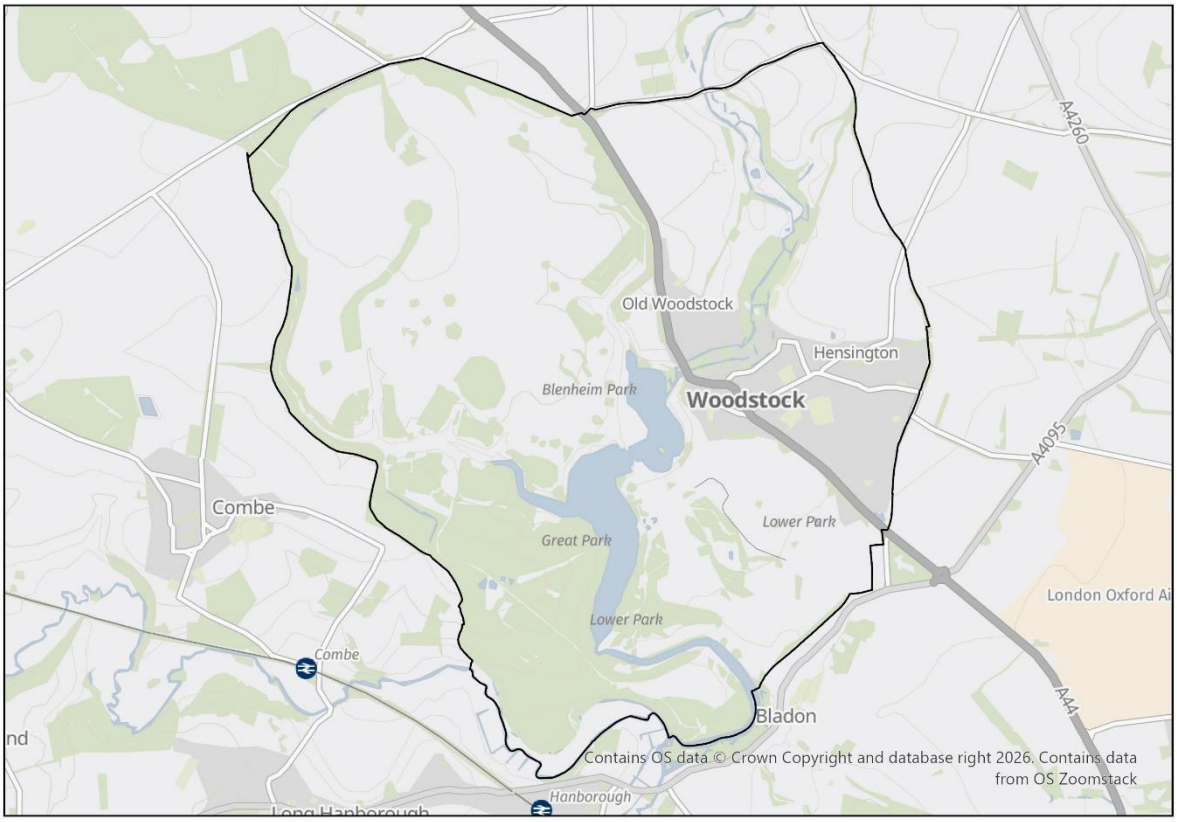

Figure 8.18 – Geographic Extent of Woodstock Area Strategy

The Woodstock Area Today

8.9.1 Woodstock is an historic market town located in the eastern part of West Oxfordshire, with a population of approximately 3,000 residents. The town performs a role that extends well beyond its size, functioning both as a local service centre for surrounding rural communities and as a nationally and internationally recognised visitor destination due to its close relationship with the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site (WHS).

8.9.2 The town is characterised by its high-quality historic environment, with a large conservation area encompassing a significant number of listed buildings and a well-preserved medieval street pattern centred around Market Place, High Street and Oxford Street. This heritage, combined with its attractive townscape and setting, contributes strongly to Woodstock's distinct identity and sense of place.

8.9.3 Woodstock benefits from a strong independent retail, hospitality and tourism offer, supported by visitor activity associated with Blenheim Palace and a wide range of cultural events. This visitor economy plays a significant role in supporting local businesses and employment, helping sustain a diverse range of services that might not otherwise be viable in a town of its size.

8.9.4 The town is relatively well connected, located on the A44 corridor between Oxford and Chipping Norton, and served by frequent bus services linking it to Oxford, surrounding settlements and nearby rail stations at Long Hanborough and Charlbury. Recent and planned investment in public transport infrastructure and active travel routes reinforces Woodstock's accessibility and sustainability credentials.

8.9.5 However, Woodstock faces a number of important challenges. Planned housing growth through allocations in the adopted Local Plan 2031 represents a significant increase in the town's size, with a large proportion of development yet to be delivered. This has raised concerns regarding the capacity of local infrastructure, including healthcare provision, education, parking and transport networks

8.9.6 Traffic congestion, particularly associated with through-traffic along the A44 and wider road network pressures, affects environmental quality and the functioning of the town centre. At the same time, opportunities exist to improve walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure and strengthen sustainable transport connections, including through the Woodstock Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

8.9.7 Woodstock's environmental setting is of exceptional importance. The town lies adjacent to Blenheim Palace and Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site of international significance, as well as designated ecological and landscape assets. These sensitivities place important constraints on future development and require a carefully managed approach to growth that protects the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS, including through its setting.

8.9.8 Overall, Woodstock's combination of historic character, environmental quality, strong visitor economy and community identity underpins its importance within West Oxfordshire. Future change will need to balance the delivery of housing, infrastructure and economic vitality with the protection of the town's heritage, landscape setting and quality of life for residents.

Statement of Ambition - The Woodstock Area in 2043

8.9.9 By 2043, Woodstock will have successfully accommodated a period of significant change, evolving as a thriving, resilient and well-supported historic market town that continues to play a key role within West Oxfordshire and the wider region.

8.9.10 The priority over the plan period will be the successful integration of committed development and the delivery of essential infrastructure. The town will be supported by improved healthcare provision, sufficient school capacity, enhanced public spaces, and better managed parking and transport networks, ensuring that the needs of a growing population are met and that quality of life for residents is maintained and enhanced.

8.9.11 Woodstock's exceptional historic environment and its unique relationship with the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site will be conserved and enhanced. Development and change will be carefully managed to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS, including through the safeguarding of those elements of its setting which contribute to its significance. The town will continue to be recognised as a place of national and international importance.

8.9.12 The town centre will remain vibrant and attractive, with a strong independent retail, hospitality and cultural offer that supports both residents and visitors. Tourism will continue to play a vital role in the local economy, supported by a balanced and sustainable approach that enhances the visitor experience while managing pressures on the town and its infrastructure.

8.9.13 Woodstock will benefit from improved connectivity, with greater emphasis on sustainable transport. Walking, wheeling and cycling will be safer, more attractive and more widely used, supported by the delivery of measures identified through the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Public transport connections to Oxford and surrounding areas will continue to provide a realistic alternative to private car travel.

8.9.14 The natural environment will be protected and enhanced, with strengthened green infrastructure, improved biodiversity and better integration of development with the surrounding landscape. The River Glyme, Watermeadows and wider ecological networks will play an increasingly important role in supporting climate resilience, environmental quality and wellbeing.

8.9.15 Economic activity within Woodstock will be supported in a way that reflects the town's character and strengths. A diverse local economy will be sustained through tourism, independent businesses, small-scale enterprise and flexible working, supported by strong digital connectivity and appropriate workspace provision.

8.9.16 Overall, Woodstock will be a well-managed, inclusive and sustainable community, where growth has been aligned with infrastructure, heritage has been safeguarded, and the town's distinctive character and quality of life have been preserved for future generations.

Strategic Development Framework for the Woodstock Area

8.9.17 Building on the area profile and statement of ambition above, Policy WO1 provides a framework for managing change and development within the Woodstock Area to 2043.

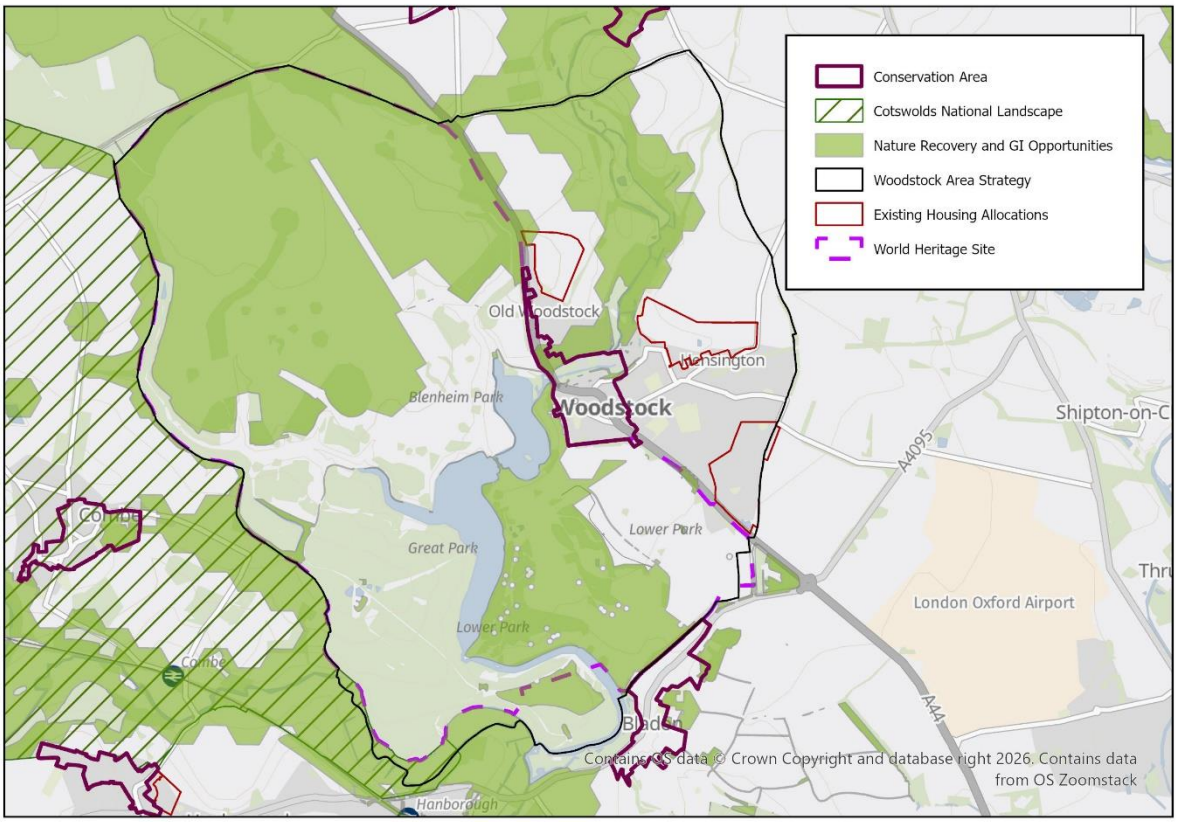

Figure 8.19 – Strategic Development Framework for the Woodstock Area

8.9.18 The framework recognises Woodstock's role as a historic market town, an important Tier 2 Service Centre and a key visitor destination associated with the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site. The town benefits from a strong range of services and facilities, a vibrant local economy and an exceptional historic environment that contributes significantly to its identity, attractiveness and sense of place.

8.9.19 The framework seeks to ensure that future development supports the long-term vitality and sustainability of Woodstock whilst safeguarding its unique historic character, environmental assets and relationship with the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site. Particular emphasis is placed on conserving and enhancing the town's rich heritage, supporting a thriving local economy and visitor offer, addressing infrastructure needs, protecting and enhancing the natural environment, and improving opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport in order to reduce reliance on the private car.

8.9.20 The framework also recognises the need to address existing challenges including traffic congestion, visitor pressures and infrastructure capacity constraints. Future development will therefore be expected to be proportionate to the scale and character of the town and supported by the timely provision of infrastructure and services, including healthcare, education, public open space and sustainable transport improvements.

8.9.21 The Council will work proactively with Oxfordshire County Council, the Blenheim Estate, infrastructure providers, landowners, developers, local communities and other stakeholders to secure the coordinated delivery of development, infrastructure investment, environmental enhancement and transport improvements in accordance with this framework.

Policy WO1 - Strategic Development Framework for the Woodstock Area

Woodstock will continue to function as a distinctive historic market town, rural service centre and visitor destination, valued for its exceptional heritage, strong community identity and its relationship with the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site (WHS). Development will be supported where it sustains and enhances the town's social, economic and environmental wellbeing in accordance with the following objectives.

Development proposals within the Woodstock Area will be supported where they contribute positively towards the delivery of the following objectives, having regard to their scale, nature and location:

1. **Conserving Woodstock's Historic Character and World Heritage Setting**

    a. Conserve and enhance the significance, special character and setting of Woodstock's Conservation Area, listed buildings and other heritage assets;
    b. Avoid adverse impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site, including through effects on those elements of its setting which contribute to its significance;
    c. Respect the town's historic street pattern, built form, scale and architectural character, ensuring new development responds positively to local distinctiveness;
    d. Safeguard key views to and from Blenheim Palace and its wider landscape setting, as well as important views within the town;
    e. Support the sensitive reuse and adaptation of historic buildings where this secures their long-term viable use;
    f. Deliver high-quality design that reinforces Woodstock's sense of place and historic environment.

2. **Supporting a Thriving Local Economy and Visitor Destination**

    a. Support Woodstock's role as a visitor destination linked to Blenheim Palace and the wider Oxfordshire economy;
    b. Promote a balanced and sustainable approach to tourism that supports the local economy whilst protecting residential amenity and environmental quality;
    c. Support independent businesses, cultural activity, creative industries and home-working opportunities;
    d. Retain and enhance town centre uses including retail, hospitality, cultural and community facilities;
    e. Support economic activity appropriate to the town's scale and character, including flexible and small-scale employment space.

3. Homes, Growth and Infrastructure

a. Provide limited, proportionate and well-designed development appropriate to the scale, character and infrastructure capacity of the town;
b. Prioritise the effective use of previously developed land and suitably located infill sites;
c. Contribute towards meeting identified local housing needs, including affordable housing and a mix of tenures and dwelling types;
d. Ensure new development is well integrated with the existing settlement and historic fabric;
e. Be supported by the timely provision of infrastructure, services and utilities necessary to mitigate development impacts;
f. Contribute towards the delivery of key infrastructure, including healthcare provision (such as a new or expanded GP facility), education capacity and public open space;
g. Demonstrate that adequate infrastructure can be delivered in a timely manner, with priority given to addressing existing deficiencies. Proposals that fail to do so will not be supported.

4. Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure

a. Protect and enhance Woodstock's natural environment, including the River Glyme, Watermeadows and surrounding countryside;
b. Conserve biodiversity assets, ecological networks and green infrastructure;
c. Avoid harm to designated sites including those associated with Blenheim Park;
d. Deliver net gains in biodiversity and contribute to nature recovery where appropriate;
e. Incorporate sustainable drainage systems and respond positively to flood risk considerations.

5. Improving Movement, Accessibility and Climate Resilience

a. Support measures to address traffic congestion and the impacts of through-traffic, particularly along the A44 corridor;
b. Deliver and enhance safe, attractive and convenient walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, including proposals identified in the Woodstock Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and Strategic Active Travel Network;
c. Improve connectivity to public transport services, including bus corridors and nearby rail stations;
d. Promote an integrated approach to movement, mobility and access, reducing reliance on the private car;
e. Incorporate high standards of sustainable design, energy efficiency and low-carbon development;
f. Support climate resilience through sustainable construction, urban greening and environmental design.

Woodstock Town Centre

8.9.22 Woodstock Town Centre is a small but highly distinctive market town centre that performs an important role as a local service centre, visitor destination and cultural hub. Closely associated with the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site, the town attracts visitors from across the UK and internationally and contributes significantly to the local economy. Its historic streets, attractive Market Place, independent businesses, restaurants, cafés, hotels and cultural attractions combine to create a vibrant and distinctive destination with a strong sense of place.

8.9.23 The town centre is characterised by a predominantly independent retail, leisure and hospitality offer, centred on Oxford Street, High Street, Market Place and Market Street. A wide range of small-scale shops, galleries, restaurants, pubs and visitor-focused businesses operate from attractive historic buildings, contributing to the town's unique character and appeal. Despite its relatively small size, the centre performs strongly, benefiting from low vacancy rates, a high-quality environment and a thriving visitor economy.

8.9.24 Woodstock's cultural and visitor offer is closely linked to the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site, the Oxfordshire Museum and a range of markets, festivals and community events that take place throughout the year. These attractions help support local businesses, reinforce the town's identity and contribute to a vibrant daytime and evening economy.

8.9.25 Whilst Woodstock benefits from excellent environmental quality and a strong visitor economy, it also faces a number of challenges. Traffic congestion, parking pressures and the impacts of through-traffic along the A44 can affect the quality of the town centre environment. Changing patterns of retailing, visitor behaviour and town centre activity also require the centre to continue evolving in order to remain vibrant, resilient and attractive to residents, businesses and visitors alike.

8.9.26 Opportunities exist to enhance the public realm, improve accessibility, strengthen walking and cycling connections, support the reuse of underutilised buildings and further diversify the town centre offer. There is also potential to improve wayfinding and strengthen connections between the town centre, Blenheim Palace and other local attractions, helping to encourage longer visitor stays and greater economic benefits for the town.

Key Priorities

8.9.27 Key priorities for Woodstock Town Centre include:

- Maintaining and strengthening Woodstock's role as a distinctive historic market town centre and visitor destination;
- Supporting a diverse and resilient mix of independent retail, hospitality, leisure, cultural, community and service uses;
- Protecting and enhancing the vitality and viability of Oxford Street, High Street, Market Place and Market Street as the focus of town centre activity;

- Supporting the reuse of vacant, underutilised and upper-floor spaces through high-quality and sensitive development;

- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, including the Conservation Area, listed buildings, historic shopfronts and the setting of the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site;

- Improving the quality of the public realm through enhanced landscaping, seating, wayfinding, heritage interpretation and public spaces;

- Improving walking, wheeling and cycling access and strengthening connections between the town centre, Blenheim Palace, surrounding areas and public transport services including Hanborough Station;

- Supporting a vibrant programme of events, cultural activities and community initiatives that contribute to year-round vitality;

- Supporting local businesses and the visitor economy whilst ensuring that visitor impacts are appropriately managed; and

- Supporting climate resilience through urban greening, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable drainage and high-quality design.

A Strategy for Woodstock Town Centre

8.9.28 Building on the Strategic Development Framework for the Woodstock Area (Policy WO1), the purpose of Policy WO2 is to maintain and enhance Woodstock Town Centre as a vibrant historic market town centre and visitor destination, ensuring that it continues to serve the needs of residents, businesses and visitors whilst safeguarding its unique heritage and character.

8.9.29 The policy seeks to support a thriving, diverse and resilient town centre that responds positively to changing economic, retail and social trends whilst reinforcing the qualities that make Woodstock distinctive. It promotes investment in the historic environment, public realm and community infrastructure whilst supporting a broad mix of retail, hospitality, cultural, community, leisure and service uses that contribute to activity throughout the day and evening.

8.9.30 A key priority will be to enhance the quality, accessibility and attractiveness of the town centre through public realm improvements, better walking, wheeling and cycling connections, improved wayfinding and stronger links between the town centre and the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site. Together, these measures will help create a more attractive, accessible and welcoming environment that supports local businesses, residents and visitors whilst respecting Woodstock's historic character.

8.9.31 The policy also seeks to strengthen Woodstock's role as a visitor destination and cultural centre by building on its exceptional heritage, independent business offer, markets, events and community initiatives. Opportunities for heritage-led regeneration, the sensitive reuse of historic buildings, the enhancement of key public spaces and the promotion of cultural activity will be

supported where they contribute positively to the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centre.

Policy WO2 – Woodstock Town Centre

Woodstock Town Centre will continue to serve as a distinctive historic market town centre and visitor destination, closely linked to the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site and the wider West Oxfordshire visitor economy. Development will be supported where it enhances vitality, viability, environmental quality and accessibility, while conserving the town's unique historic character.

Development proposals within Woodstock Town Centre will be supported where they:

1. **Support vitality and viability by:**

    a. Maintaining and enhancing a diverse mix of uses, including independent retail, hospitality, cultural, leisure, community and service uses;
    b. Protecting and promoting active ground floor uses in key commercial frontages;
    c. Supporting the reuse of vacant or underused buildings and upper floors for flexible uses, including commercial, cultural, community, workspace and residential uses where appropriate;
    d. Supporting small businesses, start-ups and creative industries through the provision of adaptable commercial space;
    e. Supporting appropriate day and evening uses that contribute positively to vitality and local character, without causing unacceptable impacts on residential amenity.

2. **Improve movement, accessibility and public realm by:**

    a. Improving the quality, coherence and usability of key public spaces, including Market Place and High Street, through high-quality design and the use of appropriate materials;
    b. Enhancing pedestrian, wheeling and cycling environments, including improving safety, accessibility and connectivity for all users;
    c. Improving wayfinding and connections between the town centre, Blenheim Palace, parking areas and other key destinations;
    d. Addressing the impacts of congestion, traffic and parking pressures on the town centre environment;
    e. Supporting public realm improvements that encourage social interaction, events and increased dwell time.

3. **Conserve and enhance the historic environment by:**

    a. Conserving and enhancing the significance of the Conservation Area, listed buildings, historic shopfronts and the wider townscape;
    b. Ensuring that development respects local character, scale, materials and architectural detailing;
    c. Supporting the maintenance, repair and sensitive enhancement of historic buildings and spaces;
    d. Promoting heritage interpretation and initiatives that enhance understanding and appreciation of Woodstock's historic environment.

4. **Support a sustainable visitor economy and cultural activity by:**

a. Supporting Woodstock's role as a high-quality visitor destination linked to Blenheim Palace and the wider district;
b. Encouraging cultural activity, events, markets, exhibitions and community initiatives that enhance the attractiveness and vibrancy of the town centre;
c. Supporting coordinated promotion, partnership working and tourism initiatives where these enhance the visitor experience;
d. Managing visitor impacts to ensure that residential amenity and environmental quality are protected.

Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site

8.9.32 Following international evaluation, in 1987 the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site was inscribed by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee onto the World Heritage List. UNESCO's Operational Guidelines state that World Heritage Sites are places of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) to humanity and represent cultural and/or natural heritage of such significance that their conservation is considered to be of importance to present and future generations across the world.

8.9.33 Outstanding universal value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community as a whole'.

8.9.34 Blenheim Palace was inscribed on the World Heritage List under criteria (ii) and (iv), recognising both its architectural significance and its influence on the development of architecture and landscape design. UNESCO recognised that the Palace and its surrounding landscape represented an important and influential new approach to planning, architecture and landscape composition. The Palace is set within a landscape substantially remodelled by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and is widely regarded as one of the finest surviving examples of an English landscape park. Together, the Palace, Park and wider designed landscape form a heritage asset of exceptional international significance.

8.9.35 The significance of the World Heritage Site extends beyond the physical fabric of the Palace and Park itself. Its Outstanding Universal Value is derived from a range of attributes including its designed landscape, historic relationship with the surrounding countryside and settlements, key views and vistas, spatial composition, and the visual and functional relationships that contribute to its authenticity and integrity. Consequently, development proposals both within and beyond the designated boundary can have the potential to affect the significance of the World Heritage Site.

8.9.36 National planning policy requires local planning authorities to identify, protect, conserve and enhance World Heritage Sites and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance. The NPPF makes clear that World Heritage Sites are designated heritage assets of the highest significance and that great weight should be given to their conservation. Development proposals should therefore demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the World Heritage Site and the contribution made by its setting to its Outstanding Universal Value.

8.9.37 In line with the NPPF, the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity, integrity and significance of the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site and those elements of its setting that contribute to its significance will be protected, conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced. Particular regard will be given to the protection of important views, landscape character, designed landscapes, tranquillity and the wider environmental qualities that contribute to the appreciation and understanding of the Site.

8.9.38 The site is a valuable asset of local, national and international significance, providing a wide variety of benefits including opportunities for conservation, biodiversity enhancement, recreation, education, public access and the promotion of local identity and sense of place. Blenheim Palace also makes a substantial contribution to the local and regional economy, attracting significant visitor numbers each year, supporting local businesses and employment opportunities and acting as a major destination within Oxfordshire's visitor economy. The Estate itself is one of the largest employers in West Oxfordshire.

8.9.39 The Council recognises that pressures for growth and development within West Oxfordshire and neighbouring areas have the potential to affect the significance of the World Heritage Site, particularly through incremental and cumulative impacts on its setting. It is therefore important that development proposals are informed by a robust understanding of the Site's significance and, where necessary, are supported by proportionate Heritage Impact Assessments and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments to ensure that potential impacts are fully understood and appropriately addressed.

8.9.40 A World Heritage Site Management Plan has been prepared for Blenheim Palace to guide the long-term conservation, management and enhancement of the Site and its Outstanding Universal Value. The Management Plan seeks to sustain the significance of the Site whilst recognising the wide range of social, environmental, cultural and economic benefits that can be achieved through positive management. The Management Plan is a material planning consideration and will be taken into account in the determination of planning applications and the preparation of development proposals affecting the World Heritage Site and its setting.

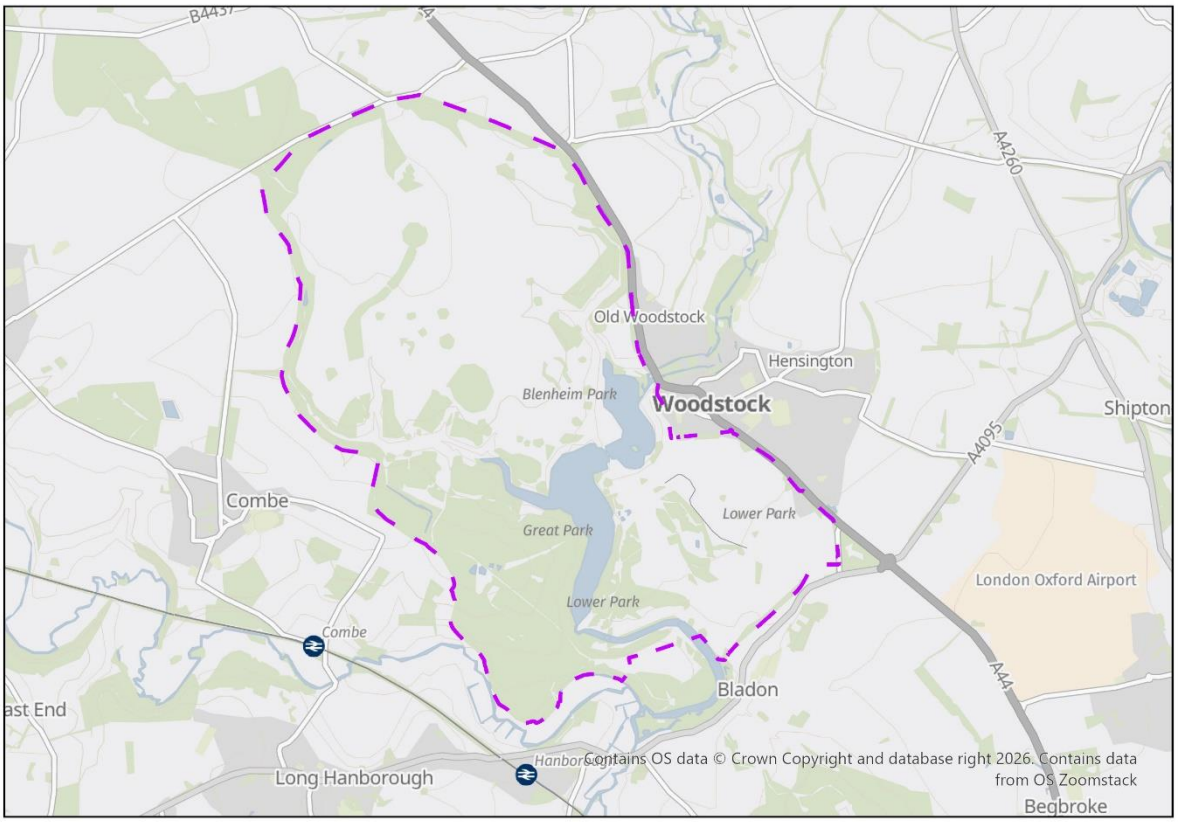

Figure 8.20 – Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site

Policy WO3 – Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site (WHS)

1. **Strategic Objective**
   a. The exceptional cultural significance and Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site (WHS) will be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced for current and future generations. Development proposals must demonstrate how they conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the WHS's OUV, including its attributes, authenticity and integrity.

2. **Protection of Outstanding Universal Value**
   a. All proposals within or affecting the WHS must conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the attributes that contribute to its OUV as defined in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value and the WHS Management Plan.
   b. Great weight will be given to the conservation of the OUV, integrity and authenticity of the WHS. Any harm to its significance must be clearly and convincingly justified, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
   c. Development leading to substantial harm or loss of significance (including attributes that contribute to OUV) will only be permitted in wholly exceptional circumstances, in accordance with national policy, where it can be demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that significantly outweigh that harm.
   d. Where proposals would cause less than substantial harm, such harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the development in accordance with national policy.

3. **Protection of the Setting**
   a. Development within or affecting the setting of the WHS must conserve and, where appropriate, enhance its OUV, including through effects on those elements of its setting that contribute to its significance, such as landscape character, key views, vistas, skylines and spatial and visual relationships.
   b. Proposals must demonstrate a detailed understanding of the contribution made by the site to the setting of the WHS and provide sufficient information, proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal, to enable its impact on that contribution to be understood.
   c. Proposals must avoid impacts such as visual intrusion, inappropriate scale or form, cumulative landscape harm, noise and light pollution where these would adversely affect the significance or OUV of the WHS, including through its setting.
   d. Development proposals must have particular regard to areas identified in the WHS Management Plan as having heightened sensitivity or value for long-distance views to and from the Site.
   e. The design, materials, layout and scale of development must be appropriate to the historic and natural character of the WHS and its setting, having regard to their contribution to OUV.

4. **Assessment Requirements**
   a. Development proposals that could impact the significance and OUV of the WHS, including those arising from development within its setting, must be accompanied by a proportionate and robust Heritage Impact Assessment and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, prepared in accordance with relevant guidance and best practice and in consultation with appropriate bodies.

b. Assessments must clearly identify the specific attributes of OUV affected, potential direct and indirect impacts, explain how impacts have been avoided and minimised, and propose mitigation and enhancement measures.
c. Where appropriate, proposals should contribute positively to the conservation of the WHS, including through improved access, interpretation and landscape restoration.

5. Major and Cumulative Development

a. Proposals for major development that could impact the significance and OUV of the WHS within its setting (including large-scale residential schemes or infrastructure such as solar farms) will be subject to the most rigorous assessment and will only be supported where exceptional circumstances are demonstrated, consistent with national policy, and where:

i. The need for the development and potential alternative options have been appropriately considered, where relevant;
ii. ii. The public benefits clearly and substantially outweigh the harm to the significance and/or OUV of the WHS;
iii. iii. All practicable steps have been taken to avoid, minimise and mitigate harm; and
iv. iv. Proposals include a clear strategy to deliver long-term enhancements to the WHS, including to those elements of its setting which contribute to its significance.

b. The cumulative impacts of existing, committed and proposed development will be carefully considered, particularly where there is a risk of incremental degradation of the WHS's significance and OUV, including through effects on its setting where it contributes to OUV.

6. Stakeholder Engagement

a. Developers will be expected to engage early and proactively with the District Council, Historic England, the WHS Steering Group and local communities to ensure alignment with the WHS's protection objectives and to inform the design, scale and layout of proposals.

7. Blenheim Palace WHS Management Plan

a. The Blenheim Palace WHS Management Plan is a material planning consideration. Development proposals should support its aims and objectives and demonstrate consistency with its policies and guidance.

Priority Growth Locations

8.9.41 Woodstock has accommodated a reasonably significant amount of new growth in recent years with 487 new homes completed since 2011.

8.9.42 Recognising its key role as a service centre and its strategic location on the A44 corridor, the adopted Local Plan 2031 allocated three sites at Woodstock including:

- Land east of Woodstock (300 homes)
- Land north of Hill Rise, Woodstock (120 homes)
- Land north of Banbury Road, Woodstock (180 homes)

8.9.43 All three sites are owned by the Blenheim Estate and the largest of them, the land east of Woodstock (now known as 'Park View') is well under construction with only 40 dwellings still to be completed. As set out in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2, these will all be completed in the next five years.

8.9.44 Land north of Hill Rise now has detailed planning permission for the provision of up to 180 homes (higher than the original allocation of 120) and the development is now under construction through Pye Homes. As set out in the trajectory at Appendix 2, these are all expected to be completed by 2031.

8.9.45 The land north of Banbury Road has outline planning permission for the provision of 235 homes (higher than the original allocation of 180). The developer, Pye Homes has confirmed that they expect to start on-site in 2029/30. As set out in the trajectory at Appendix 2, all of these dwellings will be completed within the period to 2043.

8.9.46 As part of its Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) the Council has considered the potential suitability of other parcels of land at Woodstock including further land to the north of Banbury Road, however no sites have been found to be suitable.

8.9.47 As such, no additional sites are proposed to be allocated at Woodstock as part of this Plan – rather the focus is on supporting the successful delivery of the three adopted Local Plan 2031 site allocations.

8.9.48 Further land to the south-east of Woodstock is the subject of a draft site allocation for around 450 homes within the emerging Cherwell draft Local Plan. As the allocation is subject to a number of significant outstanding objections (including from West Oxfordshire District Council) it carries little weight in planning terms at the present time.

Key Infrastructure Requirements

8.9.49 The volume of traffic on the A44 south of Woodstock to Oxford has been identified as among the highest on the primary route network. Continued investment in active and public transport infrastructure. The County Council have been working with a number of stakeholders to develop an improved, safe and joined up cycling and walking network from the Strategic Development Areas in the north and north-east of the town to the nearby school, town centre and beyond.

8.9.50 Despite the town's cultural and recreational offerings, it has limited accessible public open space beyond institutional playing fields. The Watermeadows, located in the heart of the town, offer valuable biodiversity and community amenity, but further enhancements to green infrastructure are needed to support a growing population.

8.9.51 In addition, the need for a new GP surgery has long been identified as a priority for the town and discussions are currently ongoing to identify an appropriate solution.

8.9.52 The Marlborough School in Woodstock is experiencing rising demand and expansion by one form of entry is planned. In terms of primary education, Woodstock Primary School has already expanded to 2 form entry size to meet the needs of permitted and committed development and

as its site area is below that required for a larger school, it is not assessed as being able to expand further. Should future development require expanded school capacity land availability will need to be addressed.

8.9.53 Infrastructure funding has been secured through S106 agreements entered into by landowners of the Local Plan 2031 allocations. In addition to affordable housing and biodiversity net gain provision as appropriate, financial contributions include provision of healthcare facilities, outdoor playing pitches and a swimming pool.

Phasing

8.9.54 Further development at Woodstock should be carefully phased to align with the timely delivery of critical infrastructure required to support a growing population and maintain the town's character, accessibility and quality of life. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they contribute to and are coordinated with infrastructure provision.

8.9 Salt Cross Garden Village Area Strategy

8.11.1 Salt Cross Garden Village (formerly known as the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village) is a planned new community to the north of the A40 near Eynsham. The site is allocated as a Strategic Location for Growth (SLG) in the adopted Local Plan 2031 under Policy EW1.

8.11.2 It was first introduced as a potential location for strategic-scale growth in response to the need for West Oxfordshire to assist Oxford City with a proportion of their unmet housing need – the idea being that a proportion of any affordable homes built would be offered to those on Oxford City Council's affordable housing waiting list.

8.11.3 The allocation is based on the creation of a free-standing, exemplar Garden Village, the comprehensive development of which will be led by an Area Action Plan (AAP). The allocation envisages a mixed-use development of about 2,200 homes, a 40-hectare science park and a range of supporting facilities including new schools, transport improvements, green space and community facilities.

8.11.4 In accordance with the requirements of Policy EW1, the Council has prepared an Area Action Plan (AAP) for Salt Cross Garden Village which was formally adopted in February 2026.

8.11.5 It is proposed as part of this Plan, that the AAP formally supersedes Policy EW1 of the adopted Local Plan 2031.

8.11.6 The AAP's primary purpose is to ensure that Salt Cross becomes a high-quality, landscape-led garden village with a strong focus on sustainability, biodiversity, affordable housing, active travel and economic growth. It establishes the policies and requirements that will guide future planning applications and infrastructure delivery, helping to create a self-contained settlement that meets housing and employment needs while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

8.11.7 Good progress is being made with bringing the site forward to the delivery stage. The site promoter is Grosvenor Developments who are acting on behalf of a collective pool of landowners to secure outline planning permission.

8.11.8 An outline planning application for the site was submitted in 2020 but has been delayed because of the examination and adoption of the Salt Cross AAP. With the AAP having now been formally adopted, the Council and Grosvenor are working collaboratively to 'refresh and update' the outline application so that it can be determined as soon as possible.

8.11.9 Based on the anticipated timescales for the outline application being determined and subsequent stages including detailed reserved matters application, the expectation is that construction will begin on site in 2030/31 with around 2,125 homes completed in the period up to 2043 and the remainder to follow beyond the end of the plan period.

8.11.10 Having regard to the overall size of the Salt Cross site, Officers consider that there is a good prospect of being able to increase the number of new homes beyond 2,200 through the efficient use of all available land and the use of higher densities in appropriate locations.

8.11.11 This is particularly likely if further work on the development of a Mass Rapid Transit solution (see Policy SP5) concludes that there is potential to serve the site e.g. a new mobility hub linked to the existing park and ride.

8.11.12 Policy 22 of the AAP allows for an increase beyond 2,200 homes if it can be demonstrated that any such increase would accord with the overall vision, objectives and relevant policies of the AAP and relevant policies of the Local Plan 2031 and Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan.

8.11.13 Officers will therefore continue to work with the site promoter and other relevant stakeholders to explore the possibility of further land within the AAP boundary being brought forward for development along with consideration of the most appropriate density and form of development in key parts of the site.

8.11.14 For the purposes of this Plan however, as set out in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2, the assumption is that 2,125 new homes will be completed by 2043.

8.10 Rural Area Strategy

The Rural Area Today

8.11.1 West Oxfordshire's rural area comprises a diverse network of villages of varying sizes, hamlets and open countryside which together make a significant contribution to the district's character, identity and economy. They are home to a substantial proportion of the district's population and encompass a rich variety of landscapes, heritage assets, agricultural land, river valleys and environmental designations, including extensive areas within the Cotswolds National Landscape.

8.11.2 The district's larger villages perform an important role in supporting local communities, providing homes, employment opportunities, schools, shops, community facilities and other services that serve both local residents and the surrounding rural hinterland. Smaller villages and hamlets make an equally important contribution to the district's social fabric, maintaining distinct identities, strong community networks and a close relationship with the surrounding countryside.

8.11.3 Agriculture and other land-based industries continue to play a vital role in shaping the rural environment and supporting the local economy. The rural area also supports a diverse range of businesses including tourism, hospitality, rural enterprise, home-working and small-scale employment activities. Increasingly, digital connectivity is enabling people and businesses to operate successfully from rural locations, helping to support local economic resilience.

8.11.4 West Oxfordshire's rural areas contain a rich historic environment including conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens and traditional settlement patterns that contribute significantly to local distinctiveness and sense of place. The natural environment is equally important, with extensive networks of habitats, rivers, woodlands, hedgerows and green spaces supporting biodiversity and providing opportunities for recreation, health and wellbeing.

8.11.5 Whilst rural communities possess many strengths, they also face a number of challenges. Access to services and facilities can be limited, public transport provision is often constrained and many communities remain highly dependent on the private car. Concerns have also been raised regarding the capacity of infrastructure, including wastewater networks, drainage systems, roads, schools and healthcare facilities, as well as the cumulative impacts of development on village character, environmental quality and community cohesion.

8.11.6 Climate change, biodiversity loss and increasing pressure on natural resources present further challenges. Flood risk, water management, habitat fragmentation and the need to reduce carbon emissions are increasingly important considerations in planning for the future of West Oxfordshire's rural communities.

8.11.7 These opportunities and challenges reinforce the need for a balanced approach to rural development - one that supports thriving communities and local needs whilst safeguarding the environmental, landscape and heritage assets that make West Oxfordshire's rural areas distinctive.

Statement of Ambition – The Rural Area in 2043

8.11.8 West Oxfordshire's rural areas will continue to play a vital role in the life and identity of the district. By 2043, the villages, hamlets and countryside of West Oxfordshire will remain distinctive, thriving and resilient, supporting strong local communities, farming and land-based industries, small-scale enterprise, and rich cultural and environmental assets.

8.11.9 The district's rural communities will continue to evolve in a way that reflects their differing roles, characteristics and capacity for change. Whilst the majority of new development will be directed towards West Oxfordshire's principal towns and service centres, proportionate growth will help sustain rural communities, support local services and facilities, and contribute towards meeting identified local needs without undermining the distinctive character, identity and setting of villages and the wider countryside.

8.11.10 Development in rural areas will be modest in scale and carefully managed to respect local character, landscape sensitivity, infrastructure capacity and environmental constraints. Housing and other forms of development will respond directly to local needs, particularly for affordable and accessible homes, helping younger people, families and older residents to remain within their communities and supporting the long-term sustainability of rural settlements.

8.11.11 Rural sustainability will be enhanced through improved digital connectivity, support for local facilities and businesses, investment in active travel and public transport, and opportunities for nature recovery. The built and natural heritage of West Oxfordshire's countryside, including its historic villages, agricultural landscapes, river valleys and the Cotswolds National Landscape, will be protected and enhanced for future generations.

8.11.12 Nature recovery, climate resilience and environmental stewardship will be integral to the future of the rural areas. Biodiversity enhancement, habitat creation, sustainable land management, improved water management and the delivery of multifunctional green infrastructure will help create healthier, more resilient places for people and wildlife.

8.11.13 Through carefully managed growth, investment in infrastructure, environmental enhancement and community-led planning, West Oxfordshire's rural areas will remain attractive, inclusive and sustainable places that continue to support the needs of residents, businesses and future generations whilst safeguarding the qualities that make them distinctive.

Strategic Development Framework for the Rural Area

8.11.14 Building on the settlement hierarchy (SP1) spatial strategy (SP2) and statement of ambition above, Policy RA1 provides a framework for managing change and development across West Oxfordshire's rural areas to 2043.

8.11.15 The framework applies to Tier 3 Large Villages, Tier 4 Medium Villages and Tier 5 Small Villages, Hamlets and Open Countryside. It recognises the important role that rural communities play in supporting the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the district whilst acknowledging that the capacity of settlements to accommodate growth varies considerably.

8.11.16 Consistent with the spatial strategy of this Plan, the majority of future growth will be focused on the district's principal towns and service centres. Within rural areas, development will be expected to be proportionate to the scale, character, function and infrastructure capacity of individual settlements and should demonstrably contribute towards meeting local needs and supporting community sustainability.

8.11.17 Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring that development is infrastructure-led, protects and enhances rural character, safeguards important environmental and heritage assets, supports nature recovery and climate resilience, and contributes positively to the long-term vitality of rural communities. The framework also seeks to support rural enterprise, community facilities and appropriate opportunities for affordable housing and small-scale growth where these help sustain local communities.

8.11.18 The Council will work proactively with Parish Councils, local communities, neighbourhood plan groups, infrastructure providers, landowners, developers and other stakeholders to ensure that future change reflects local circumstances and community aspirations and contributes positively to the long-term sustainability and resilience of West Oxfordshire's rural areas.

Policy RA1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Rural Area

Development proposals within the Rural Areas of West Oxfordshire (Tier 3, Tier 4 and Tier 5 settlements and the open countryside) will be supported where they contribute positively towards the delivery of the following objectives, having regard to their scale, nature and location:

1. Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities

a. Supporting the long-term vitality and resilience of rural communities through the retention and enhancement of local services, facilities, employment opportunities and community infrastructure;
b. Supporting development that responds to local needs identified by the local community and contributes positively to community wellbeing and sustainability;
c. Supporting the sensitive reuse and adaptation of existing buildings, including heritage assets, where this secures their long-term viable use.
d. meeting the needs of the travelling community

2. Delivering Proportionate and Infrastructure-Led Growth

a. Ensuring that development is proportionate to the scale, character, role and infrastructure capacity of the settlement concerned;
b. Ensuring that development does not result in unacceptable pressure on infrastructure, services or environmental assets and is supported by appropriate mitigation where required;

c. Prioritising the effective use of previously developed land and existing buildings where appropriate.

3. Conserving Rural Character, Landscape and Heritage

a. Conserving and enhancing the distinctive character, identity and setting of villages, hamlets and the wider countryside;
b. Protecting and enhancing landscape character, important views, settlement separation and local distinctiveness;
c. Conserving and enhancing the significance and setting of heritage assets and their contribution to local character and sense of place.

4. Supporting the Rural Economy and Environment

a. Supporting sustainable rural businesses, farming and land-based industries, tourism, home-working and other forms of rural enterprise appropriate to their location;
b. Protecting and enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure, ecological networks and opportunities for nature recovery;
c. Supporting measures that improve climate resilience, environmental quality and sustainable management of natural resources.

5. Improving Connectivity and Accessibility

a. Supporting opportunities to improve walking, wheeling and cycling connections within and between settlements;
b. Supporting improvements to public and community transport, digital connectivity and access to services where opportunities arise;
c. Reducing the need to travel by private car wherever practicable and promoting more sustainable patterns of development.

Priority Growth Locations

8.11.19 A significant amount of development has been delivered in the rural parts of West Oxfordshire since 2011, with particular concentrations of growth at Aston, North Leigh, Enstone, Tackley and Stonesfield due to their relative sustainability as Tier 3 settlements.

8.11.20 No allocations for new development were made in the rural areas in the adopted Local Plan 2031. All development has been delivered via speculative planning applications determined by the district council and in some cases, via planning appeals.

8.11.21 Moving forward, growth within the rural areas is anticipated to comprise the following:

- Major existing commitments of 10+ homes and 1,000 sqm+ commercial floorspace;
- Enstone Airfield Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)
- Land north of Aston
- Land at Kingham Station
- Land at the Downs, Standlake,
- Land at Rousham Road, Tackley

8.11.22 Major existing commitments are sites that as of 1st April 2026, have planning permission or a resolution to grant planning permission for more than 10 homes or 1,000 sqm of commercial floorspace.

8.11.23 These are effectively already in the development 'pipeline' and are expected to make an important contribution towards meeting local and wider housing, employment and infrastructure needs. They are included below for information with the residential permissions reflected in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2.

8.11.24 The Enstone Airfield Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO) identifies the Enstone Airfield area as a strategic opportunity for redevelopment and regeneration to enhance employment provision in the northern part of the district and to deliver synergistic development focused on aviation and tourism.

8.11.25 The four proposed site allocations for residential development at Aston, Kingham Station, Standlake and Tackley are expected to deliver up to 380 homes including affordable housing, retail provision, public open space, green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements and associated infrastructure.

Major Existing Planning Commitments (10 or more homes)

8.11.26 Major existing commitments with planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission in the Rural Area as of 1st April 2026 include the following:

- 80 dwellings – Land north of Holliers Crescent, Middle Barton
- 60 dwellings – Land east of Wroslyn Road, Freeland
- 55 dwellings – Land north of the A4095 North Leigh
- 43 dwellings – Land south of New Yatt Road, North Leigh
- 11 dwellings – Land west of Greenwich Lane, Leafield

8.11.27 As reflected in the housing trajectory at Appendix 2, all of these units are expected to be completed by 2031.

Enstone Airfield Area of Regeneration Opportunity (ARO)

8.11.28 Enstone Airfield is an important rural economic asset located in the north of West Oxfordshire. The site accommodates a diverse range of activities including an active aerodrome, flying club and flight training school, business park, animal feed manufacture and a variety of light industrial and commercial uses.

8.11.29 The site occupies a strategically accessible location within the district, lying in relative proximity to Chipping Norton, Woodstock, Banbury and Oxford. It also benefits from access to rail services at Charlbury and Tackley, providing connections to Oxford, Reading, London and the wider rail network.

8.11.30 Enstone Airfield has evolved incrementally over many decades and contains a wide range of buildings and operational areas associated with aviation, employment and commercial activity. Many of the existing buildings date from the post-war period and, whilst continuing to serve a useful purpose, are increasingly outdated and present opportunities for renewal, modernisation and more efficient use of land.

8.11.31 The site also sits within a wider area of economic activity and investment, including the nearby Alpine Formula One facility, Soho Farmhouse, Heythrop Park and the consented museum development on part of the airfield. Together these assets contribute to the area's growing importance as a focus for employment, tourism, hospitality, engineering and innovation.

8.11.32 The Enstone Airfield Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO) recognises the long-term potential of the site to support economic growth, skills development, aviation activities and investment. The ARO does not allocate the site for a specific form, scale or quantum of development. Instead, it establishes a positive policy framework to support future redevelopment, regeneration and intensification proposals where these are consistent with the operational requirements of the airfield, infrastructure capacity and the principles of sustainable development.

8.11.33 The site offers significant opportunities to support the Government's economic growth agenda through the delivery of modern employment space, business investment, education and training facilities, and enhanced aviation-related activities. In particular, there is potential to strengthen links between the area's tourism, hospitality, engineering and aviation sectors, supporting skills development, apprenticeships and workforce training.

8.11.34 At present, the site's future development potential is constrained by a number of factors including fragmented land ownership, the absence of a coordinated long-term development strategy, infrastructure limitations, landscape sensitivities and the capacity of parts of the local highway network. A coordinated approach to future planning and investment will therefore be essential.

8.11.35 Redevelopment and intensification may provide opportunities to improve the quality and efficiency of existing employment areas, modernise aviation facilities, enhance environmental performance, strengthen landscape structure, improve biodiversity and deliver transport and infrastructure improvements that support the long-term sustainability of the site.

8.11.36 Given the scale, complexity and potential duration of redevelopment and investment opportunities across the site, the Council will support the preparation of a comprehensive masterplan, development framework or other agreed planning mechanism developed in partnership with landowners, airfield operators, Oxfordshire County Council, infrastructure providers and other relevant stakeholders.

8.11.37 Such a framework should establish a long-term vision for the future evolution of Enstone Airfield, addressing economic development, aviation operations, education and training opportunities, transport and movement, infrastructure requirements, environmental enhancement, landscape mitigation, nature recovery, climate resilience and sustainable energy generation.

8.11.38 A coordinated framework-led approach will help ensure that redevelopment proposals come forward in a comprehensive manner, make efficient use of previously developed land, safeguard the operational role of the airfield and deliver lasting economic, social and environmental benefits for West Oxfordshire.

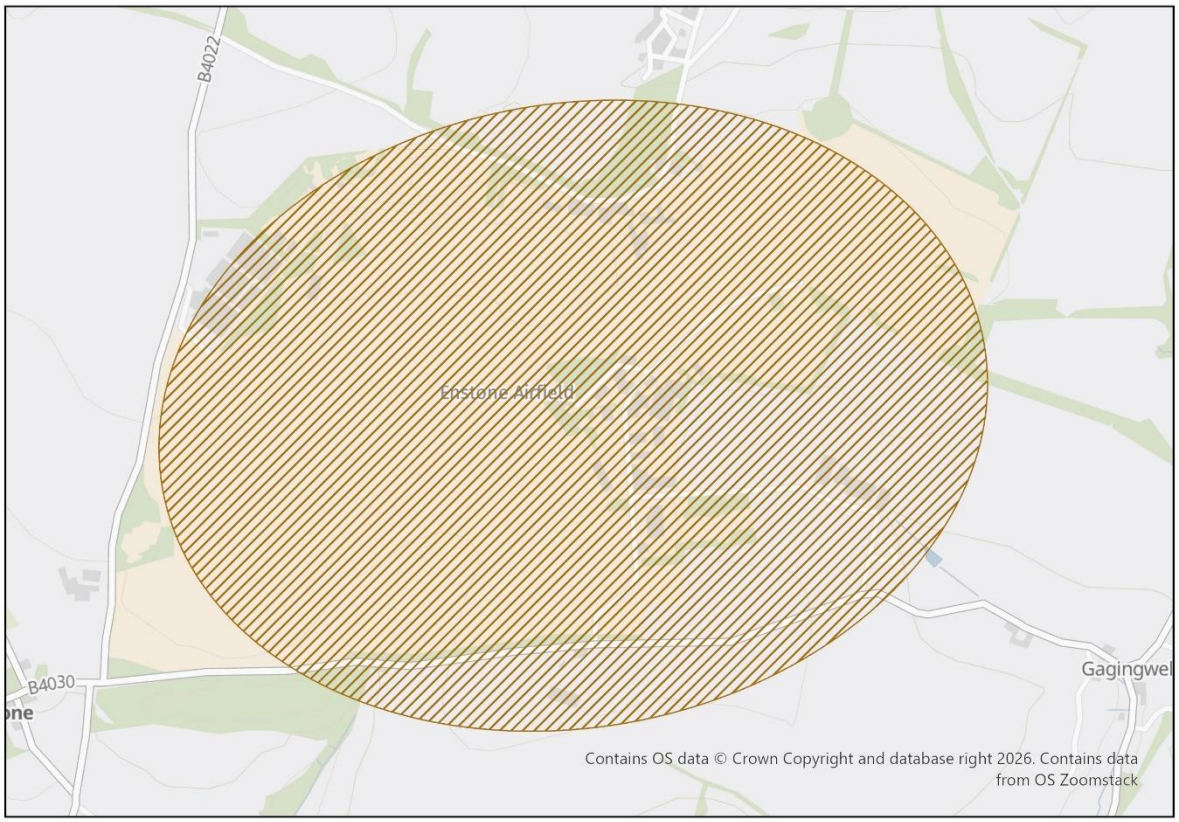

Figure 8.x – Enstone Area of Regeneration Opportunity

Policy RA2 – Enstone Airfield Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)

The Enstone Airfield Area of Redevelopment Opportunity, as identified on the Policies Map, is designated as a location for the enhancement of economic development, aviation activities and education and training provision.

The Council will support the comprehensive or phased redevelopment, regeneration, enhancement and intensification of land within the Area of Redevelopment Opportunity where proposals contribute towards the long-term sustainability and economic success of Enstone Airfield and its surrounding area.

Proposals within the Area of Redevelopment Opportunity should seek to:

a. Support the long-term enhancement of Enstone Airfield as a focal point for economic development, aviation activities and education and training provision;

b. Facilitate improvements to aviation facilities, including the provision of modern and flexible operational, employment and business accommodation and the co-location of related activities;

c. Provide modern employment space, including office, research, industrial, manufacturing, education, training and other employment-generating uses appropriate to the location;

d. Support the delivery of a high-quality West Oxfordshire Mobility Hub incorporating appropriate provision for bus services, cycling facilities, walking routes, taxi provision, shared mobility services, electric vehicle infrastructure and other sustainable transport measures;

e. Provide enhanced walking and cycling connections to Enstone, Middle Barton and other surrounding settlements where appropriate;

f. Support development that contributes positively towards the viability, delivery and operation of Enstone Airfield and does not prejudice its ongoing operation;

g. Make efficient use of land through high-quality design, place-making and sustainable development principles;

h. Incorporate strategic landscaping, green infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements, ecological networks, sustainable drainage and climate resilience measures;

i. Demonstrate that development would not prejudice the delivery of planned development, infrastructure or operational requirements elsewhere within the Area of Redevelopment Opportunity;

j. Safeguard land, where necessary, for the future delivery and operation of aviation activities and supporting infrastructure.

k. Make provision to meet the needs of the travelling community.

The Council will support the preparation of a comprehensive masterplan, development framework or other agreed planning mechanism to guide the coordinated redevelopment and enhancement of the Area of Redevelopment Opportunity. Any such framework should address economic development, aviation activities, education and training provision, transport and movement, supporting infrastructure, environmental enhancement, landscape mitigation, nature recovery, climate resilience and sustainable energy objectives.

Rural Area Site Allocations

8.11.39 As outlined above to help meet identified needs, this Plan proposes four modest site allocations within the Rural Area of the District including:

- Land at Aston (up to 25 homes)
- Land at Kingham Station (up to 70 homes)
- Land at the Downs, Standlake (up to 200 homes)
- Land at Rousham Road, Tackley (up to 70 homes).

8.11.40 These sites have all been evaluated through the Council's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) and found to be suitable in principle for development.

8.11.41 Policies for each site are set out below together with an illustrative concept plan intended to guide the overall form and nature of any subsequent planning applications for these sites.

Policy RA3 – Land north of Aston

8.11.42 Policy RA3 allocates land north of Aston to support sustainable rural growth over the plan period. The site has been selected through assessment of alternatives, taking into account accessibility, landscape sensitivity and environmental constraints. Its location adjacent to the existing village offers an opportunity for well-integrated development that supports the vitality of the community.

8.11.43 Development should be of an appropriate scale and design, respecting the rural character of Aston and its setting. Proposals are expected to achieve high-quality place-making, integrate with the existing settlement, and safeguard important landscape features and views, with careful treatment of the transition to open countryside.

8.11.44 The allocation will contribute to meeting local housing needs, including affordable housing, while ensuring necessary infrastructure is provided. Development must address environmental considerations, including biodiversity, flood risk, and sustainable drainage, and maximise opportunities for green infrastructure and open space.

Policy RA3 - Land north of Aston

Site area: 2 hectares
Developable area: 1.2 hectares

Current use: Agricultural- pasture

Landowner/site promoter: OCC & The Land Studio Ltd.

Allocation: Residential development of up to 25 dwellings (40)% affordable housing, public open space and informal recreation areas, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements and supporting infrastructure including access, drainage, and utilities.

In addition to the general policies of this Local Plan, development proposals will be expected to accord with the following site-specific requirements:

6. Key Design Principles

Development should:

a. Be guided by a comprehensive masterplan prepared with the local community in general accordance with an indicative concept plan.
b. Positively integrate with existing development to the west, taking into account the presence of established landscape buffers.
c. Respond positively to the context and pattern of development, creating a contextually appropriate form of infill development.
d. Establish a clear sense of place with legible street hierarchy and distinct character areas.
e. Create clear layout and active frontages providing overlooking and natural surveillance of streets and open spaces.
f. Provide meaningful physical and visual connections between the sites which adjoin from the north, potential linkage into the newly developed site to the east.
g. Respect existing landscape features such as hedgerows and trees where possible.
h. Provide onsite area of land for community use

7. Transport and Movement

a. Primary vehicular access to be taken from the existing highway network, with detailed access arrangements subject to transport assessment.
b. Safe and direct pedestrian and cycle connections towards the centre of Aston.
c. Successful integration with and, where necessary, contributions towards enhancements to public transport services and infrastructure.
d. Appropriate parking provision in accordance with local standards, incorporating EV charging.
e. The alignment of the existing public right of way (including any bridleway) shall be retained, enhanced or where necessary sensitively diverted, provided that:

    i. the resulting route is safe, direct, attractive and well-integrated within the development and overlooked by active frontages;
    ii. the alignment facilitates the delivery of a comprehensive and coherent layout, avoiding the creation of small, isolated or poorly related parcels of land;

iii. development makes efficient use of the site, ensuring that land crossed by the existing route is capable of being integrated into the overall scheme; and
iv. any diversion results in a route of equal or improved quality and accessibility for users.

8. Heritage

a. Development must conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of nearby heritage assets, including the wider historic landscape setting of the Aston Conservation Area.
b. Proposals should be informed by a heritage impact assessment and archaeological assessment.

9. Landscape

a. A landscape-led approach shall be taken to the design, layout and massing of development.
b. Retention and reinforcement of existing hedgerows and field patterns where appropriate.
c. Creation of a strong landscaped edge to the countryside particularly along the eastern and northern boundaries, to minimise visual impact and provide long-term containment.
d. Create a successful relationship to existing landscape buffers to the west.
e. Sensitive treatment of site boundaries, particularly to the north and east.

10. Housing

a. Provide 40% on site affordable housing in accordance with Policy XX.
b. The development shall provide a balanced mix of housing types and tenures to meet identified local needs. (2 bed, 3 bed with some 4 beds).

11. Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

a. Delivery of a multifunctional green infrastructure network, including public open space, play areas and ecological corridors.
b. Achievement of measurable biodiversity net gain in line with national policy.
c. Protection and enhancement of existing habitats.
d. Integration of SuDS features as ecological assets.

12. Flood Risk and Drainage

a. Development to be informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment.
b. Use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water runoff.
c. Runoff rates to be restricted to greenfield levels.
d. Incorporation of attenuation features such as swales and basins.

13. Climate change and sustainability

a. Development shall demonstrate the use of:
b. renewable and low-carbon energy sources;
c. sustainable design and construction methods; and
d. high standards of energy efficiency in new buildings.

14. Infrastructure Requirements

a. Address the identified wastewater capacity constraints at Bampton Sewage Treatment Works (STW)
b. Provide contributions towards education healthcare services and local community facilities.
c. Delivery of on-site open space and play provision.

15. Phasing and Delivery

a. Be supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
b. Development will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that sufficient wastewater treatment capacity is available; or necessary upgrades to the wastewater treatment network have been secured and will be delivered in advance of development.
c. Development shall be brought forward in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
d. Phasing to ensure timely provision of infrastructure and early delivery of key access routes and green infrastructure.

Policy RA4 – Land at Kingham Station

8.11.45 Policy RA3 allocates land at Kingham Station to support sustainable development in a highly accessible location. The site's proximity to the railway station and its connections to wider services and employment centres make it well suited to accommodating growth in a manner that reduces reliance on private car travel and promotes sustainable transport choices.

8.11.46 Development is expected to be of a high design quality, reflecting local distinctiveness and ensuring a sympathetic relationship with the surrounding countryside. Particular attention should be given to addressing flood risk, and the landscape setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

8.11.47 The site will contribute towards meeting identified housing needs, including affordable housing, while supporting enhancements to Kingham station as a key rural transport hub. Proposals must address infrastructure requirements and incorporate appropriate measures relating to biodiversity, flood risk, and sustainable drainage, alongside the provision of green infrastructure and open space.

Policy RA4 – Land at Kingham Station

Site area: Approx. 17.47 hectares (gross).

Developable area: Approx. 4.38ha built development and 3.58ha public open space/green infrastructure, with meadowland retained for biodiversity enhancements.

Current use: Agricultural land and meadow adjoining Kingham Station.

Landowner/site promoter: Mr & Mrs Ambler

Allocation: Residential-led mixed-use development of up to 70 dwellings including 40% affordable housing, commercial/business units (Use Class E), public open space, mobility hub, biodiversity enhancements and supporting infrastructure including access, drainage and utilities.

In addition to the general policy requirements of this Local Plan, development proposals will be expected to accord with the following site-specific requirements:

1. **Key Design Principles**

Development should:

a. Be informed by a comprehensive masterplan and landscape-led approach developed in consultation with the local community and relevant stakeholders.
b. Respond positively to the site's relationship with Kingham Station whilst maintaining a sensitive transition to the surrounding rural landscape and Cotswolds National Landscape.
c. Create a distinct sense of place with high quality public realm and legible movement hierarchy.
d. Incorporate frontage development along key routes, particularly towards the station approach.
e. Incorporate high-quality sustainable and energy efficient design, seeking net-zero operational carbon and Passivhaus principles where feasible.
f. Provide overlooking and natural surveillance of streets and open spaces.
g. Retain and reinforce existing landscape features including hedgerows, trees and the river meadow character.
h. Ensure development conserves and enhances dark skies through sensitive lighting design.

2. Transport and movement

a. Primary vehicular access to be taken from the B4450 with detailed arrangements informed by a transport assessment and highway safety requirements.
b. Provide safe and direct pedestrian and cycle links to Kingham Station and surrounding footpath and cycle networks.
c. Deliver a mobility hub integrating rail, bus, walking and cycling facilities and supporting sustainable travel choices.
d. Provide appropriate parking provision including electric vehicle charging infrastructure and secure cycle parking.
e. Contribute towards improvements to local sustainable transport and public transport services where required.

f. Enhance Kingham Station and associated facilities, including public realm improvements, passenger facilities, improved accessibility, active travel and sustainable transport integration.

3. Heritage

a. Development must conserve the significance and setting of nearby heritage assets including the conservation areas of Kingham and Bledington, and the wider historic landscape setting.
b. Layout, scale, materials and design shall respond positively to local vernacular and rural character and respect key views.
c. Proposals should be informed by an appropriate heritage assessment.

4. Landscape

a. Development shall be landscape-led and demonstrate conservation and enhancement of the Cotswolds National Landscape.
b. Proposals shall be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).
c. Built development shall be confined to the less sensitive parts of the site and take into account key views into and out of the site identified within the LVIA.
d. Structural planting and green infrastructure shall be provided to mitigate visual impacts and reinforce landscape containment.

5. Green Infrastructure (GI) and Biodiversity

a. Delivery of a multifunctional green infrastructure network including areas of public open space, allotments, orchards, ecological corridors and informal recreation space.
b. Provide measurable biodiversity net gain in accordance with national policy, including the enhancement of the River Evenlode meadow landscape.
c. Protect and enhance existing habitats and species through appropriate mitigation and management measures.
d. Integration of SuDS features as part of the ecological and landscape strategy.

6. Flood risk / drainage

a. Development shall avoid areas at risk of flooding and be informed by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment.
b. Sustainable drainage systems shall be incorporated to manage surface water runoff and achieve greenfield runoff rates.
c. The development shall not increase flood risk elsewhere.
d. Incorporation of attenuation features such as swales and basins.

7. Housing and Economy

a. Provide up to 70 dwellings, including 40% affordable housing with an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes to address local need.
b. Provide small-scale commercial and business space to support the rural economy and sustainable local employment, and provide future residents of the development access to local services.
c. Support opportunities for home working and high-quality digital connectivity.

8. Infrastructure

a. Provide or contribute towards necessary education, healthcare, community, transport and utility infrastructure arising from the development.
b. Deliver on-site open space, play provision and associated maintenance arrangements.
c. Ensure provision of high-speed broadband and supporting utilities infrastructure.

Policy RA5 – Land at the Downs, Standlake

8.11.48 Policy RA5 allocates land at The Downs, Standlake to support the sustainable growth of the village, with particular emphasis on additional local retail provision. In addition to making a significant contribution of 200 new homes towards meeting identified housing needs, the site offers an excellent opportunity to provide additional small-scale retail provision. This will significantly improve day-to-day convenience for residents, support the local economy, and reduce the need to travel to nearby centres.

8.11.49 Development should be well integrated with the existing settlement and reflect the character of Standlake, delivering a high-quality and accessible local centre. New retail provision is expected to complement the scale and needs of the village, helping to maintain its vitality and viability.

8.11.50 The allocation will also contribute to meeting local housing needs and supporting infrastructure, while ensuring environmental considerations such as landscape, biodiversity, and drainage are appropriately addressed.

Policy RA5– Land at the Downs, Standlake

Site area: Approximately 29 hectares (gross)
Developable area: Approximately 10.5 hectares (excluding necessary infrastructure, retained hedgerows and trees and proposed landscaping)

Current use: Agricultural

Landowner/site promoter: Mactaggart and Mickel

Allocation: Residential development of up to 200 dwellings to include a range of residential accommodation to meet identified needs including a minimum of 40% affordable housing, public open space and informal recreation areas, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements and supporting infrastructure including retail provision, access, drainage, and utilities.

In addition to the general policy requirements of this Local Plan, development proposals will be expected to accord with the following site-specific requirements:

1. **Key Design Principles**

   Development should:

   a. Be informed by a comprehensive masterplan prepared with the local community in general accordance with the indicative concept plan.
   b. Respond positively to the location of the site, with development relating well to existing built form and the surrounding rural environment.
   c. Establish a clear sense of place with legible street hierarchy and distinct character areas.
   d. Be consistent with the character of nearby settlements.
   e. Incorporate frontage development along key routes.
   f. Provide overlooking and natural surveillance of streets and open spaces.
   g. Respect existing landscape features such as hedgerows and trees where possible.

2. **Transport and movement**

   a. Primary vehicular access to be taken from Downs Road, with detailed access arrangements subject to transport assessment.
   b. Mitigate the impact of traffic associated with the development.
   c. Safe and direct pedestrian and cycle connections to bus stops along Downs Road and to local services and facilities to encourage sustainable travel.
   d. Integration with existing and proposed public transport services.
   e. Provision of active travel routes linking the site to local services and facilities and surrounding areas.
   f. Appropriate parking provision in accordance with local standards, incorporating EV charging.

3. **Heritage**
   a. Development must conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of nearby heritage assets, including the wider historic landscape setting and archaeology.
   b. Proposals should be informed by a heritage impact assessment.
   c. Layout and scale should respect key views and settlement character.

4. **Landscape**

a. Retention and reinforcement of existing hedgerows and field patterns where appropriate.
b. Creation of a strong landscaped edge to the southern boundary.
c. Provision of structural planting to mitigate visual impacts and create a high-quality design.
d. Sensitive treatment of site boundaries, particularly to the south and west.

5. Green Infrastructure (GI) and Biodiversity

a. Delivery of a multifunctional green infrastructure network, including public open space, play areas and ecological corridors.
b. Achievement of measurable biodiversity net gain in line with national policy.
c. Protection and enhancement of existing habitats, nearby local wildlife sites, and nearby Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
d. Integration of SuDS features as ecological assets.

6. Flood risk / drainage

a. Development to be informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment.
b. Use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water runoff.
c. Runoff rates to be restricted to greenfield levels.
d. Incorporation of attenuation features such as swales and basins.

7. Minerals

a. Demonstrate how it meets the requirements of Oxfordshire County Council's adopted Minerals and Waste Plan which designates the site as a 'mineral strategic resource area' for sharp sand and gravel.

8. Infrastructure

a. Delivery of on-site infrastructure, or contributions towards off-site infrastructure in the local area, in accordance with the adopted West Oxfordshire Developer Contributions SPD Document.
b. Delivery of on site convenience retail store to serve site and local community
c. Utilities infrastructure (water, electricity, broadband) to be provided/upgraded as necessary.
d. Include improvements to public transport infrastructure and the adjoining public right of way to improve the relative sustainability of the site and connectivity to local services and facilities.

9. Phasing / Delivery

a. Development to be brought forward in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
b. Phasing to ensure timely provision of infrastructure and early delivery of key access routes and green infrastructure.
c. Indicative delivery over 3-10 years, subject to market conditions and phasing arrangements.

Policy RA6 – Rousham Road, Tackley

8.11.51 Policy RA6 allocates land at Rousham Road, Tackley to support the sustainable growth of the village over the plan period. The site's location within a Tier 3 settlement, in close proximity to a railway station, makes it a sustainable location for development, enabling convenient access to a range of services and employment opportunities while reducing reliance on private car travel.

8.11.52 The site has been identified through the assessment of reasonable alternatives, having regard to its relationship with the existing built-up area, accessibility to local services, and environmental and infrastructure constraints. It provides an opportunity to deliver well-integrated development that reinforces the village form and supports the vitality of the community.

8.11.53 Development is expected to be of an appropriate scale and design, respecting the character of Tackley and its surrounding countryside, and ensuring a sensitive transition to the rural edge. The allocation will contribute to meeting local housing needs, including affordable housing, alongside the provision of necessary infrastructure.

8.11.54 Proposals must address key considerations such as landscape impact, biodiversity, flood risk, and drainage, while incorporating opportunities for green infrastructure and open space.

Policy RA6 – Rousham Road, Tackley

Site area: 17.4 Hectares

Developable area:

Current use: Agricultural

Landowner/site promoter: Oxfordshire County Council

Allocation: Residential development of up to 70 dwellings to include a range of residential accommodation to meet identified needs including a minimum of 40% affordable housing, public open space and informal recreation areas, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements and supporting infrastructure including access, drainage, and utilities.

In addition to the general policy requirements of this Local Plan, development proposals will be expected to accord with the following site-specific requirements:

1. **Key Design Principles**

   Development should:

   a. be informed by site constraints including topography and the surface water flow route along the eastern boundary, which should form part of the site's green infrastructure framework.

   b. Respond positively to the edge-of-settlement location, retaining and incorporating existing landscape features including hedgerows and trees, and providing a sensitive transition to the open countryside.

   c. Create a clear sense of place through a legible street hierarchy, active frontages to key routes with access onto Rousham Road including well-overlooked streets and spaces.

   d. The layout should take a landscape-led approach, with built development focused in the most suitable areas of Flood Zone 1 and avoiding areas of surface water risk.

   e. Green infrastructure and drainage corridors should be used to structure the layout and define character areas.

2. **Transport and movement**

   a. Primary vehicular access to be taken from the existing highway network on to Rousham Road, with detailed access arrangements subject to transport assessment.

   b. Provide safe and direct pedestrian and cycle connections to the village, Public Rights of Way, bus stops and Tackley Railway Station to encourage sustainable travel.

   c. Provide parking in accordance with local standards, incorporating electric vehicle charging and well-integrated design.

   d. Internal routes should align with green infrastructure corridors to provide attractive walking and cycling connections through the site

3. Heritage

a. Development must conserve and where possible enhance the significance and setting of nearby heritage assets, including the Tackley Conservation Area, through appropriate layout, scale and protection of key views.
b. Proposals should be informed by a heritage impact assessment.
c. Open space and landscape buffers should be used to provide separation and preserve the setting of the Tackley Conservation Area

4. Landscape

a. Landscape structure should reflect the site's topography, including the fall from west to east.
b. Provide a strong and well-structured landscaped edge to the countryside, including structural planting and sensitive treatment of site boundaries, particularly to the south and west.

c. The surface water flow route along the eastern boundary should be retained and incorporated as part of a wider multifunctional green corridor.

d. Public open space should be located to form a strong landscape setting and transition to the countryside, including along key site edges.

5. Green Infrastructure (GI) and Biodiversity

a. Delivery of a multifunctional green infrastructure network, including public open space, play areas and ecological corridors.

b. Protection and enhancement of existing habitats and delivery of measurable biodiversity net gain on site in line with national policy.

c. Green infrastructure should incorporate the drainage strategy, including swales, basins and biodiversity areas, and integrate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) as ecological assets.

d. The surface water corridor should function as an ecological corridor linking habitats within and beyond the site.

e. Provision should include on-site play space and informal recreation areas integrated within the green infrastructure network.

6. Flood risk / drainage

a. A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required to confirm the drainage strategy, including climate change allowances, exceedance flow routing, and demonstration that runoff rates are restricted to greenfield levels.

b. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) should be provided and designed to integrate with green infrastructure, including attenuation basins, swales and infiltration features where feasible.

c. Development layout must respond to the identified surface water flow route along the eastern boundary, which should be retained, kept free from built development, and incorporated within the site layout.

d. A sequential approach to layout must be applied, directing built development to areas of lowest flood risk within the site.

7. Infrastructure

a. Provide or contribute towards education, healthcare, open space, play provision and local community facilities.

b. Ensure that utilities infrastructure, including water supply, wastewater, electricity and broadband, is provided or upgraded as necessary.

c. Development must demonstrate that adequate wastewater treatment capacity is available, in accordance with the findings of the Water Cycle Study, and early engagement with Thames Water will be required to confirm capacity and infrastructure requirements.

d. Where necessary, occupation of development may need to be phased to align with upgrades to Tackley Sewage Treatment Works.

e. Support improvements to station accessibility and capacity, where required.

8. Phasing / Delivery

a. Development must be brought forward in a comprehensive and coordinated manner in accordance with an agreed phasing plan.

b. Phasing must take account of infrastructure constraints, particularly wastewater treatment capacity, and occupation of dwellings may be restricted until necessary upgrades to Tackley Sewage Treatment Works have been completed.

c. Phasing should ensure early delivery of key infrastructure, including site access, drainage infrastructure and green infrastructure corridors, including those associated with the surface water flow route.

Infrastructure Priorities

8.11.55 The primary form of deprivation in rural areas of West Oxfordshire relates to access to housing and services. A priority for delivery in rural areas should seek to address this deprivation domain either through the direct provision of new and enhanced services within rural communities or the provision of improved access, including public transport linking communities with service centres.

8.11.56 The Local Plan includes the addition of retail provision at Standlake to improve convenient access to shopping facilities, while financial contribution should be collected from rural developments to invest in improved public transport infrastructure and services.

8.11.57 The Water Cycle Study demonstrates that waste water treatment capacity is stretched across the rural parts of the district with sewage treatment works already operating beyond their permit levels and discharging to water courses at Tackley, Bampton and Church Hanborough. A priority for infrastructure delivery should be the delivery of upgrades to sewage treatment works to increase capacity and to improve the ecological status of watercourses across the district.

8.11.58 Electricity networks will require reinforcement to ensure sufficient capacity to accommodate additional growth, particularly as developments are planned to be fossil fuel free and dependant of the provision of sufficient electricity.

8.11.59 A key aspect of the Spatial Strategy is to focus development within sustainable transport corridors including in proximity to the railway network. Large scale residential developments are proposed at Tackley and Kingham, which should facilitate improvements to station access, including car parking where necessary to enhance accessibility to rail services for existing and new communities.

8.11.60 Opportunities should be sought throughout the rural areas to enhance Green Infrastructure in accordance with Catchment Management Plans for the Rivers Evenlode, Cherwell and Windrush, including natural floodrisk mitigation within upper catchments. Green Infrastructure enhancements that support Nature Recovery will be particularly encouraged.

Phasing

8.11.61 The proposed allocations for residential development in rural areas vary in scale and location; however, infrastructure constraints, most notably wastewater treatment capacity, will be the principal factor influencing the timing and sequencing of development.

8.11.62 Development will be phased to ensure that it is aligned with the delivery of infrastructure required to support growth, with particular regard to environmental capacity and access to services.

9. Development Management Policies

9.1 Development Management Policies play a critical role in delivering the spatial strategy and vision set out in this Local Plan. They provide the detailed criteria against which planning applications will be assessed, ensuring that development is sustainable, well-designed, and appropriate to its context.

9.2 These policies complement the strategic policies elsewhere in the Plan by guiding day-to-day decision-making on planning applications. Together, they ensure that development contributes positively to the economic, social and environmental objectives of the area, while protecting valued assets and mitigating adverse impacts.

9.3 The policies in this section apply to all development proposals unless otherwise stated. They should be read alongside relevant national policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and any supplementary planning documents adopted by the Council.

9.4 Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they comply with the relevant Development Management Policies. Where proposals conflict with one or more policies, permission will only be granted where material considerations clearly indicate that the benefits of the development outweigh any harm.

9.5 The Development Management Policies are intended to:

- Provide a consistent and transparent framework for determining planning applications;
- Ensure that development is well-designed, inclusive and responsive to local character;
- Protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment;
- Safeguard residential amenity and quality of life;
- Support sustainable patterns of development and address climate change;
- Manage the impacts of development on infrastructure, services and communities.

9.6 The policies reflect local priorities and evidence and have been prepared having regard to national policy and guidance. They will be used proactively to support sustainable development and to secure high standards in design, environmental performance and place-making.

9.7 Applicants should engage with the Council at an early stage to understand how the Development Management Policies apply to their proposals. Early engagement will help to identify potential issues and opportunities and support the delivery of high-quality outcomes.

9.8 All planning applications should be supported by proportionate and relevant information demonstrating compliance with the policies in this Plan. The level of detail required will vary depending on the nature, scale and location of the proposal.

Policy DM1 - Green Infrastructure

9.9 Policy DM1 seeks to ensure development in West Oxfordshire protects, enhances and extends the green infrastructure network, delivering multiple benefits for climate resilience, nature recovery, health and wellbeing and local character, supporting the creation of sustainable, high-quality places.

9.10 Green Infrastructure (GI) is a fundamental component of sustainable place-making, providing a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits. It encompasses a network of natural and semi-natural assets, including parks, open spaces, rivers, woodlands, green corridors and other landscape features, which together support biodiversity, climate resilience and the health and wellbeing of communities.

9.11 In the context of West Oxfordshire, the quality and connectivity of green infrastructure is essential to maintaining the district's distinctive character, rural landscapes and ecological value. Planned growth presents both challenges and opportunities for GI. Without careful planning, development can lead to the loss, fragmentation or degradation of existing green assets. However, when properly integrated, new development can strengthen and expand the GI network, delivering multifunctional benefits for people and nature.

9.12 Policy DM1 ensures green infrastructure is considered at the earliest stages of the planning and design process and is treated as essential infrastructure. It promotes a landscape-led approach, where development responds positively to existing natural features and incorporates new high-quality, multifunctional green spaces that contribute to a coherent and connected network across the district contributing towards nature recovery and the delivery of on-site and off-site Biodiversity Net Gain.

Protection of Existing Green Infrastructure

9.13 Policy DM1 reflects national planning policy, which emphasises the importance of protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services, and securing measurable net gains for biodiversity. It also supports the Government's objectives for nature recovery, climate change adaptation and improved public health.

Climate Resilience, Health and Wellbeing

9.14 A key function of GI is to support climate resilience. Well-designed green spaces and features can help manage flood risk through sustainable drainage, reduce the urban heat island effect, improve air quality and contribute to carbon sequestration. In addition, GI plays a vital role in supporting nature recovery, enabling habitat creation, enhancement and connectivity, which are essential to reversing biodiversity decline and supporting priority species.

9.15 DM1 also recognises the importance of GI in promoting health and wellbeing. Access to high quality, safe and inclusive green spaces supports physical activity, mental health and social interaction. Protecting and enhancing publicly accessible open spaces and green routes, including those suitable for walking and cycling, helps create healthy, active communities and reduces reliance on car travel.

9.16 To ensure that these benefits are realised, the policy requires development to deliver new GI that is multifunctional, serving a range of purposes including recreation, biodiversity, water management and landscape enhancement, while also respecting local character and context. Connectivity is a central principle, ensuring that GI assets within and beyond the site are integrated into a wider network that functions effectively at both local and strategic scales.

Green Infrastructure Strategies

9.17 The requirement for a Green Infrastructure Strategy for major development ensures a comprehensive, evidence-based approach. By mapping existing assets, assessing opportunities and setting out delivery and management arrangements, these strategies help secure high-quality outcomes and ensure that GI is effectively integrated into the overall master planning of a site.

9.18 Any GI strategy prepared in support of strategic development proposals must demonstrate how the provision of GI contributes to the delivery of ecosystem services and wider benefits from nature.

Long-term Management and Maintenance

9.19 Long-term stewardship is critical to the success of green infrastructure, particularly within new developments. Without appropriate management and maintenance, the quality and functionality of GI can decline over time. The requirement for Landscape Management Plans and clear governance and funding arrangements ensures that GI assets remain safe, functional and attractive for future generations.

Policy DM1 – Green Infrastructure

1. Provision, protection and enhancement of the Green Infrastructure Network

Having regard to the nature, scale and location of a proposal, development must contribute to the provision, protection and enhancement of green infrastructure in West Oxfordshire.

Development proposals will be expected to address the following requirements where they are relevant and proportionate;

a. Protect existing publicly accessible open spaces from unnecessary loss or fragmentation.
b. Strengthen connectivity, integration and multifunctionality to deliver a coherent, high-quality network that benefits people, nature and climate resilience.
c. Provide new multifunctional GI that is safe, inclusive and accessible;
d. Support climate change adaptation and resilience, including flood risk management and heat island mitigation;
e. Enhance biodiversity, habitat connectivity and nature recovery including priority species;
f. Promote health and wellbeing through access to high-quality open spaces and opportunities for recreation, relaxation and active travel including the protection and enhancement of publicly accessible open spaces for informal recreation and community use;
g. Contribute to improved air quality and carbon sequestration.

h. Ensure that Green Infrastructure is designed to be capable of long term management and maintenance

2. Green Infrastructure Strategies

a. All major development proposals must be supported by a Green Infrastructure Strategy, proportionate to the scale and nature of the development. The Strategy must:

i. Identify and map existing green infrastructure assets and networks including those extending beyond the development site boundary;
ii. Demonstrate how these assets and networks will be protected, enhanced, integrated and connected;
iii. Set out arrangements for the delivery, long-term management and maintenance and monitoring of green and blue infrastructure, including governance and funding mechanisms in accordance with Policy CP4.

b. In addition, all strategic development sites of more than 300 homes, around 50% of the site area (including private garden space) should contribute to the overall green infrastructure network. The exact proportion of green infrastructure must be informed by site-specific constraints, masterplanning and viability considerations, provided the overall function, quality and connectivity of the network are not undermined.

3. **Green Infrastructure Management and Maintenance**

Proposals for major developments must be accompanied with a Landscape Management Plan (LMP) to ensure that the landscape elements of the development are properly managed and maintained over time.

Policy DM2 - Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Nature Recovery

9.20 Many development types are now subject to statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in accordance with national policy and legislation.

9.21 Beyond this, WODC continue to seek no net loss in biodiversity. Developments that are exempt from delivering statutory BNG must achieve at least no net loss of biodiversity, having regard to the existing (pre-development) biodiversity value of the site, and demonstrate biodiversity enhancement to achieve gains where possible.

9.22 Where no net loss of biodiversity cannot be demonstrated, and where this would not justify refusal of a planning application, appropriate compensation measures will be sought to offset the loss and achieve an overall gain in biodiversity, e.g. by contributing to appropriate local nature recovery projects.

No Net Loss of Biodiversity

9.23 The "no net loss of biodiversity" policy applies to all developments, including those that are exempt from the statutory requirement to deliver BNG under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), but excluding householder applications.

9.24 Development must demonstrate that it will result in no net loss of biodiversity, having regard to the existing biodiversity value of the site (the "baseline"). Proposals must be supported by information sufficient to demonstrate that biodiversity losses have been avoided, adequately minimised or compensated to achieve no net loss. The level of information submitted shall be proportionate to the scale and potential biodiversity impact of the development.

9.25 To demonstrate compliance with this policy, development proposals must be supported by a completed copy of the appropriate statutory biodiversity metric, or any successor in methodology, providing a quantitative assessment of the pre- (baseline) and post-development biodiversity values sufficient to demonstrate that no net loss would occur. The use of the statutory biodiversity metric in these circumstances is intended solely to provide a transparent and consistent quantitative assessment of biodiversity value and does not require the delivery of the statutory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain for exempt development. It is therefore accepted that metrics to demonstrate no net loss will show an error as they will not be demonstrating the 10% net gain objective.

9.26 Contributions towards local nature recovery projects would need to be quantified to ensure that the provision would result in no net loss of biodiversity and at least a like-for-like compensation approach has been applied.

9.27 Local nature recovery projects could be explored through the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) and the Council would support the use of this external organisation in delivering off-site compensation outside of the statutory BNG process. TOE are a recognised partner organisation for nature recovery and BNG in Oxfordshire and have a long track record of providing funding for environmental projects and setting up BNG habitat banks. They also offer grants specifically for the implementation of the Oxfordshire LNRS, including a species recovery fund (opened in 2026).

Application of the Mitigation Hierarchy

9.28 *The* mitigation hierarchy is a sequential approach to the consideration of ecological impact and what should be done to avoid harm, reduce impacts or compensate where loss is unavoidable or there are residual impacts.

9.29 *This* established and well-known approach to minimising ecological impact resulting from developments must be and applied as part of the Ecological Impact Assessment process, no matter how small the impact. It should be applied to habitats, species and other ecological features. The Ecological Impact Assessment report should outline how the hierarchy has been fully assessed in order to inform the final mitigation and compensation strategies. An Ecological Impact Assessment report prepared in accordance with the CIEEM best practice guidelines should be sufficient.

9.30 *The* UK Green Building Council Mitigation Hierarchy Factsheet[16] provides further detail about what is required to evidence that each of the steps have been fully considered.

High-quality BNG

9.31 In order to demonstrate that BNG habitat creation and enhancement will be delivered to a high standard, proposals must be informed by the following:

i. Delivery in accordance with good practice principles[17] and/or BS8683:2021 (as defined below).
j. Using native and locally appropriate species, reflecting local provenance and ecological character.
k. Increasing habitat diversity by creating/enhancing a range of different habitats and habitat mosaics
l. Incorporating structural diversity within habitats, e.g. varied age structure, microhabitats, deadwood and water features.
m. Applying appropriate soil preparation, hydrological design and biosecurity measures.
n. Avoiding generic seed mixes or artificial features unless these are ecologically justified and limiting the use of wildflower turf or other similar "off the shelf" products to where there is a demonstrable need.
o. Incorporating the specific needs of species that are known to be present within a 2km radius of the development site, particularly the provision of food plants for pollinating insects.

Habitat distinctiveness

9.32 'Habitat distinctiveness' is a measure based on the type of habitat and its distinguishing features, including a consideration of species richness and rarity, the extent to which the habitat is protected by designations and the degree to which a habitat supports species rarely found in other habitats (ref. Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide). Distinctiveness is one of the three core quality components that contribute towards the calculation of biodiversity units in the metric, the others are condition and strategic significance.

9.33 An over-reliance on low distinctiveness habitats will not make a meaningful difference for nature recovery in the district. Where developments can focus on higher distinctiveness habitats to fulfil their BNG requirements, then these must take precedence. This must be balanced against the likely anthropogenic pressures arising from the type of development being proposed as these may affect the ability of some habitats to establish and reach their full potential. Principle 7 of the biodiversity metric is that habitat interventions must be realistic and deliverable within a relevant project timeframe.

9.34 The Council's expectation is that developments should aim to create a high quality, biodiverse environment within the site as part of their green infrastructure approach and to provide

16 https://ukgbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/UKGBC-The-Mitigation-Hierarchy-Factsheet-v0.5.pdf

17 *Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development, A Practical Guide* / *Process for designing and implementing BNG*

semi-natural green spaces that provide for both people and nature. The policy encourages developers to aim for the highest distinctiveness habitats and the best target conditions for habitats within identified constraints and pressures and not just the quantum of biodiversity units. It is accepted BNG proposals must also be both realistic and achievable within the statutory 30-year period. However, in light of the timeframe for most developments, a longer-term vision and a commitment to ongoing management to maintain and enhance the quality of habitats is expected beyond the initial 30-years.

9.35 The process by which this longer-term vision can be realised is becoming known as "BNG Stacking" in the development industry, which treats habitat creation and enhancement as a staged, long-term process rather than a one-off intervention. By planning sequential improvements over time, stacking aligns infrastructure delivery with natural ecological processes. This fits in with the BNG good practice principles, which require development to leave biodiversity in a measurably better state than before. When habitats are created or restored, nature does not remain static. A species-rich grassland may progress to scrub, then woodland, and over time, support highly valuable features such as veteran trees. Stacking recognises the ecological succession and plans intentionally for how habitats change over decades, rather than attempting to realise a final outcome in a single intervention and in a single timeframe. In practical terms, this involves creating and enhancing habitats in stages. For example, a site that begins as modified grassland in poor condition might first be improved to neutral grassland in moderate condition, secured through a long-term management plan and generating biodiversity units. Once that target habitat and condition is achieved, the habitat becomes the baseline for a further stack of enhancement, potentially progressing toward good-condition grassland, and in time, lowland meadow priority habitat. This incremental approach mirrors natural processes and creates a more realistic, lower-risk pathway towards habitats that are otherwise, difficult, costly or uncertain to establish in one step. This mainly being applied to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (source: https://www.mottmac.com/en-gb/insights/why-biodiversity-net-gain-is-a-strategic-asset-for-major-infrastructure-projects/) but it could still be used to inform long-term aspirational nature recovery outcomes for other development types. Developers are therefore encouraged to think beyond the statutory 30-year period required for statutory BNG and identify aspirational outcomes for nature that could be realised within the lifetime of the development through continual enhancement and an adaptive management approach.

9.36 The implementation of Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans (HMMP) for BNG "onsite significant enhancement" will be secured via planning condition and/or S106 agreement, including a BNG monitoring fee where relevant. S106 agreements are preferred in most cases due to the 30-year statutory period for monitoring. Although monitoring is only necessary for 30 years, ongoing management of habitats will still be required and this should be for the lifetime of the development (subject to an adaptive management approach).

Habitat Management Information

9.37 For all proposals that would result in onsite significant enhancements for BNG, an indication of how the habitats will be managed for the 30-year statutory period must be provided as part of the planning application. This ensures a higher level of certainty that the applicant has fully considered the implications arising from the creation/enhancement of certain habitats. A draft

Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) would be the ideal option, but an indicative statement with outline information of habitat management would be the minimum accepted. The draft management details should also include reference to monitoring by a competent ecologist(s) and adaptive management mechanisms to allow adjustments to achieve target habitat condition if monitoring identifies shortfalls.

Delivery of off-site BNG

9.38 Development in the district will require adequate open-space in order to create habitats to offset ecological impacts and provide BNG, and it is recognised that this cannot always be achieved in a realistic and achievable manner. In most cases, BNG must be integrated with green infrastructure to ensure a holistic approach is taken and can also be stacked with protected species mitigation measures (up to no net loss). However, there are several habitat banks in West Oxfordshire that contribute towards local nature recovery efforts and provide developers with a local option for the purchase of off-site units.

9.39 Where biodiversity units cannot be purchased from local habitat banks within the district in the first instance, evidence must be provided that demonstrates that these units were not available and the units that have been purchased are of higher quality and contribute significantly towards nature recovery in that location.

Biodiversity Protection

- Local Wildlife Sites and Proposed Local Wildlife Sites

9.40 Local authorities are required to identify, designate and protect Local Wildlife Sites through the planning system. In Oxfordshire, the identification and designation of LWS is administered by TVERC. A selection panel meets each year and includes representatives from TVERC, the local authorities, Natural England and BBOWT. TVERC maintain a living list of LWS in West Oxfordshire, which is updated annually.

9.41 Where the development has the potential to affect a Proposed Local Wildlife Site, the developer must undertake surveys and assessments to determine whether the site likely meets the criteria for Local Wildlife Site status. Proposed LWS are those awaiting survey and selection as part of the Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Sites Project, the process for which is led by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) on behalf of the local planning authorities in the county. Where a site is likely to meet the criteria for selection, the development will be determined on the basis that the site is a designated Local Wildlife Site.

- Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees

9.42 Where there are ancient woodland, ancient trees or veteran trees on or near a proposed development site, Natural England and the Forestry Commission's Standing Advice "Ancient Woodland, Ancient Trees and Veteran Trees: Advice for Making Planning Decisions" must be considered and evidence provided to justify the proposed approach.

- Priority habitats

9.43 Priority habitats are those listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (as amended), which are often referred to as 'Habitats of Principal Importance for Biodiversity', and identified as priorities for nature recovery in the Oxfordshire LNRS.

- Priority species

9.44 Priority species are those listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (as amended), which are often referred to as 'Species of Principal Importance for Biodiversity', and identified as priorities for nature recovery in the Oxfordshire LNRS.

General Ecological Enhancements

9.45 For general ecological enhancements, the Council's published Biodiversity Specification[18] series should be used as guidance for identifying which enhancements to implement and a written statement submitted to justify the choices made (via the Council's website[1]).

9.46 The Householder Biodiversity Specification gives basic advice about a range of enhancements that could be provided on a range of different development types.

9.47 "Integrated" wildlife boxes are preferred as these are permanent features that require no maintenance in comparison to externally mounted boxes. Integrated means that the boxes are fitted into the wall of a new building or extension rather than being externally mounted. It is therefore important that these boxes are installed during construction. There are numerous ready-made products available for this purpose, including bricks, tubes and roof tiles.

9.48 Swift bricks are specifically identified as a general enhancement for all new build developments and extensions to buildings, as these provide suitable nesting sites for swifts that rely solely on buildings for breeding, but can also be used by house sparrows and starlings, which are priority species.

9.49 Bat boxes (tubes, bricks or modified roof tiles) are also a simple way of providing roosting habitat within new buildings or extensions to buildings. These must be placed in suitable locations where foraging/commuting habitats that are not affected by artificial lighting are available for bats.

9.50 Hedgehogs are a priority species and require large territories to provide suitable foraging, breeding and hibernating habitats, so permeability through new developments is essential and can be facilitated by creating gaps underneath fences and holes through stone walls. These should be strategically located within a new development to ensure sufficient links between gardens and green spaces.

[18] https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/wildlife-and-biodiversity/biodiversity-specifications/

9.51 Generally, the location and specification of ecological enhancements should be designed with input from a competent ecologist and informed by the most up to date research and guidance, responding to existing species that are known to be present on site or in the surrounding area, and potential opportunities for providing new habitat for other priority species.

Ecological Mitigation and Compensation

9.52 Mitigation and compensation measures must be ecologically sound, realistic and likely to succeed. Proposals must therefore be based on best practice guidance, including the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM, 2024).

9.53 The Priority Species Scheme (PSS) provides off-site compensatory habitat to offset impacts of development on priority species through an integrated approach to delivery by stacking a species element to off-site BNG provision but is also available separately where statutory BNG does not apply to the development. This is administered by the Council's delivery partner, NatureSpace Partnership and provides a more cost-effective approach to the provision of species compensation.

9.54 The scheme only covers certain priority species as it is being phased in, so full details would need to be obtained from NatureSpace. It is available for Hedgehog, Linnet, Skylark and Yellowhammer during the year January 2026-27.

Great Crested Newt District Licensing Scheme

9.55 District Licensing or DL is used to describe a new approach to authorising developments affecting great crested newts, by focusing conservation efforts where it will create maximum benefit for the species - whilst reducing delays, costs, risks and uncertainty for developers. West Oxfordshire District Council holds a Great Crested Newt Organisational (or "District") Licence granted by Natural England so in this authority an additional licensing option for developers is available that enables new sustainable development whilst also conserving great crested newts (and wider biodiversity). The scheme is administered by NatureSpace Partnership on behalf of the Council.

9.56 Developers wishing to engage with the District Licensing Scheme can do so during the planning application process, by submitting an enquiry to NatureSpace (an informal enquiry can be made for an initial quote); planning applications using the District Licensing Scheme do not need to be supported by great crested newt survey information: entry into the Scheme confirms all great crested newt requirements have been satisfactorily addressed for the proposed development and use of the Council's District Licence is authorised as part of the planning process. Where the traditional licensing route is being followed, full survey information will be required at application stage, with a detailed mitigation and compensation strategy as necessary for assessment by the council prior to determination of the planning application, and a separate licence application is made to Natural England following planning approval.

9.57 A clear justification for not using the DLS must be provided in an accompanying Ecological Impact Assessment or similar report by a competent ecologist, including evidence that the use of the scheme has been investigated thoroughly.

9.58 The DL is based on impact risk zones that accurately predict newt presence through the analysis of habitat suitability. They are remodelled by experts every five years to ensure that they are kept up to date. The maps are accepted statutory guidance as part of the licensed scheme that local planning authorities must take into account when considering the impacts of development on great crested newts. They also provide certainty to developers as they can quickly establish whether action needs to be taken for this species. Under the District Licence, each development is treated according to the highest risk zone within the site boundary. These are available to view on the NatureSpace website at low resolution. NatureSpace will confirm which impact risk zone is relevant when a developer contacts them for a free quotation and an eligibility check.

- ***Black impact risk zone:*** *nationally or regionally important site for great crested newts – these are excluded from the District Licence Scheme*
- ***Red impact risk zone:*** *highly suitable habitat – the most important areas for great crested newts and the zone where they are most likely to occur*
- ***Amber impact risk zone:*** *suitable habitat – great crested newts are likely to be present*
- ***Green impact risk zone:*** *moderate habitat suitability – great crested newts may be present*
- ***White impact risk zone:*** *low habitat suitability – there is a low probability of great crested newt presence*

Policy DM2 - Ecological Protection, Biodiversity Net Gain and Nature Recovery

1. No net loss of biodiversity

All development must achieve no net loss of biodiversity, having regard to the existing (pre-development) biodiversity value of the site, and demonstrate biodiversity enhancement to achieve gains where possible.

2. Application of mitigation hierarchy

a. All development will be expected to minimise ecological impacts in line with the mitigation hierarchy in reducing order of priority:

   i. Avoid impacts, e.g. through retention of habitats/features
   ii. Reduce through mitigation
   iii. Compensate as a last resort only

b. Development likely to result in any direct or indirect loss, deterioration or harm to the following ecological features will be refused unless there is a robust justification for a lack of reasonable alternative sites that would result in less or no harm or there are wholly exceptional reasons justifying the granting of planning permission, and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

i. Local Wildlife Sites and Proposed Local Wildlife Sites
ii. Local Nature Reserves
iii. Priority habitats
iv. Priority species
v. Local Geological Sites
vi. Important and/or ancient hedges and/or hedgerows
vii. Ancient woodland and/or ancient and/or veteran trees; and/or
viii. Rivers and streams.

3. **High-Quality Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

a. Developments subject to statutory BNG must:
   i. Contribute in a meaningful way towards nature recovery by creating and enhancing habitats in accordance with Policy CP10.
   ii. Deliver BNG in accordance with good practice principles. .
   iii. Avoid reliance on low distinctiveness habitats unless these can be clearly justified and prioritise the creation and enhancement of a diversity of different medium and high distinctiveness habitats and habitat mosaics appropriate to the local characteristics of the site and the surrounding landscape.
   iv. Select habitat types and target conditions that are achievable and realistic for the location and type of development, and their likely management requirements.
   v. Demonstrate that habitat creation and enhancement will be delivered to a high standard.
   vi. Consider how an ongoing adaptive management approach would result in longer term aspirational outcomes for nature recovery beyond the statutory 30 year monitoring period.

b. Developments must submit information as to how sites will be managed by submitting either:

   i. a draft Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for all onsite significant enhancements, or;
   ii. outline habitat management proposals or specifications as part of another relevant report.

c. Developments must submit an Ecological Impact Assessment report that explains their design approach to ensure high-quality outcomes by demonstrating compliance with the above criteria.

4. **Locational Requirements for Offsite BNG**

a. In accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy, where delivery of BNG is not possible onsite, off-site gain must be implemented as guided by the potential measures in the LNRS and located where they can secure the greatest benefits to the recovery of nature as close to the development as possible, or at least within the district.

b. Developers will be expected to purchase biodiversity units from local habitat banks within the district in the first instance to contribute towards local nature recovery efforts.

5. **General Ecological Enhancements**

    a. Ecological enhancements are encouraged for all development types. These must be incorporated in accordance with the Council's Biodiversity Specifications according to the following specific thresholds wherever relevant and proportionate:

        i. Householder applications must commit to delivering at least one of the ecological enhancements from the Householder Biodiversity Specification.
        ii. All new build developments and extensions to existing buildings of 5 metres or more in height are required to incorporate two or more integrated swift bricks in accordance the Council's Biodiversity Specification #3 and/or BS42021:2022 where appropriate, and at least one integrated bat box in suitable location(s).
        iii. All new developments must incorporate gaps under fences and/or through stone walls to maintain permeability through the site for hedgehogs in accordance with the Council's biodiversity specifications

    b. Other enhancements relating to wildlife boxes, native planting and wildlife refuges (e.g. log piles) as relevant to the site context and at the Council's discretion.

6. **Ecological Mitigation and Compensation**

    a. Where the loss of ecological features cannot be prevented or adequately mitigated, appropriate compensation measures will be sought to offset the loss by contributing to appropriate local nature recovery projects to achieve an overall gain in biodiversity.

    b. Measures proposed to mitigate adverse ecological impacts to meet requirements for compensation above will be given weight proportionate to their likelihood of success. Where reasonable doubt exists as to the effectiveness of any such measures, weight afforded to those measures will be significantly reduced.

    c. Developers must consider using the NatureSpace Priority Species Scheme where impacts covered cannot be fully mitigated or compensated onsite for the species specifically covered by the scheme.

7. **Great Crested Newt District Licensing Scheme**

    a. All developments within the red impact risk zone will be required to apply to join the Great Crested Newt District Licensing Scheme (DLS) unless an Ecological Impact Assessment report provides an acceptable justification for not doing so. This applies to householder applications where a pond is present onsite or within 50 metres of the site.

    b. All major developments within the amber impact risk zone will be required to join the DLS. Justification for not taking this route must be clearly explained in an Ecological Impact Assessment report.

c. All non-householder development that directly or indirectly impact ponds within 500m of the site will be required to consider joining the District Licensing Scheme.

Policy DM3 - Conserving and Enhancing Landscape Character through New Development

9.59 Policy DM3 seeks to ensure development respects, conserves and enhances the landscape character of West Oxfordshire, reinforcing local distinctiveness and delivering high-quality, well-integrated places that respond positively to their environmental context.

9.60 Landscape character is a defining feature of West Oxfordshire, contributing to its identity, sense of place and environmental quality. The district contains a rich and varied landscape, including large areas within the Cotswolds National Landscape, alongside valued agricultural land, historic parklands, river valleys and rural settlements. These landscapes are not only visually important, but also support biodiversity, cultural heritage, recreation and local distinctiveness.

9.61 National planning policy places great importance on recognising and protecting the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and on achieving well-designed places that respond to local character. National policy also affords great weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now National Landscapes), such as the Cotswolds.

9.62 New development has the potential to significantly affect landscape character if it is poorly designed or inappropriately located. Without careful consideration, development can erode local distinctiveness, disrupt important views, and fragment key landscape features such as hedgerows, tree belts and watercourses. Conversely, well-designed development that responds positively to its landscape context can reinforce local character, restore degraded landscapes and enhance environmental quality.

9.63 DM3 ensures that development is informed by a thorough understanding of landscape character and sensitivity, and that the design process is grounded in a landscape-led approach. Recognising the importance of local context, proposals are expected to respond to the defining characteristics of the site and its surroundings, including landform, settlement pattern, building typology, materials and vegetation structure. This helps to ensure that development integrates successfully and appears as a natural extension of its setting.

Views and Visual Amenity

9.64 A key objective of DM3 is to protect important views and visual amenity, including both long-range views across the wider landscape and more immediate local views from public spaces, rights of way and settlements. The careful consideration of building height, massing, layout and siting is essential to avoiding visual intrusion and maintaining the integrity of skylines and key landscape features.

Historic Landscapes

9.65 DM3 also recognises the importance of historic landscapes, including traditional field patterns, historic parklands, gardens and other features that contribute to the district's heritage

significance. Development should conserve these assets where possible and, where appropriate, enhance their setting and appreciation.

Integrating New Development Within the Existing Landscape of West Oxfordshire

9.66 High-quality landscaping plays a central role in achieving successful integration of development with the existing landscape and historic character of West Oxfordshire. The retention of existing trees, hedgerows and other natural features is strongly encouraged, as these often form the backbone of local landscape character and ecological networks. New planting should complement and reinforce these features, using native or locally appropriate species to strengthen biodiversity and visual coherence. This approach aligns with the wider objectives of green infrastructure provision under Policy DM1, ensuring that landscape and ecological considerations are addressed holistically.

Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessments

9.67 The requirement for proportionate Landscape Character Assessments (LCA) or Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA) for major development reflects the need for robust, evidence-based design. These assessments enable applicants and decision-makers to understand the sensitivities of a site, evaluate potential impacts and identify appropriate mitigation measures. They also help demonstrate how proposals have evolved in response to landscape considerations.

Long-term Management and Maintenance

9.68 DM3 emphasises not only the design and delivery of landscaping, but also its long-term management and maintenance. Trees, hedgerows and planting schemes require appropriate establishment and ongoing care to ensure they fulfil their intended function. Securing management arrangements, including maintenance plans and responsibilities, is therefore essential to achieving lasting benefits.

9.69 Given the high quality and sensitivity of much of the West Oxfordshire landscape, including nationally designated areas, it is particularly important that development proposals are carefully assessed for their impact on landscape character and scenic beauty. This includes understanding cumulative impacts and ensuring that development contributes positively to the overall landscape framework.

9.70 An understanding of the landscape character and sensitivity of landscapes is key to developing proposals for sustainable development in West Oxfordshire.

9.71 Due to the quality and condition of the West Oxfordshire landscape, much of which is protected by the National Landscape designation, proposals for development should be informed by an understanding of the landscape character of the site and its surroundings and assess the sensitivity of the landscape in which they are located.

9.72 This includes evaluating the impact of the proposed development on the local landscape character, scenic views, and any protected or valued landscapes, including the Cotswold National Landscape

Policy DM3 - Conserving and Enhancing Landscape Character through New Development

1. **Design Integration and Landscape Context**

    a. New development must be designed to:

        i. integrate with the surrounding landscape, respecting its scale, form, and character. The design should take account of the existing landform, local building materials, landscape elements (such as trees, hedgerows, and water features), and traditional settlement patterns;

        ii. respect and reflect the landscape character through appropriate building heights, massing and layout. For example, buildings should avoid dominating or disrupting important views, skylines, or natural features, and should blend into the existing topography and built environment

        iii. conserve and enhance historic landscapes, including agricultural landscapes, parks, gardens, and other cultural landscapes. Development must be designed to respect the heritage value of the landscape and contribute to its continued preservation.

        iv. integrate high-quality landscaping to enhance the local character, mitigate the impact of built structures, and create a harmonious transition between the built and natural environment. This may include planting native species, retaining existing trees and hedgerows, and providing green infrastructure to enhance biodiversity in accordance with Policy DM2.

        v. minimise any adverse visual impact on the landscape and where appropriate enhances and restores degraded landscapes including on long-range and local views, particularly from public viewpoints. Assessment of visual impact should be proportionate to the scale and sensitivity of the site and its setting.

        vi. retain, protect, and enhance important landscape features, such as mature trees, hedgerows, watercourses, and historic boundaries, where practicable.

        vii. Mitigate, where necessary any landscape and visual impacts of development through appropriate screening including additional planting in accordance with Policy DM2

    b. Proposals for major development must be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Character Assessment (LCA) or a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to identify key features of the landscape, including topography, views and cultural heritage and to demonstrate how proposals have responded to such features.

2. **Landscaping in New Developments**

a. The provision of new trees and hedgerows must be considered as part of the broader green infrastructure strategy for the development in accordance with Policy DM1. This includes ensuring that planting schemes:

   i. Increase connectivity between habitats, creating wildlife corridors and linking with existing natural features; and
   ii. enhance biodiversity by planting a variety of native species that support local wildlife.

b. New tree planting and hedgerow creation should be designed with careful consideration of their long-term growth and environmental impact. Species selection should prioritise native or locally adapted species, taking into account soil conditions, water availability, and climate resilience.

c. Planting arrangements should allow for the full growth of trees and hedgerows and should be located in areas where they will not obstruct future development or create safety hazards.

d. Appropriate arrangements for the maintenance of new trees, hedgerows and other landscaping features will be secured for a minimum period of five years following planting. This includes ensuring proper watering, pruning, and protection from damage during the establishment phase.

e. *A long-term management plan will be required for the ongoing care of trees and hedgerows beyond the initial five years.*

Policy DM4 - Light Pollution and Dark Skies

9.73 Policy DM4 aims to ensure development in West Oxfordshire does not worsen light pollution and where possible enhances dark skies, while providing safe and appropriate levels of illumination. DM4 aims to balance the functional requirements of development with the need to conserve landscape character, biodiversity and residential amenity, in line with national policy.

9.74 Dark skies are a distinctive and valued characteristic of West Oxfordshire's landscape, particularly within its rural areas and the Cotswolds National Landscape. The absence of artificial light contributes to the area's tranquillity, scenic quality and sense of remoteness, as well as supporting biodiversity and ecological networks. Uncontrolled or excessive artificial lighting can erode these qualities, giving rise to light pollution, skyglow and visual intrusion, while also adversely affecting residential amenity and wildlife.

9.75 National planning policy recognises the importance of limiting light pollution. DM4 applies the requirements of national policy, ensuring the need for, and design of, lighting is carefully considered as part of the development process.

9.76 DM4 promotes a design-led approach to lighting, requiring applicants to demonstrate a clear and justified need for external lighting and to ensure that it is proportionate to its intended function. Lighting should not be treated as a standard or default component of development, particularly in rural areas where low ambient light levels are part of the area's character.

9.77 Poorly designed lighting can result in unnecessary light spill, glare and skyglow, harming both visual amenity and the wider environment. This is particularly important in sensitive locations such as the Cotswolds National Landscape, where the conservation of natural beauty includes the protection of dark skies. DM4 supports adherence to best practice guidance, including the Cotswolds National Landscape Dark Skies Position Statement, to ensure that lighting schemes minimise upward light and visual intrusion.

9.78 Artificial lighting can have significant ecological impacts, particularly on nocturnal species such as bats, invertebrates and other wildlife that rely on dark corridors for movement and foraging. River corridors, woodlands and hedgerows often function as important dark ecological networks, and excessive lighting can disrupt these habitats and species behaviour. In accordance with the requirements of national policy, DM4 requires development to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on wildlife through sensitive design, buffer zones and appropriate mitigation measures.

9.79 DM4 also recognises the importance of energy efficiency and climate considerations in accordance with policies CP1 and DM9. The use of modern lighting technologies, such as LED luminaires with appropriate colour temperature and programmable controls, can significantly reduce energy consumption and unnecessary illumination. Timers, motion sensors and dimming controls help ensure that lighting is only used when required. This limits environmental impacts but also contributes to carbon reduction objectives.

9.80 Lighting associated with certain uses, such as sports facilities, can be particularly intrusive if not carefully managed. DM4 requires that such schemes are designed to minimise impact on

surrounding receptors and are subject to operational controls to prevent unnecessary use outside active hours.

9.81 To support effective decision-making, development proposals that may give rise to significant lighting impacts should be accompanied by a Lighting Impact Assessment (LIA), proportionate to the scale and sensitivity of the site. This ensures that potential impacts on dark skies, local amenity and biodiversity are properly understood and addressed.

9.82 Lighting systems can change over time if not properly maintained or controlled. Securing commitments to the ongoing management, operation and maintenance of lighting ensures that installations continue to perform as intended and remain compliant with policy objectives.

9.83 All proposals for development that include external lighting must be sensitive to the surrounding environment, providing adequate illumination for the nature of the proposal without compromising dark skies, particularly in rural areas where intrusive lighting may contrasts with the natural, low-light character of the area.

Policy DM4 - Light Pollution and Dark Skies

The visual impact of lighting on the surrounding area must be considered as part of the design process for new development. This includes avoiding overly bright or obtrusive lighting features that dominate the landscape or obscure important natural or cultural features or impact on the amenity of local residents.

1. **All proposals that include external lighting should:**

    a. Have a clear need and justification;
    b. follow best practice in outdoor lighting design, reflecting, where relevant, the Cotswolds National Landscape Dark Skies Position Statement.
    c. Be designed and installed in a way that minimises light spill beyond the development site and prevents skyglow. Lighting should be directed downwards, shielded, and controlled to avoid upward light spill, glare, and light pollution.
    d. incorporate energy-efficient solutions and suitable timing and control systems to enable lighting to be switched off or dimmed when it is not needed, particularly in areas with low human activity at night (e.g., in rural or residential areas).
    e. be minimised and directed and controlled to avoid impacting dark skies and wildlife.
    f. be designed to ensure safety without excessive brightness. Where feasible, new developments should incorporate designs that integrate with the natural environment, utilising low-level, ground illuminating downcast lighting.

2. **Proposals involving sports facilities requiring floodlighting must;**

    a. demonstrate that lighting design minimises glare, skyglow, and light spill to surrounding areas, especially near residential properties, wildlife habitats, or designated dark sky areas.

    b. only be used during operational hours and should incorporate time controls to ensure it is switched off when not in use.

2. Minimising impact on wildlife

a. New development must consider the potential impact of lighting on wildlife habitats, especially where these areas are known to support protected species, including river corridors recognised as dark ecological networks.
b. Proposals must incorporate design features that minimise the effects of lighting on sensitive species, such as low-light zones, lighting shields, and light-curtaining techniques.
c. Where new development is proposed near sensitive habitats (such as wetlands, woodlands, or wildlife corridors), a buffer zone should be maintained that limits the use of lighting and reduces its impact on biodiversity.

Lighting Assessment and Management

For developments likely to generate significant light pollution, a lighting impact assessment should be submitted as part of the planning application. The assessment must demonstrate how the proposed lighting scheme will prevent adverse impacts on dark skies, sensitive habitats, and local amenity and incorporate appropriate mitigation.

A commitment to the long-term management and maintenance of lighting systems must be secured to ensure ongoing compliance with this policy.

Policy DM5 - Efficient Use of Land

9.84 Policy DM5 aims to support the effective and sustainable use of land in accordance with national policy, which requires planning policies and decisions to promote an effective use of land in meeting development needs.

9.85 The Council recognises that land is a finite resource and that making efficient use of suitable land is essential to meeting development needs, reducing pressure on undeveloped countryside and Green Belt land, supporting regeneration objectives, and contributing towards sustainable patterns of growth. DM5 therefore seeks to direct development towards previously developed land and accessible urban locations where infrastructure, public transport, services and employment opportunities already exist.

Re-use of Previously Developed Land

9.86 Policy DM5 reflects the national approach to reuse of previously developed land by strongly supporting proposals that bring previously developed land back into productive use where development can be accommodated sustainably and without unacceptable environmental harm.

9.87 The re-use of brownfield land can provide a range of planning, environmental and economic benefits. Such sites are often located within existing settlements and close to jobs, public transport and community facilities, making them inherently sustainable locations for growth.

Redevelopment can also assist in improving environmental quality, remediating contamination, supporting investment and regeneration, and reducing the need for development on greenfield land.

9.88 However, not all previously developed sites are suitable for redevelopment. Proposals must therefore avoid significant environmental harm, protect important natural and historic assets, and preserve or enhance local character and amenity, consistent with the wider national and local objectives.

Efficient Land Use, Density and Accessibility

9.89 The NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to support development that makes efficient use of land. It also promotes higher density development in locations that are well connected by public transport and provide good access to services and employment opportunities.

9.90 In accordance with national policy, Policy DM5 seeks to optimise development densities in sustainable locations while ensuring that development responds positively to local context and does not adversely affect the character, appearance or function of an area. The policy does not prescribe minimum densities across all locations; instead, it adopts a flexible approach which recognises that appropriate density levels will vary according to site characteristics, accessibility, urban form, environmental constraints and infrastructure capacity.

9.91 Higher-density development is particularly encouraged within urban areas, town centres and around key transport hubs where there is existing or planned access to high quality public transport, services and employment. This approach supports sustainable travel behaviour, reduces reliance on the private car and aligns with national and local objectives promoting sustainable transport and reducing carbon emissions.

9.92 DM5 emphasises that efficient use of land must not be pursued at the expense of good design or quality of life. Development proposals are therefore expected to provide high standards of residential amenity, green infrastructure, landscaping, open space and environmental quality. Well-designed higher density development can make a positive contribution to local character, vitality and sustainability where it is carefully integrated with surrounding development and supported by appropriate infrastructure.

Mixed-use Development and Sustainable Communities

9.93 In accordance with national policy DM5 encourages a mix of compatible uses where appropriate. Integrating residential, commercial, employment and community uses can help create active neighbourhoods, improve accessibility to services, reduce the need to travel and make more efficient use of land and infrastructure.

Integration with Transport Infrastructure

9.94 Finally, development proposals are also expected to integrate effectively with existing transport infrastructure and prioritise opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport use. This supports both local and national objectives promoting climate resilience, public health and sustainable patterns of movement.

Policy DM5 – Efficient Use of Land for development

1. Reuse of Previously Developed Land

The reuse of previously developed (brownfield) land will be strongly encouraged in order to make efficient use of land, support regeneration, and reduce pressure on greenfield sites.

Development on previously developed land will be supported where it:

a. Avoids significant environmental harm or the loss of important natural features;
b. Is sustainably located in accordance with the Spatial Strategy
c. Contributes positively to regeneration and the creation of sustainable communities; and
d. Preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the area.

2. Efficient Land Use, Density and Accessibility

New development should make the most efficient use of land by achieving appropriate and sustainable densities, having regard to the character of the area, infrastructure capacity, and the quality of the environment.

Higher-density development will be supported in urban areas and locations with good access to public transport, services and employment opportunities, including areas around key transport hubs, provided it would not result in harm to local character, amenity or the wider landscape.

Proposals for development should:

a. Optimise the use of land in a way that reflects the surrounding context and supports sustainable infrastructure;
b. Ensure that higher-density development provides high standards of design, residential amenity, open space and green infrastructure; and
c. Promote a mix of uses including residential, commercial, and community uses, where appropriate, to support vibrant and sustainable neighbourhoods.
d. Be designed to integrate with existing transport infrastructure and promote sustainable travel options, including walking, cycling, and public transport.

Policy DM6 - Trees and Hedgerows and Woodland

9.95 In accordance with national policy, Policy DM6 seeks to protect, retain and enhance trees, hedgerows and woodland as important components of green infrastructure, local character, climate resilience and biodiversity. Trees and hedgerows make a significant contribution to the environmental quality and distinctiveness of places, whilst also delivering important ecosystem services including carbon sequestration, flood mitigation, urban cooling, air quality improvement and habitat connectivity.

9.96 Policy DM6 also reflects the objectives of the Environment Act 2021, the England Trees Action Plan, biodiversity net gain requirements and wider green infrastructure and climate change initiatives, which collectively seek to increase tree canopy cover, strengthen ecological networks and improve environmental resilience.

Protection of Existing Trees and Hedgerows

9.97 Existing trees, hedgerows and woodland are among the most valuable natural assets within the built and rural environment. Mature trees, established hedgerows and Ancient Woodlands take many decades to replace and as irreplaceable habitats in some cases, provide substantially greater environmental, landscape and biodiversity benefits than new planting. Policy DM6 therefore prioritises the retention of these features.

9.98 Hedgerows are identified as a Habitat of Principal Importance for Biodiversity Conservation (i.e. priority habitat) under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. They are particularly important as wildlife corridors and ecological stepping stones which support habitat connectivity and species movement across landscapes. Trees and hedgerows also contribute strongly to local landscape character, settlement identity and visual amenity and are often integral to the setting and design of development.

9.99 Policy DM6 requires development proposals to retain and integrate existing trees and hedgerows and woodland within the design and layout of schemes wherever possible. This follows the design-led approach advocated by the NPPF and national design guidance, which emphasises the importance of incorporating natural features into development from the outset rather than treating them as constraints.

9.100 The loss of mature trees and hedgerows must be avoided unless justified by sound arboricultural, site layout or health and safety reasons. Early consideration of trees and hedgerows within the design process is critical to ensure that development responds positively to local context whilst maintaining green infrastructure networks and environmental quality.

Ancient and Veteran Trees

9.101 Ancient and Veteran trees are a valuable ecological resource and irreplaceable habitat. By virtue of their age, they have significant biological, aesthetic and cultural value and should be managed accordingly, and conserved to maximise their habitat value and life span. National Policy requires that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees, should be refused unless there are

wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists. Natural England/Forestry England Standing Advice[19] is a useful resource to guide development proposals affecting ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees. Standing advice is a material planning consideration and should be taken into account when making decisions on planning applications.

Major Development Proposals

9.102 The requirement for major development proposals to provide a tree survey and hedgerow assessment ensures that decisions are informed by robust and up-to-date technical evidence. Surveys should be prepared in accordance with the relevant British Standards, including BS5837:2012 "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction", which establishes nationally recognised methodologies for surveying and categorising trees, assessing impacts and informing site design.

9.103 The submission of arboricultural information at the application stage enables the Council to properly assess the quality, condition and value of trees and hedgerows both on and adjacent to development sites, together with the likely impacts of development proposals. It also assists in ensuring that retained trees can coexist successfully with proposed development over the long term.

9.104 Where removal is necessary, proposals must clearly justify the loss and set out appropriate mitigation and compensation measures. This reflects the mitigation hierarchy established through national planning and environmental policy, which seeks to avoid harm before considering mitigation or compensation.

Replacement Planting

9.105 Replacement planting is required where trees or hedgerows are lost as a result of development in order to maintain and enhance overall green infrastructure value, support biodiversity net gain objectives and contribute towards climate resilience and landscape enhancement. The replacement ratios set out in Policy DM6 recognise that newly planted trees and hedgerows will take considerable time to reach the ecological and visual value of established features. Replacement planting should therefore deliver a measurable enhancement wherever practicable.

9.106 Replacement planting should be located on-site wherever possible and utilise native or climate-resilient species appropriate to local landscape character and biodiversity objectives. Consideration should also be given to opportunities to strengthen habitat connectivity and urban greening through integrated planting strategies. This approach aligns with the England Trees Action Plan, which promotes the expansion and protection of trees and woodland, increased urban tree planting, and improved ecological connectivity as part of the transition to a more climate-resilient and nature-rich environment.

[19] Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK

Protection During Construction

9.107 Development activity can result in significant damage to trees and hedgerows through soil compaction, root severance, changes in ground levels, storage of materials and construction traffic. Such damage may not become apparent until several years after development has been completed. Ensuring effective protection during construction helps secure the long-term health and longevity of retained landscape features and contributes to the creation of attractive, sustainable and resilient places.

9.108 Policy DM6 requires the submission of an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS), Tree Protection Plan (TPP) and, where appropriate, Hedgerow Protection Plan (HPP) for development affecting retained trees or hedgerows. These documents provide details of root protection areas, protective fencing, site construction methods, service installation and long-term management measures in accordance with BS5837 standards and recognised arboricultural practice.

Policy DM6 – Trees and Hedgerows and Woodland

1. **Protection of Existing Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland**

    a. Proposals for development should:

        i. retain and incorporate existing trees and hedgerows. The loss of mature trees and hedgerows should be avoided unless necessary due to site constraints or health and safety risk.

        ii. demonstrate how the development respects and integrates existing tree and hedgerow features into the site layout and design.

        iii. Avoid impacts on ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees in accordance with standing advice, implementing appropriate buffers where necessary.

        iv. Implement a 50 metre development free buffer to all Ancient Woodland in support of the Councils Nature Recovery objectives

2. **Major Development proposals**

    a. Planning applications for major development should be accompanied by a tree survey and hedgerow assessment, prepared in accordance with the most up to date quality management standards. This should identify the location, condition, and species of all trees and hedgerows on or near the site.

    b. Where it is necessary to remove trees or hedgerows, the reasons for removal must be clearly set out along with any compensatory planting proposals.

3. **Replacement Planting**

a. Where trees or hedgerows are lost as a result of development, developers will be required to provide replacement planting at a ratio of at least 2:1 for trees and 3:1 for hedgerows, unless this is not feasible due to site constraints. Replacement planting should be located on-site wherever possible and be of equivalent or greater biodiversity value.

Tree and Hedgerow Protection During Development

Where development is proposed in close proximity of an existing tree or hedgerow, an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and Tree Protection Plan (TPP) and/or Hedgerow Protection Plan (HPP) must be submitted as part of the planning application demonstrating how trees and hedgerows and their root zones will be safeguarded during the construction phase.

Policy DM7 - Sport, Recreation and Play

9.109 Policy DM7 seeks to protect, enhance and deliver sport, recreation and play opportunities across the district in order to support healthy, active and inclusive communities. Access to high quality sport, recreation and play provision is essential to physical and mental wellbeing, social interaction, community cohesion, quality of life and forms a key component of sustainable development.

9.110 DM7 is consistent with national policy and guidance, Sport England guidance and the objectives of the West Oxfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy, all of which identify the importance of protecting existing facilities, addressing quantitative and qualitative deficiencies in provision, and ensuring that future growth is appropriately supported by new and enhanced recreational infrastructure.

Safeguarding Existing Facilities

9.111 Existing sport, play and open space facilities represent important community assets which contribute to health, wellbeing, social inclusion and placemaking. Facilities such as playing pitches, parks, recreation grounds, children's play areas, leisure centres and informal recreational spaces often perform multiple functions, including supporting biodiversity, climate resilience and opportunities for informal recreation and social interaction.

9.112 Policy DM7 reflects the approach in national policy which is clear that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should be protected unless robust evidence demonstrates that they are surplus to requirements, replacement provision of equal or greater value is secured, or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss.

9.113 Existing sport, play and open space will be protected against loss, dilapidation and/or deliberate degradation. Facilities should be maintained to a reasonable standard to ensure they continue to meet the needs of residents in the local settlement and surrounding communities. The deterioration of facilities can lead to reduced participation, accessibility and community benefit and may undermine wider health and wellbeing objectives.

9.114 In considering proposals involving the loss of existing provision, the Council will require robust and up-to-date evidence of need prepared in accordance with recognised best practice guidance, including Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and associated assessment methodologies.

9.115 Particular weight will be given to safeguarding facilities in locations where the Council's evidence identifies existing or future quantitative or qualitative deficiencies. The West Oxfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy and Open Space Study identify areas where current provision is under pressure or where additional demand is expected as a result of planned growth. In such circumstances, retaining and improving existing facilities will form an important part of creating sustainable communities and supporting healthy lifestyles.

Provision to Meet the Needs of New Development

9.116 New residential and mixed-use development increases demand for sport, recreation and play facilities. Policy DM7 requires development proposals to make appropriate provision to meet needs arising from development, including the needs of children and young people, in accordance with national policy.

9.117 DM7 recognises that in rural areas and smaller settlements, smaller-scale, shared-use or multifunctional provision may be more appropriate to local context and patterns of use. Flexible and adaptable facilities can play an important role in sustaining rural communities whilst making efficient use of limited land and resources.

9.118 Provision should be made on-site, particularly for larger developments where opportunities exist to create integrated and accessible recreational infrastructure as part of wider place-making objectives. On-site provision can help create attractive neighbourhoods, support social interaction and encourage walking and cycling by ensuring facilities are close to where people live.

9.119 In some circumstances, off-site provision or financial contributions may represent the most effective and sustainable approach, particularly where existing facilities can be expanded or enhanced to serve new populations more effectively. Contributions will be secured in accordance with Policy CP4.

Supporting New and Enhanced Facilities

9.120 The Council will support proposals for new and improved sport, recreation and play facilities where they address identified needs and are appropriately located and designed. Accessible facilities located within or adjacent to settlements can help reduce reliance on private car travel and encourage active lifestyles through walking and cycling.

9.121 The policy supports facilities that are inclusive and accessible to all sections of the community, including children, older people, disabled people and groups currently underrepresented in participation. This aligns with Sport England's objectives for increasing participation and reducing inequalities in access to sport and recreation.

9.122 Facilities should provide safe, attractive and welcoming environments and be designed in accordance with recognised best practice guidance, including Sport England design guidance and relevant accessibility standards. Bets practice design will ensure facilities remain adaptable, resilient and capable of meeting long-term community needs.

Long-term Management and Maintenance

9.123 Long-term management and maintenance arrangements are important in ensuring that facilities remain functional, safe and financially sustainable over time. Policy DM7 therefore requires proposals to demonstrate how facilities will be managed and maintained in accordance with Core Policy CP4.

Managing Environmental Impacts

9.124 Finally, DM7 recognises that sport and recreation facilities can give rise to environmental impacts, including lighting, noise and traffic generation, particularly where facilities are located close to residential areas or sensitive landscapes. Proposals should therefore demonstrate that impacts beyond the immediate vicinity of the site have also been appropriately considered and mitigated where necessary.

Policy DM7 – Sport, Recreation and Play

1. Safeguarding Existing Facilities

a. Existing playing pitches and sport, recreation and play facilities, including formal and informal provision, leisure centres, parks, recreation grounds and playgrounds will be safeguarded against loss or deterioration.

b. Development proposals that would result in the loss or deterioration of such facilities, including associated infrastructure, will only be supported where:

i. An up-to-date and robust assessment of need, prepared in accordance with best practice guidance demonstrates that the facility is surplus to current and future requirements; or
ii. Equivalent or improved replacement provision is secured, in terms of quantity, quality, functionality and accessibility, in a suitable and convenient location serving the same settlement or catchment; or
iii. The proposal delivers alternative sport or recreational provision whose benefits clearly outweigh the loss of the existing facility.

c. Particular weight will be given to safeguarding facilities in locations where local evidence identifies existing or future shortfalls.

2. Provision to Meet the Needs of New Development

a. New residential and mixed-use development must make appropriate provision for sport, recreation and play to meet needs arising from the development, including the needs of children and young people.

b. Provision will be delivered through:

i. On-site facilities, designed in line with national and local standards;
ii. Off-site provision or financial contributions, where on-site provision is not appropriate or viable, and where this would deliver clear, timely and accessible benefits for the community.

c. In rural settlements and villages, provision may include smaller-scale, informal, shared-use or multifunctional facilities where this better reflects local character, access patterns and identified needs.

3. Supporting New and Enhanced Facilities

a. Subject to compliance with other relevant policies, the Council will support proposals for new or enhanced sport, recreation and play facilities where they:

i. Address identified needs and gaps in provision, as set out in the West Oxfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy, West Oxfordshire Open Space Study and successor studies;
ii. Are located within or adjacent to settlements and are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport;
iii. Are inclusive, safe and designed to accommodate all ages, genders and abilities, with particular regard to increasing participation for all;
iv. Secure long-term management and maintenance arrangements, in accordance with Policy CP4
v. Have regard to environmental impacts beyond the immediate vicinity of the site, e.g. lighting, noise and traffic impacts

b. Facilities should be designed in accordance with relevant best-practice guidance.

Policy DM8 - A Healthy Food Environment

9.125 Policy DM8 seeks to embed healthy, sustainable and resilient food environments into the design and delivery of new development. Promoting opportunities for local food production, community growing, access to nutritious food and stronger local food networks as part of the creation of healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities.

9.126 The built environment plays an important role in shaping food behaviours and dietary outcomes. Access to healthy, affordable and locally produced food, opportunities for food growing, and the concentration and location of unhealthy food outlets can all influence long-term health and wellbeing. Policy DM8 therefore seeks to ensure that development contributes positively towards healthier lifestyles and more sustainable food systems.

9.127 Fostering a healthy food environment is important to addressing current and emerging public health challenges, particularly rising levels of childhood obesity and diet-related ill health. Public health evidence demonstrates that poor diet is a major contributor to obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other long-term health conditions.

9.128 Data for Oxfordshire indicates that 18.6% of Reception year children (aged 4–5) were classified as overweight or obese in 2019/20, increasing to 29.4% of Year 6 children (aged 10–11). This reflects national trends showing significantly higher obesity levels by the end of primary school. Evidence also demonstrates a strong relationship between obesity and deprivation, with poorer communities often experiencing reduced access to affordable and nutritious food choices.

9.129 National policy recognises that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and should enable and support healthy lifestyles, particularly where this would address identified local health and well-being needs. National policy also supports access to healthier food, the retention and enhancement of green infrastructure, environmental sustainability, biodiversity enhancement and community resilience, all of which are closely linked to the creation of healthy food environments. This approach also aligns with the objectives of the Environment Act 2021, public health strategies, climate adaptation initiatives and sustainable placemaking principles.

Protecting Natural Resources for Food Production

9.130 Healthy food production depends upon the protection of finite environmental resources, particularly soil and water. Agricultural land, healthy soils and water resources are essential to food security, biodiversity and climate resilience. Development proposals are therefore expected to protect and maintain natural systems that support local food growing and sustainable land management.

9.131 DM8 supports development approaches that integrate biodiversity enhancement, sustainable drainage and climate-responsive design alongside opportunities for food production. Features such as orchards, hedgerows, wildflower planting and pollinator-friendly landscapes can provide multiple environmental benefits, including habitat creation, urban cooling, carbon storage and improved ecological connectivity, whilst also supporting productive landscapes.

Community Food Growing and Local Food Production

9.132 Policy DM8 encourages the provision of community food growing opportunities within residential developments and other appropriate locations, including schools, employment areas and community facilities. Community gardens, allotments, orchards and edible landscapes can support healthier diets, provide educational opportunities and strengthen social interaction and community cohesion.

9.133 Food growing spaces also contribute positively to mental health and wellbeing by encouraging outdoor activity, reducing isolation and fostering community participation. Integrating food production into the public realm can improve the quality and functionality of green infrastructure whilst helping to build more resilient and self-sustaining communities.

9.134 DM8 recognises that smaller-scale and informal food growing opportunities can often be successfully incorporated into development through landscaping schemes, shared spaces, green roofs, green walls and multifunctional public areas. Edible planting and productive landscaping can form part of a wider approach to sustainable placemaking and urban greening.

Allotments and Community Gardens

9.135 Larger residential developments generate increased demand for access to open space, recreation and community facilities, including food growing opportunities. Policy DM8 therefore expects developments of 50 or more dwellings to provide dedicated space for allotments and/or community gardens unless alternative provision can be robustly justified.

9.136 Where on-site provision is made, spaces should be accessible, attractive and integrated into the wider layout of the development to ensure that all residents, including those with mobility impairments, are able to benefit.

9.137 DM8 also seeks to ensure that growing spaces support sustainable food production through the use of healthy and uncontaminated soils, water-efficient practices, biodiversity enhancement and adaptable design capable of supporting a range of growing activities.

9.138 The provision of allotments and community gardens can also help address existing waiting lists and deficiencies in allotment provision identified through local open space evidence and community engagement.

Supporting Local Food Networks and Sustainable Supply Chains

9.139 Policy DM8 supports the establishment and growth of local food networks, market gardens and small-scale food enterprises that improve access to locally produced food and strengthen local supply chains. Shorter and more transparent food supply chains can reduce food miles, support local economic resilience and improve community awareness of sustainable food production.

9.140 Supporting local producers and community food initiatives can also contribute to rural diversification and the vitality of rural communities, whilst helping reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation and distribution.

Health Impacts and Hot Food Takeaways

9.141 Policy DM8 is also informed by growing national and local concern regarding the health impacts associated with the concentration of hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets, particularly near schools and places frequented by children and young people. National policy and public health guidance increasingly support the use of planning powers to promote healthier food environments and address health inequalities.

9.142 Limiting over-concentrations of unhealthy food outlets, particularly where there is evidence of adverse impacts on health, pollution, amenity or anti-social behaviour, forms part of a wider strategy to support healthier lifestyles and reduce long-term health inequalities across West Oxfordshire.

Community Participation and Long-Term Stewardship

9.143 Community involvement is an important component of successful food growing initiatives. Development proposals that include food-growing opportunities are therefore expected to demonstrate how local communities will be involved in their planning, design, use and long-term management. Community gardening programmes, workshops, edible trails and partnerships with local food organisations can help maximise participation, educational value and long-term success.

9.144 Finally, DM8 also recognises that effective stewardship and maintenance are essential to ensuring that food-growing spaces remain viable, safe and productive over time. Appropriate long-term management arrangements should therefore be secured as part of the development process.

9.145 Development will be supported where it enables households and communities to grow, cook and eat food collectively. This could include community food growing, processing and eating infrastructures and facilities, as well as less intensive features such as fruit trees. This could further include the facilities required for developments to produce foods for local groceries that are accessible to local communities.

Policy DM8 – A Healthy Food Environment

Having regard to the nature, scale and location of a proposal, development must contribute to a healthy food environment.

1. Development proposals will be expected to address the following requirements where they are relevant and proportionate;

    a. Protect existing natural resources that support the provision of healthy food environments including soil and water resources;

b. Provide community food growing opportunities as part of new housing developments and in other appropriate locations, such as employment sites, new schools and community centres.
c. Provide opportunities for local food production within the public realm including edible landscapes, allotments and community orchards;
d. Support the establishment and operation of market gardens and food networks for the benefit of local communities;
e. utilise biodiversity friendly climate-responsive design to enable food growing incorporating habitats and/or features for wildlife such as orchards, hedgerows, wildflowers, companion planting and shelter for pollinators.
f. include features such as green roofs or walls and passive design techniques that support year-round food production, including hedgerows as boundary treatments;

Allotments and Community Gardens

1. Larger residential developments (50 or more dwellings) will be expected to include dedicated space for community gardens and/or allotments on-site, unless it can be demonstrated that it is not feasible or necessary (e.g. expansion of an existing facility nearby would be preferable).

2. Where provided on-site, the design of these spaces should be integrated into the development's layout, ensuring easy access for all residents, including those with mobility issues. These spaces should support sustainable food production; use healthy uncontaminated soil; promote biodiversity; and be adaptable to different types of growing (e.g. vegetable patches, fruit trees, communal gardening spaces)

3. Proposals that support and strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains, including opportunities for local producers, growers and food enterprises to supply and serve the local community, will be encouraged subject to compliance with other relevant policies.

Where development provides food-growing spaces and initiatives, applicants should demonstrate how community participation and involvement will be supported in their planning, design, use, and ongoing management. This may include measures such as community gardening programmes, edible food walks, food workshops, and engagement with local food groups, urban farming networks, and community organisations.

Provision for the future long-term maintenance and management of community food growing opportunities must be agreed as part of the planning application.

Policy DM9 - Net Zero Carbon Development

9.146 Policy DM9 seeks to ensure that all new development contributes towards the transition to a net zero carbon future and supports the achievement of local and national climate change objectives.

9.147 The policy responds to the legally binding national target established under the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended) to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It also reflects the objectives of the NPPF, which requires the planning system to support the transition to a low carbon future, take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and support the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy generation.

9.148 DM9 is further informed by the National Design Guide, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on climate change and energy efficiency, the UK Net Zero Strategy, the Future Homes Standard, and local climate emergency declarations and carbon reduction commitments. Collectively, these national and local policy drivers establish a clear direction towards highly energy efficient, fossil fuel free buildings and substantial reductions in operational and embodied carbon emissions.

Responding to the Climate Emergency

9.149 The built environment is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions at both the national and local level. Operational emissions associated with heating, cooling, lighting and powering buildings account for a significant proportion of the UK's carbon output. In addition, whilst embodied carbon arising from the extraction, manufacture, transport and assembly of construction materials is becoming an increasingly important component of whole-life carbon emissions.

9.150 Reducing emissions from new and existing development is essential in achieving national and local carbon reduction targets and ensuring communities become more resilient to future climate and energy challenges. Buildings constructed today will remain in use for many decades and will influence energy consumption and carbon emissions throughout their lifetime. There is consequently a strong imperative to ensure development is designed and constructed to high environmental standards from the outset, avoiding the need for costly future retrofitting and reducing the risk of long-term carbon lock-in.

9.151 Policy DM9 adopts a "fabric first" approach, prioritising the reduction of energy demand through high-performance building envelopes, effective insulation, airtight construction, and passive design measures before the incorporation of low-carbon or renewable energy technologies. By minimising energy requirements at source, this approach delivers lasting carbon savings, improves occupant comfort, reduces energy costs and enhances resilience to climate and energy prices.

9.152 The fabric first principle is supported by national policy and industry best practice and is widely recognised as the most effective and cost-efficient pathway towards achieving net zero operational carbon development. DM9 therefore seeks to ensure that all new development

maximises energy efficiency as a fundamental component of sustainable design and contributes positively to the transition to a low-carbon built environment.

Building Fabric and Energy Demand Standards

9.153 Space heating demand is a key measure of building energy performance and an important indicator of operational carbon emissions, DM9 requires development to achieve demanding energy efficiency standards through the delivery of highly insulated, airtight and thermally efficient buildings. The requirement for to achieve a space heating demand of less than 15 kWh/m²/yr (or < 20 kWh/m2 /year for bungalows where site-specific design constraints may apply) reflects recognised best practice associated with ultra-low energy and Passivhaus-informed development and supports the transition towards net zero operational carbon buildings.

9.154 Achieving low space heating demand through appropriate building orientation, high-performance insulation, minimisation of thermal bridging, enhanced airtightness and passive solar design can significantly reduce energy consumption throughout the life of a building. These measures not only reduce operational carbon emissions but also improve resilience to future energy price fluctuations and contribute to greater occupant comfort and wellbeing.

9.155 Highly energy efficient buildings place less demand on energy infrastructure and enable renewable and low-carbon energy technologies to operate more effectively. By reducing overall energy requirements before considering energy generation measures, development can achieve the most cost-effective and durable carbon reductions. Improving the thermal performance of buildings can also contribute to wider social and economic objectives. Lower energy consumption can help reduce household energy costs, mitigate fuel poverty and improve indoor environmental quality through more consistent internal temperatures and reduced risks associated with cold and damp conditions. DM9 therefore places strong emphasis on reducing energy demand as the foundation of sustainable and resilient development.

Energy Efficiency and Energy Use Intensity

9.156 Energy Use Intensity (EUI) is an increasingly recognised measure for building performance, providing a more robust and measurable indicator of actual building performance than traditional compliance-based metrics. Expressed as energy use per square metre of floor area, EUI enables the overall energy efficiency of a building to be assessed and compared across different building types and operational contexts. DM9 therefore establishes EUI targets for major development to ensure that energy performance is considered holistically throughout the design, construction and occupation stages of development.

9.157 The use of EUI targets supports a performance-led approach to carbon reduction by focusing on the actual energy demand of buildings rather than solely the compliance with notional building regulations standards. This approach reflects emerging best practice guidance in sustainable design, building performance modelling and net zero carbon development and is

increasingly being adopted by local planning authorities, industry organisations and professional bodies.

9.158 Requiring developments to demonstrate predicted energy demand and anticipated operational performance helps address the widely recognised "performance gap" between design-stage calculations and the energy consumption of completed buildings in use. By encouraging greater attention to building fabric, services, controls and occupant outcomes, EUI targets can improve confidence that carbon reduction objectives will be achieved in practice.

9.159 The EUI targets contained within DM9 have been informed by recognised net zero carbon benchmarks, low-energy building standards and industry guidance. These targets provide a clear framework for achieving significant reductions in operational energy demand while allowing flexibility to respond to different building types and operational requirements. For development types where established benchmarks are not available or where building functions vary significantly, applicants may be required to provide bespoke assessments and evidence demonstrating that energy demand has been minimised as far as reasonably practicable.

9.160 By embedding EUI within the policy framework, DM9 seeks to promote a culture of measured building performance, support the delivery of genuinely low-energy development and contribute to the wider transition towards a net zero carbon built environment.

Fossil Fuel Free Development and Renewable Energy

9.161 Policy DM9 requires all new development to be designed and constructed without reliance on fossil fuel-based heating systems and to be capable of operating using renewable and low-carbon energy sources. This reflects the urgent need to decarbonise the built environment in support of national and local net zero commitments and recognises that the continued installation of fossil fuel infrastructure risks locking developments into long-term carbon emissions and future retrofit costs.

9.162 The transition away from natural gas and other fossil fuels is a fundamental component of achieving net zero operational carbon development. Advances in building fabric performance, heat pump technology, renewable electricity generation and energy storage systems now enable a wide range of development types to be delivered without reliance on fossil fuel heating. Fossil fuel-free buildings are also better positioned to respond to future changes in energy markets, carbon regulation and technological innovation.

9.163 DM9 adopts a sequential approach to renewable and low-carbon energy provision. Applicants are expected to first minimise energy demand through a fabric-first approach and high standards of energy efficiency before maximising opportunities for on-site renewable energy generation. Priority should be given to the integration of technologies such as rooftop solar photovoltaic panels, solar thermal systems, battery storage, heat pumps and other appropriate renewable energy technologies as part of the overall design of buildings and development sites.

9.164 Where it can be robustly demonstrated that on-site renewable energy generation cannot reasonably meet total operational energy demand, applicants may utilise appropriately evidenced off-site renewable energy provision or direct renewable electricity procurement arrangements. Any such measures should demonstrate a clear and verifiable contribution towards achieving net zero operational carbon outcomes and should only be considered after all reasonable opportunities for on-site energy generation have been fully explored.

9.165 The policy supports the sensitive integration of renewable and low-carbon energy technologies into development, recognising that design quality, townscape character, heritage significance, landscape considerations and environmental impacts must also be considered. Renewable energy infrastructure should therefore be incorporated in a manner that complements the architectural design of buildings and contributes positively to the quality, functionality and sustainability of places.

9.166 By requiring fossil fuel-free development and prioritising renewable energy generation, DM9 seeks to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon energy system, reduce operational emissions and ensure that new development is resilient to future environmental and economic challenges.

Embodied Carbon

9.167 As operational carbon emissions reduce over time through improvements in energy efficiency, the decarbonisation of the electricity grid and the transition to renewable energy sources, embodied carbon is becoming an increasingly significant component of the overall climate impacts associated with development. Embodied carbon arises from the extraction, manufacture and transport of construction materials, as well as the processes of construction, maintenance, refurbishment, demolition and end-of-life disposal or reuse. In many new developments, embodied emissions can account for a substantial proportion of whole-life carbon impacts.

9.168 DM9 therefore requires major development proposals to demonstrate how embodied carbon emissions have been assessed and reduced through the preparation of proportionate Life Cycle Assessments and embodied carbon calculations. This approach supports a more comprehensive understanding of the environmental impacts of development and ensures that carbon reduction measures are considered throughout the entire life cycle of a building rather than solely during its operational phase.

9.169 The assessment and reduction of embodied carbon can be achieved through a range of design and construction measures, including the retention and reuse of existing buildings and structures, the specification of low-carbon and responsibly sourced materials, efficient structural design, the minimisation of material use, and the adoption of construction methods that reduce waste and resource consumption. Early consideration of embodied carbon during the design process can often deliver significant carbon savings at relatively low cost while improving overall resource efficiency.

9.170 DM9 also supports the application of circular economy principles, which seek to maximise the lifespan and value of materials and buildings by promoting adaptability, durability, repair, reuse and recycling. Applicants are encouraged to explore opportunities for material recovery, modular construction, design for disassembly, off-site manufacturing and other innovative approaches that minimise waste and reduce lifecycle emissions.

9.171 By requiring embodied carbon to be considered alongside operational energy performance, the policy seeks to encourage a whole-life carbon approach to development and support the delivery of buildings that are both resource-efficient and aligned with the transition to a net zero carbon future.

Energy Strategy and Post-Occupancy Evaluation

9.172 DM9 requires the submission of an Energy Strategy to ensure that energy efficiency, carbon reduction and renewable energy measures are embedded within development proposals from the earliest stages of design. The Energy Strategy provides a clear framework for demonstrating how the development will meet the requirements of the policy and enables energy and carbon reduction measures to be considered as an integral component of the overall design process rather than as a retrospective exercise.

9.173 The Energy Strategy will allow the Council to assess whether development proposals can achieve the required standards through robust, transparent and evidence-based methodologies. By requiring the strategy to be updated at key stages, including prior to commencement and prior to occupation where appropriate, the policy ensures that assessments reflect the final as-built development and account for any detailed design changes that may occur during the delivery process.

9.174 The requirement for Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) reflects growing recognition that the actual performance of buildings can differ significantly from design-stage predictions. Research has consistently identified a performance gap between anticipated and measured energy consumption, often resulting in higher operational emissions than originally forecast. Monitoring building performance after occupation provides an important mechanism for understanding whether intended energy and carbon outcomes are being achieved in practice.

9.175 POE enables developers, building owners and occupiers to identify operational issues, optimise building systems and improve overall energy efficiency. It also promotes greater accountability in the delivery of sustainable development by ensuring that environmental performance claims can be tested against actual outcomes. This performance-led approach supports the wider objective of delivering genuinely low-carbon buildings rather than relying solely on theoretical modelling.

9.176 The information generated through post-occupancy monitoring can also provide valuable evidence to inform future policy development, improve design and construction practices, and enhance understanding of building performance within the local area. Lessons learned from completed developments can contribute to continuous improvement across the development industry and help ensure that future schemes deliver increasingly effective carbon reductions.

9.177 By combining upfront energy planning with post-occupancy performance monitoring, DM9 seeks to establish a comprehensive and transparent framework for delivering net zero carbon development and ensuring that projected environmental benefits are realised throughout the operational life of buildings.

Policy DM9 – Net Zero Carbon Development

Development proposals must contribute to the achievement of net zero operational carbon and support the transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient built environment.

Proposals will be expected to minimise energy demand through a fabric-first approach, achieve high standards of energy efficiency, avoid the use of fossil fuel heating systems, and maximise the use of renewable and low-carbon energy technologies.

The requirements set out below should be met unless it can be robustly demonstrated that compliance is not feasible or viable having regard to the nature, scale, location and characteristics of the development, and that the proposal achieves the maximum reasonable reduction in carbon emissions.

1. Building Fabric and Energy Demand Standards

a. Development proposals must be designed to achieve the following space heating demand standards:

- Residential development: ≤15 kWh/m²/year.
- Bungalows: ≤20 kWh/m²/year.

Applicants must demonstrate how building orientation, insulation, airtightness, thermal bridge reduction and passive design measures have been used to minimise energy demand.

2. Energy Efficiency

a. All development proposals must demonstrate compliance with the following Energy Use Intensity (EUI) targets:

i. Residential: ≤35 kWh/m²/yr
ii. Offices: ≤55 kWh/m²/yr
iii. Retail: ≤35 kWh/m²/yr
iv. Warehouses: ≤35 kWh/m²/yr
v. Schools: ≤55 kWh/m²/yr

b. For other development types, applicants shall agree appropriate EUI targets with the District Council through pre-application discussions or provide evidence of compliance with recognised net zero carbon benchmarks.

3. Fossil Fuels and Zero Operational Carbon Balance

a. All development must be designed to operate without fossil fuel heating systems.

b. A sequential approach shall be applied whereby:
i. Energy demand is minimised through building fabric and energy efficiency measures;
ii. Opportunities for on-site renewable and low-carbon energy generation are maximised;

iii. Any residual operational energy demand is met through renewable energy sources, including appropriately evidenced off-site renewable energy provision where necessary.

c. Major development proposals must demonstrate how net zero operational carbon will be achieved through the submission of an Energy Strategy.

4. Embodied Carbon

a. All major development must meet best practice targets for embodied carbon. Buildings should prioritise the use of re-used and low-carbon materials and be designed to enable disassembly at end of life, in line with circular economy principles.

b. A Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) must be undertaken for all major developments to quantify carbon emissions and wider environmental impacts across the full lifecycle of the building. This should include appropriate embodied carbon calculations, proportionate to the level of design information available at each stage of the project.

c. Residual, unavoidable embodied carbon emissions from major developments must be offset through financial contributions to the West Oxfordshire Climate Offsetting Fund.

d. Smaller developments are strongly encouraged to apply the same standards and principles where feasible.

5. Energy Strategy

a. All major development must be accompanied by an Energy Strategy, which shall be updated as necessary prior to commencement of development and prior to occupation.

b. The Energy Strategy must be based on a clear and robust calculation methodology and shall include, as a minimum, the following key elements:

- Predicted annual energy demand (kWh/year);
- Energy Use Intensity (kWh/m²/year);
- Space heating demand (kWh/m²/year);
- Total renewable energy generation (kWh/year).

c. Energy modelling shall be agreed with the Council, submitted in support of the planning application, and updated prior to commencement of development and prior to occupation to reflect the finalised development.

d. The Energy Strategy shall also include appropriate and proportionate arrangements for Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE), including monitoring and reporting. The scope, methodology, and reporting requirements shall be agreed with the District Council and secured through a planning condition and/or Section 106 agreement.

Policy DM10 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development

9.178 Policy DM10 supports the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure as part of the transition towards a net zero carbon future, improved energy security and greater resilience within West Oxfordshire. The policy reflects national and local commitments to addressing climate change and recognises the important role renewable energy has in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, decentralising energy generation and supporting sustainable economic growth.

9.179 National policy recognises the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable and low carbon sources and requires planning policies to support renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring adverse impacts are appropriately addressed. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) further advises that local planning authorities should identify suitable areas for renewable energy development and consider the cumulative impacts of such proposals.

9.180 Informed by Oxfordshire Local Area Energy Planning and the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Assessment and Strategy for West Oxfordshire (2016), DM10 seeks to direct proposals for renewable and low carbon energy towards the most suitable and least constrained locations, Together with its associated landscape capacity studies, the assessment and strategy identifies broad areas of opportunity and constraint for different renewable and low carbon technologies across the district, including solar energy, wind energy, biomass and decentralised heat networks. It also considers landscape sensitivity, environmental constraints, infrastructure considerations and opportunities for future deployment.

Green Belt

9.181 National policy identifies most forms of renewable energy development as inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Applications for renewable energy proposals within the Green Belt will therefore be determined in accordance with national Green Belt policy. Where proposals are located within the Green Belt, applicants will be required to demonstrate the very special circumstances necessary to justify such development, where applicable.

The Cotswolds National Landscape

9.182 Renewable and low-carbon energy proposals within the Cotswolds National Landscape will be subject to particularly careful scrutiny. Proposals must demonstrate how they respond to landscape character, visual sensitivity, tranquillity, and cumulative impacts, having regard to the Cotswolds National Landscape Board's Position Statement on Renewable Energy and other relevant guidance.

9.183 Small-scale schemes may be accommodated where they are sensitively designed and successfully integrated into the landscape. However, large-scale renewable energy proposals within the National Landscape will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be clearly demonstrated that there would be no significant harm to landscape character or visual quality, and that the proposal is in the public interest.

Community-Led Renewable Energy

9.184 The Council places significant value on community-led and locally supported renewable energy schemes. Community energy projects can deliver a range of social, economic, and environmental benefits, including local ownership, greater public participation, reduced energy costs, enhanced energy resilience, and the reinvestment of benefits within local communities.

9.185 Accordingly, DM10 supports proposals that are initiated or led by local communities, including community solar schemes, local energy cooperatives, shared ownership models, and projects that contribute to local resilience and affordability objectives. Community-led initiatives can also play an important role in building public support for the transition to low-carbon energy generation.

9.186 Dual land-use approaches are also encouraged, including opportunities to integrate renewable energy infrastructure with biodiversity enhancement, grazing, food production, or habitat creation, where appropriate.

Community Benefits

9.187 Large-scale renewable energy developments can have direct impacts on nearby communities and local infrastructure. Policy DM10 therefore supports the negotiation of community shared ownership arrangements and community benefit contributions for larger schemes exceeding 5MW in capacity.

9.188 These arrangements can help ensure that communities hosting renewable energy infrastructure share in the benefits arising from the transition to low-carbon energy generation.

Policy DM10 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development

1. General Principles

a. Having regard to the findings of Oxfordshire Local Area Energy Planning and the 2016 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Assessment and Strategy for West Oxfordshire, together with its associated landscape capacity assessments, development proposals for renewable and low carbon energy will be supported where they accord with relevant planning policies and meet the following criteria:

i. Are located in the most suitable areas, in accordance with the Local Plan evidence base;

ii. Avoid unacceptable adverse impacts on the district's intrinsic character and beauty; biodiversity; soil resources (including best and most versatile agricultural land); the significance of heritage assets; and the special qualities of its towns, villages and countryside;

iii. Appropriately address amenity impacts, including noise, shadow flicker, and glint and glare, on nearby residents and sensitive receptors;

iv. Avoid the coalescence of settlements;

v. Contribute positively to the decentralisation and diversification of energy supply;

vi. Facilitate, where reasonably practicable, the co-location of energy generation with potential heat users and suppliers;

vii. Enhance the efficiency and resilience of the renewable and low carbon energy system.

viii. Maximise opportunities for the deployment, repowering and extension of the operational life of renewable and low carbon energy technologies in suitable locations; and

ix. Are supported by robust, site-specific assessments of technical feasibility, grid connectivity, and land quality, including consideration of best and most versatile agricultural land where relevant.

2. Cotswolds National Landscape

a. Within the Cotswolds National Landscape, proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development will be subject to particularly careful scrutiny to ensure consistency with the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

i. Small-scale proposals should clearly demonstrate how they have addressed the relevant considerations set out in the Cotswolds National Landscape Board's Position Statement on Renewable Energy.

ii. Large-scale proposals will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that there is no significant adverse impact on the landscape and that the development is in the public interest.

3. Community-Led Schemes

a. West Oxfordshire District Council places particular value on community-led renewable energy development. Proposals that are initiated by, or demonstrably benefit, local communities will be supported. This includes schemes that contribute to local energy resilience, affordability, dual land use, and democratic ownership.

4. Community Benefits

b. For large-scale renewable energy generation schemes (>5MW) that directly affect local communities, financial contributions will be secured on a £/MW/annum basis as part of a community benefits package.

Policy DM11 - Retrofitting for Energy Efficiency, Carbon Reduction and Climate Resilience

9.189 Policy DM11 supports the retrofit and adaptation of existing buildings to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and enhance resilience to the impacts of climate change. This approach recognises that improving the environmental performance of the existing building stock is essential to achieving local and national net zero carbon objectives, as well as adapting to future climate conditions.

9.190 Enhancing the performance of existing buildings can help reduce energy consumption and fuel bills, improve occupant comfort and health, increase resilience to climate-related risks, and contribute to local carbon reduction targets. Retrofitting also presents opportunities to support green skills development, local supply chains, and promote sustainable economic growth.

9.191 The policy aligns with the Climate Change Act 2008, the UK Net Zero Strategy, the National Adaptation Programme, Planning Practice Guidance on climate change and energy efficiency, and wider local climate emergency commitments. Collectively, these frameworks establish a clear requirement to improve the performance and resilience of existing buildings alongside the delivery of sustainable new development.

Importance of Retrofitting Existing Buildings

9.192 National planning policy promotes the effective use of land and materials, supports the reuse of existing resources, and requires planning decisions to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment. In this context, the retrofit of existing buildings plays an important role in reducing operational energy demand, limiting embodied carbon emissions, and extending the useful life of the existing building stock.

9.193 Existing buildings account for a significant proportion of carbon emissions arising from heating, cooling and general energy consumption. As such of the current building stock is expected to remain in use for many decades, retrofit and refurbishment measures are essential to reducing emissions, addressing fuel poverty, and improving resilience to climate change impacts.

9.194 DM11 strongly encourages the retrofit, adaptation, and re-use of existing buildings before demolition and redevelopment are considered. Retaining and improving existing structures can significantly reduce embodied carbon emissions associated with demolition, material disposal, and new construction. It also supports circular economy principles by increasing resource efficiency, making better use of existing resources, and reducing construction waste. In addition, the reuse of buildings can help preserve local character, support heritage conservation, strengthen community identity, and reduce whilst reducing pressure on natural resources and landfill capacity.

Improving Energy Efficiency and Climate Resilience

9.195 Policy DM11 promotes a fabric-first approach to retrofit wherever practicable, prioritising measures that reduce energy demand and improve thermal performance before the

introduction of energy generation technologies. Such measures may include improved insulation, draught-proofing, upgraded windows and doors, enhanced ventilation systems, solar shading, thermal efficiency improvements, and passive design measures.

9.196 DM11 also recognises the growing importance of climate resilience and adaptation. Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of heatwaves, intense rainfall events, and flooding. As a result, existing buildings must be adapted to improve resilience to overheating, moisture ingress, water scarcity, and other changing climatic conditions.

9.197 Development proposals involving existing buildings are therefore encouraged to incorporate appropriate adaptation measures, including sustainable drainage systems, passive cooling strategies, enhanced ventilation, solar shading, rainwater management, and urban greening measures, where suitable. These interventions can help improve occupant comfort, health outcomes, and the long-term durability of buildings.

9.198 The policy further supports the integration of low carbon and renewable energy technologies within retrofit schemes where they can be sensitively accommodated. Technologies such as heat pumps, solar photovoltaic panels, battery storage systems, and solar thermal installations can make a significant contribution to reducing operational carbon emissions and improving overall energy resilience.

Biodiversity and Environmental Considerations

9.199 Retrofit works can have implications for biodiversity, particularly where buildings provide habitat for protected or priority species such as bats and nesting birds. DM11 therefore requires development proposals to avoid unnecessary harm to biodiversity and to incorporate appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures where impacts are identified.

9.200 Where opportunities arise, retrofit schemes are encouraged to deliver biodiversity gains alongside energy efficiency improvements. This may include the incorporation of green roofs and green walls, installation of bird and bat boxes, pollinator-friendly planting, and habitat-sensitive landscaping as part of wider package of environmental enhancements.

Heritage and Traditional Buildings

9.201 West Oxfordshire contains a significant number of historic and traditional buildings, including listed buildings, conservation areas and non-designated heritage assets. Older and traditionally constructed buildings often require sensitive retrofit approaches that respect their historic fabric, appearance, and significance.

9.202 DM11 promotes a positive and supportive approach to retrofitting heritage assets in a way that conserves their significance while improving environmental performance. This approach reflects the objectives of the NPPF in seeking to conserve and enhance the historic environment while supporting sustainable development.

9.203 Retrofitting heritage and traditional buildings requires careful consideration of materials, construction methods, and moisture performance. Inappropriate interventions can

inadvertently damage historic fabric, compromise breathability, or harm architectural character. Proposals should therefore be informed by a proportionate understanding of the building's significance, construction, and condition.

9.204 Appropriate measures such as secondary glazing, draught-proofing, natural or breathable insulation materials, and discreet renewable energy technologies can often improve energy performance while maintaining heritage significance. The Council will support well-designed and sensitive retrofit solutions that achieve an appropriate balance between heritage conservation and climate objectives.

9.205 Where proposals would result in harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this must be clearly justified and weighed against the public benefits of the proposal in accordance with national heritage policy.

Information Requirements

9.206 Applicants are required to provide proportionate information demonstrating how retrofit and adaptation opportunities have been considered as part of development proposals involving existing buildings. This will enable the Council to understand how energy efficiency, carbon reduction, and climate resilience measures have been integrated into the scheme, and whether opportunities for reuse and adaptation have been appropriately explored.

9.207 The level of information required will vary according to the scale, complexity, and sensitivity of the proposal. For larger or more complex schemes, applicants will be expected to submit supporting information, such as energy assessments, Life Cycle Assessments, whole-life carbon considerations, heritage impact assessments, and details of climate adaptation measures where relevant.

Policy DM11 – Retrofitting for Energy Efficiency, Carbon Reduction and Climate Resilience

The Council will support and encourage the retrofit of existing buildings to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and enhance resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The reuse, retention, and adaptation of existing buildings and materials will be strongly encouraged over redevelopment where feasible, particularly where this results in reduced embodied carbon and waste generation.

1. General Approach

a) Development proposals involving existing buildings must, where practicable:

i. Improve energy efficiency and reduce operational carbon emissions;
ii. Incorporate measures to address climate risks, including overheating, flood risk, and ventilation performance;
iii. Take full advantage of opportunities to include low carbon and renewable energy technologies; and

iv. Avoid harm to biodiversity and provide appropriate mitigation and enhancement.

2. Heritage and Traditional Buildings

A sensitive and supportive approach will be taken to retrofitting of heritage assets.

a) Proposals must:

i. Seek to improve energy performance while conserving the significance of heritage assets;
ii. Use appropriate, compatible materials and design approaches; and
iii. Be informed by a proportionate understanding of the building's significance, fabric, and condition.

b) Where harm to heritage significance arises it must be clearly justified and demonstrably outweighed by public benefits, in accordance with national policy.

Information Requirements

Applications must be supported by proportionate information, demonstrating how opportunities for retrofit have been identified, having regard to the scale, nature, and complexity of the proposal.

Policy DM12 - Waste and the Circular Economy

9.208 Policy DM12 seeks to minimise waste generation, promote the efficient use of resources and support the transition towards a more circular economy. Construction, demolition and excavation waste accounts for a significant proportion of total waste generated in the UK. At the same time, the extraction, manufacture and transport of construction materials contribute substantially to carbon emissions and resource depletion. Applying circular economy principles through the planning and design process can play an important role in reducing environmental impacts and supporting net zero carbon objectives.

9.209 National policy supports the transition to a resource-efficient economy and seeks to ensure that developments make effective use of land and resources. It also requires planning decisions to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural environment by minimising waste and pollution and supporting sustainable patterns of development.

9.210 DM12 reflects the objectives of national policy, as well as the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy for England, the Waste Management Plan for England and wider principles of the circular economy, which promote keeping resources in productive use for as long as possible through reuse, repair, remanufacturing and recycling.

Waste Hierarchy and Circular Economy Principles

9.211 Policy DM12 follows the established waste hierarchy, which prioritises preventing waste in the first instance, followed by reuse, recycling and recovery, with disposal as the least preferred option. Applying the waste hierarchy at the earliest stages of design is critical to reduce overall material consumption, lower embodied carbon emissions and minimise pressure on landfill and waste infrastructure.

9.212 DM12 encourages development proposals that incorporate circular economy principles by promoting durability, adaptability and future reuse of buildings and materials. Buildings designed with flexibility and longevity in mind are more capable of adapting to changing uses and occupier needs over time, reducing the likelihood of premature demolition and redevelopment. The reuse and retrofit of existing buildings will often represent the most sustainable approach where feasible, helping to conserve embodied carbon and reduce demolition waste. The use of recycled, reclaimed and sustainably sourced materials is also encouraged in order to reduce reliance on virgin materials and support more sustainable supply chains.

9.213 Circular economy approaches can also deliver wider economic benefits by encouraging innovation, reducing material costs and creating opportunities for green industries and local supply networks.

Waste Minimisation in Construction

9.214 The construction phase of development can generate substantial quantities of material waste through excavation, packaging, off-cuts and inefficient construction practices. Policy DM12 seeks to minimise construction waste through efficient design, material optimisation and modern methods of construction.

9.215 Applicants are encouraged to use modular, off-site manufactured and prefabricated elements where appropriate, as these approaches can significantly reduce waste generation, improve construction efficiency and reduce transportation impacts. Efficient material specification and design detailing can also reduce unnecessary waste and improve long-term building performance.

9.216 The reuse and recycling of materials on-site is encouraged wherever feasible, including the recovery and reuse of demolition materials, soils and aggregates. Such measures can help reduce transportation emissions and landfill disposal whilst supporting circular economy objectives.

9.217 Major developments are required to submit a Construction Waste Management Plan (CWMP) setting out how waste arising during demolition and construction will be minimised and managed. This will ensure that waste reduction measures are integrated throughout the development process and that opportunities for material reuse and recycling are properly considered.

Good Soil Management

9.218 Soils are not a waste product, but a vital, valuable, diverse and non-renewable resource. Soils should be protected and left intact as much as possible. Where soil disturbance cannot be avoided, development proposals should be expected to ensure that the soil's multifunctional benefits are retained and improved as much as possible. Where disturbed soils are reinstated, their functionality after re-instatement should be a key tool to assess success. Through the full development lifecycle, soils should be mapped, passported, budgeted and managed. This can be achieved by requiring a Soils Management Plan and Strategy, which comprises three main elements – a baseline report, construction management plan and monitoring strategy. This would ensure that soils are considered early in the design of the development site and it would allow the relative value of soil and its impacts to be assessed.

9.219 The Soil Quality Baseline Report must provide a clear baseline assessment of the existing soil quality of the site, which will help to inform the opportunities that may exist for future management and movement of soil within the site. Where development is a proposed greenfield site, an Agricultural Land Classification survey (including desktop and fieldwork) and report must be included.

9.220 Following on from this, the Construction Phase Soil Management Plan will identify opportunities that can be taken to protect and enhance soil quality, including the following issues:

a. How the soil protection hierarchy has been applied to the design and layout of the development and reduced the need to move and compact soils in the construction phase;
b. Identification of Soil Protection Zones where soils will remain in-situ, protected, uncontaminated and uncompacted throughout the construction phases;

c. Soil protection for all open spaces in the site plan, including consideration of protecting soil carbon content, drainage role, opportunities for and ensuring success of future planting, protecting biodiversity and natural features;
d. Identification of suitable on-site soil storage areas and a stockpiling plan for where soils are being moved and stored on-site.
e. Set out how soil stripping and movement within the site have been minimised to reduce disturbance to existing soil structures and natural features such as trees, hedgerows and waterbodies.
f. A plan for restoration and enhancement where damage to soils will occur.

9.221 Finally, there should be a process of monitoring and review to ensure that the actions that are set out in the management plan are implemented successfully. A Post-Construction Soil Management and Monitoring Plan will need to set out a clear, realistic and measurable mechanism for how the process will be managed, including all expected direct and indirect, as well as permanent and temporary, impacts. This should reflect, at a minimum, the guidance outlined in the Defra Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites or the most up to date guidance at the time of submission.

Operational Waste Management

9.222 Well-designed waste and recycling infrastructure is essential to supporting sustainable waste management once development is occupied. Poorly designed storage arrangements can discourage recycling, create visual and amenity impacts and lead to operational difficulties for collection services.

9.223 Policy DM12 requires major developments to provide an Operational Waste Management Plan (OWMP) demonstrating how waste storage, segregation and collection will be managed effectively. Proposals should ensure that waste and recycling facilities are convenient, accessible and capable of supporting increased levels of recycling and waste reduction.

9.224 DM12 also supports measures that encourage behavioural change and sustainable waste practices, including composting facilities, food waste segregation and the provision of clearly identified recycling infrastructure. Waste storage areas should be well integrated into the design and layout of development so that they are functional, safe and visually attractive whilst remaining accessible for all users, including occupants with mobility impairments and waste collection operators.

Managing Waste in New Development

9.225 All development proposals are expected to incorporate appropriate waste storage and collection infrastructure proportionate to the scale and nature of the development. Adequate space should be provided for the separation of recyclable and non-recyclable materials in order to support local authority collection arrangements and maximise recycling opportunities.

9.226 Waste and recycling facilities should be designed as integral components of development rather than as incidental or poorly located afterthoughts. Good design can help reduce visual clutter, improve usability and support positive environmental behaviours.

9.227 For larger strategic residential developments, particularly higher-density schemes, innovative waste management solutions are encouraged where feasible and viable. This may include underground waste storage systems, communal recycling hubs, district collection facilities or smart waste technologies. Such approaches can help improve townscape quality, reduce collection impacts and increase operational efficiency where appropriately designed and managed.

9.228 The suitability of innovative systems will need to take account of local circumstances, including development density, collection arrangements, management responsibilities and the character of the surrounding area.

Climate Change and Resource Efficiency

9.229 Reducing waste and improving resource efficiency are closely linked to climate change mitigation. The extraction, transport and manufacture of materials are significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions, whilst landfill disposal contributes to methane emissions and environmental degradation.

9.230 By encouraging waste prevention, material efficiency and reuse, Policy DM12 contributes towards wider carbon reduction and environmental objectives, including those set out within the Council's climate commitments and sustainability strategies.

9.231 Circular economy principles can also support resilience by reducing dependence on scarce resources and promoting more sustainable patterns of consumption and development.

Policy DM12 -Waste and the Circular Economy

1. Waste Hierarchy and Circular Economy

a. All development proposals must follow the principles of the 'waste hierarchy':

i. Prevent waste through efficient design.
ii. Reuse materials and prioritise retention and adaptation of existing buildings.
iii. Recycle materials and provide accessible recycling facilities.
iv. Recover value from residual waste where appropriate.
v. Dispose only as a last resort.

b. Development proposals that support a circular economy will be strongly encouraged including where feasible, the use of recycled and sustainably sourced materials in construction and designs that prioritise durability, adaptability, and future reuse.

2. Waste Minimisation in Construction

a. Development proposals should minimise waste through efficient design and construction by:

    i. Using materials efficiently, including modular or prefabricated elements where appropriate.
    ii. Reducing packaging and construction waste.
    iii. Reusing and recycling materials on-site where feasible.

b. Major developments must submit a Construction Waste Management Plan (CWMP) outlining how waste will be reduced, reused, and recycled during construction.

3. Good Soil Management

a. All developments are required to minimise adverse impacts on soil resources.
b. New development should recognise and support the positive role that good soil management plays in creating thriving communities, delivering benefits for carbon sequestration and climate resilience, food security, sustainable urban drainage, BNG habitat creation, biodiversity enhancement, and nature recovery.
c. In all cases, there must be a presumption against the import or export of soils from the development site. Where this is demonstrated to be unavoidable, any imported soils are expected to be responsibly sourced.
d. All major development proposals should demonstrate careful consideration of sustainable soil management through the submission of a Soil Management Plan and Strategy comprised of three parts:

    i. Soil Quality Baseline Report
    ii. Constructure Phase Soil Management Plan; and
    iii. Post-Construction Soil Management and Monitoring Strategy which sets out a clear, realistic, and measurable mechanism to ensure that soil management is appropriately maintained undertaken post-construction.

4. Operational Waste Management

a. Major developments must include an Operational Waste Management Plan (OWMP) demonstrating:

    i. Adequate space for the storage, segregation, and collection of waste and recycling.
    ii. Clear and convenient access for occupants and collection services.
    iii. Measures to encourage waste reduction, reuse, and recycling (including composting where feasible).

5. Managing Waste in New Developments

a. All developments should provide appropriate waste storage and collection infrastructure, including:

    i. Well-designed, accessible, and clearly labelled waste and recycling areas.
    ii. Space for segregation of recyclable and non-recyclable waste.

b. For larger strategic residential developments (300+ dwellings) innovative or advanced waste systems (such as underground storage) are encouraged where feasible and

viable, taking account of local context, development densities, and collection arrangements.

Policy DM13 - Air Quality and Pollution

9.232 Policy DM13 seeks to ensure that new development does not give rise to unacceptable impacts on air quality, human health or environmentally sensitive habitats by requiring development proposals to appropriately assess, avoid, minimise and mitigate emissions arising from both construction and operational phases of development, with particular regard to identified air quality sensitive areas.

9.233 Poor air quality is a significant threat to human health, environmental quality and economic productivity. Long-term exposure to air pollutants is associated with respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, reduced life expectancy and increased pressure on health services. National policy and public health evidence identify air pollution as one of the most significant environmental risks to health, particularly affecting vulnerable groups such as children, older people and individuals with existing health conditions.

9.234 Reducing pollution and improving air quality is a key objective of national policy and strategies and is among the top environmental concerns for residents.

Air Quality in West Oxfordshire

9.235 Historically, the principal air pollutant of concern within West Oxfordshire has been nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), primarily associated with road traffic emissions, congestion and vehicle idling. Air quality pressures are most acute within locations where traffic flows are concentrated within constrained urban environments.

9.236 West Oxfordshire currently contains designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) where national air quality objectives have been exceeded or are at risk of being exceeded. These include:

- Witney AQMA (Bridge Street, including the junctions with New Yatt Road, Newland, Mill Street and High Street); and
- Chipping Norton AQMA (Horse Fair, High Street, Market Place, A44 and part of West Street).

9.237 These areas are particularly sensitive to additional traffic and emissions arising from development. DM13 therefore places strong emphasis on ensuring that development within or affecting these locations does not worsen existing air quality conditions and contributes positively towards improvement measures where appropriate.

9.238 Reducing pollution and improving air quality is also a key objective of national environmental policy and aligns with wider local objectives relating to public health, climate change, active travel and sustainable transport.

Protecting Sensitive Environments

9.239 In addition to impacts on human health, air pollution can adversely affect biodiversity and ecologically sensitive habitats. West Oxfordshire includes areas which are vulnerable to nitrogen deposition and airborne pollutants, most notably the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

9.240 The Oxford Meadows SAC is internationally designated for its species-rich lowland hay meadows and associated habitats, which are sensitive to changes in air quality and nitrogen deposition. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, the Council has a legal duty to ensure that development proposals do not give rise to adverse effects on the integrity of designated European sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

9.241 All development proposals within or affecting the SAC must therefore demonstrate, through appropriate assessment where necessary, that air pollution impacts can be satisfactorily avoided or mitigated. Particular attention will be given to cumulative traffic growth and associated emissions on roads affecting the SAC.

Air Quality Impact Assessments

9.242 Policy DM13 requires Air Quality Impact Assessments (AQIAs) for major development proposals and other forms of development likely to generate significant emissions or traffic movements. AQIAs should assess likely impacts during both construction and operation and should consider cumulative effects with committed and planned development. Assessments should identify impacts on both human and ecological receptors and include dispersion modelling where appropriate. Development proposals located within or near AQMAs and the Oxford Meadows SAC will require particularly careful assessment due to the heightened sensitivity of these locations.

9.243 DM13 also recognises that cumulative impacts can arise where multiple developments individually generate relatively modest increases in emissions but collectively result in significant air quality effects. Consideration of cumulative development impacts is therefore essential to ensuring that air quality objectives and habitat protections are maintained over the plan period.

Mitigation Measures

9.244 Where adverse air quality impacts are identified, applicants will be expected to demonstrate how impacts have been avoided, minimised or mitigated through appropriate and proportionate measures.

9.245 Mitigation may include the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure, walking and cycling links, travel planning measures, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and public transport improvements aimed at reducing reliance on private car travel.

9.246 Policy DM13 also encourages low-emission and energy-efficient building design, including fossil fuel free heating systems and renewable energy technologies, in order to minimise operational emissions associated with development.

9.247 Green infrastructure and landscaping can also make a positive contribution to air quality improvement by supporting pollutant absorption, urban cooling and biodiversity enhancement. Trees, hedgerows and green.

Policy DM13 - Air Quality and Pollution

1. Development proposals that individually or cumulatively lead to a material deterioration in air quality, particularly in or near the following air quality sensitive areas, will be required to demonstrate how air quality impacts will be mitigated

    a. The Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)
    b. The Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

2. An Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA) will be required for:

    a. All major development proposals
    b. Any development likely to result in a significant increase in vehicle traffic or emissions (e.g. from heating, industrial uses).
    c. Any development located within or near an AQMA or the Oxford Meadows SAC.
    d. Proposals that form part of a larger cumulative development likely to impact local or strategic air quality levels.

3. AQIAs must assess the potential impacts on local air quality during both construction and operation, taking into account cumulative effects with other planned or existing developments. They should model pollutant levels where appropriate and evaluate impacts on human health and ecological receptors.

    a. Where an AQIA identifies likely significant adverse impacts on air quality, appropriate and proportionate mitigation must be secured through the planning process. Measures may include, but are not limited to:

        i. Sustainable transport infrastructure (e.g. walking, cycling, EV charging).
        ii. Reduced car dependency and traffic management schemes.
        iii. Low-emission building design, heating systems and energy sources.
        iv. Landscaping and green infrastructure to support pollutant absorption.
        v. Off-site mitigation contributions, where on-site measures are insufficient.

4. All development proposals in or within 500m the Oxford Meadows SAC must demonstrate compliance with Habitat Regulations and ensure there is no adverse effect on the integrity of the protected site from air pollution, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Construction Environmental Management Plans

5. All major development must incorporate Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMP) that include:

    a. Dust suppression and control measures.
    b. Monitoring of particulate matter.
    c. Limiting construction vehicle emissions and on-site machinery impacts.
    d. Protocols for responding to air quality breaches during works.

6. Particular care must be taken in air quality sensitive areas (the AQMAs and within 500m of the Oxford Meadows SAC), where enhanced construction management and controls may be required.

Monitoring and Management

7. In air quality sensitive areas (the AQMAs and within 500m of the Oxford Meadows SAC), development proposals may be required to contribute to:
    a. Air quality monitoring during and post-construction.
    b. The preparation of Air Quality Management Plans (AQMPs).
    c. Ongoing compliance reviews and adaptive mitigation where thresholds are at risk of being exceeded.

Policy DM14 - Town Centres

9.248 West Oxfordshire's town centres are a focus for economic activity, community life and access to services. The Council will promote the long-term vitality, viability and resilience of all town centres through a network and hierarchy of centres comprising:

- Principal Town Centre: Witney
- Primary Town Centres: Carterton and Chipping Norton
- Tourism Focused Town Centres: Burford and Woodstock

9.249 Town centres will continue to be the preferred location for main town centre uses and other complementary activities, including retail, leisure, food and drink, cultural, community, employment and residential uses that support their role as vibrant, attractive and inclusive places. Development proposals should respond positively to changing patterns of retailing, leisure activity and service provision, whilst reinforcing the unique identity, heritage and economic function of each centre.

9.250 Policy DM14 supports a flexible and positive approach to town centre development, recognising that successful centres rely on a diverse mix of uses and an attractive, accessible public realm that encourages people to visit, spend time and participate in community life. Maintaining active ground floor frontages, particularly within Primary Shopping Areas and other important frontages, is critical to sustaining footfall, natural surveillance and the overall vitality of centres.

9.251 Excessive concentrations of a single use, including residential uses at ground floor level, can reduce activity, weaken the retail and service function of centres and diminish their attractiveness. Policy DM14 seeks to ensure an appropriate balance of uses is maintained.

Permitted Development and Article 4 Directions

9.252 Residential development within town centres can play an important role in supporting vitality and increasing activity throughout the day and evening. However, unmanaged losses of active commercial frontage to residential accommodation, particularly through permitted development rights, can undermine the character and function of centres over time. DM14 therefore seeks to manage changes of use where planning permission is required and provides a basis for considering the introduction of Article 4 Directions where there is clear evidence that permitted development is resulting in harmful impacts on town centre vitality, viability or active frontages.

Loss of Town Centre Uses

9.253 Policy DM14 also seeks to resist the unnecessary loss of town centre uses unless it is clearly demonstrated that such uses are no longer viable and that alternative town centre uses have been properly explored. Marketing and viability evidence covering a minimum period should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal and should demonstrate that reasonable efforts have been made to retain the premises in an active town centre use. Where changes are proposed, replacement uses should support the continuing economic and social function of the centre rather than detract from it.

Town Centre First Approach

9.254 In accordance with national policy, a town centre first approach will be applied to main town centre uses. Proposals located outside defined town centres will be required to demonstrate compliance with the sequential test and, where necessary, provide an impact assessment. The locally set threshold for impact assessment reflects the scale and role of West Oxfordshire's town centres, many of which are relatively small and sensitive to incremental change. Even comparatively modest out-of-centre retail and leisure proposals may, either individually or cumulatively, divert trade and footfall away from established centres and reduce planned investment.

Markets and Temporary Uses

9.255 Markets, temporary events and other forms of town centre activity contribute significantly to the vibrancy, local distinctiveness and attractiveness of West Oxfordshire's centres, particularly in the district's historic and tourism-focused settlements. The policy therefore supports proposals that sustain and enhance market activity while ensuring impacts on amenity, movement and environmental quality are appropriately managed. Existing outdoor markets and associated infrastructure are recognised as important economic and cultural assets which should be protected from harmful development impacts.

Accessibility

9.256 Accessibility and movement are important components of successful town centres. Development should support safe and convenient access by walking, cycling and public transport, whilst ensuring that any additional parking demand is appropriately managed. Measures such as improved sustainable transport facilities, travel planning, proportionate parking provision and financial contributions may be required where development would otherwise exacerbate parking pressures or traffic congestion.

Policy DM14 – Town Centres

1. New Town Centre Development

a. Development within defined town centres will be supported where it contributes positively to the function, vitality and diversity of the town centre. Proposals should:

i. Support a mix of retail, leisure, cultural, workspace, community and residential uses;
ii. Maintain active ground floor frontages, particularly within defined Primary Shopping Areas and key town centre frontages.
iii. Development that would result in inactive or predominantly residential ground floor frontages will not be supported where planning permission is required, unless it can be demonstrated that such development would not harm the vitality, viability or function of the town centre.
iv. Avoid harmful concentrations of a single use or non-town centre uses, including residential, that would undermine footfall, character, amenity, or the ability of the town centre to operate as a focus for economic and community activity
v. contribute positively to the quality, unique character and accessibility of the public realm, prioritising pedestrian and cyclist safety and supporting sustainable travel.

2. Loss of Town Centre Uses

a. Proposals involving the change of use or loss of town centre uses, where planning permission is required, will be resisted where they would undermine the vitality, viability or functional diversity of the town centre.

b. Such proposals will only be supported where it is robustly demonstrated, through an appropriate and proportionate marketing and viability exercise, that:

i. continued or alternative town centre uses are not viable; and

ii. the proposed use would demonstrably support or enhance the vitality, viability or functionality of the town centre.

c. Where evidence demonstrates that permitted development rights are resulting in the loss of key town centre uses, inactive frontages, or harm to vitality and viability, the Council will consider the use of Article 4 Directions to remove specific permitted development rights in defined locations, particularly within Primary Shopping Areas and key frontages.

3. Sequential and Impact Assessments

a. The sequential and impact tests will be applied to proposals for main town centre uses located outside defined town centres.

b. Impact assessments may be required for out-of-centre retail and leisure proposals where the scale, nature or location of development could adversely affect town centre vitality, viability or investment. As a guide, proposals exceeding 280 m^2 are likely to be required to submit an impact assessment, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there would be no significant adverse impact.

4. Markets and Town Centre Activity

a. Permanent and temporary outdoor markets and other town centre activities will be supported where they enhance local distinctiveness and do not harm existing shopping facilities, amenity, the environment or traffic flows

b. Development proposals that would have a detrimental impact on existing outdoor markets will not be supported unless the public benefits of the proposal clearly and demonstrably outweigh the harm. Where impacts are unavoidable, proposals must demonstrate appropriate mitigation measures to minimise disruption and ensure the continuity of market activity.

Where development is likely to generate additional car parking demand beyond existing capacity, this should be addressed through demand management measures, on-site provision or proportionate contributions, as appropriate.

Policy DM15 - Community Facilities and Services

9.257 Policy DM15 seeks to maintain and enhance a strong network of accessible community facilities and services across West Oxfordshire, supporting the creation of healthy, sustainable and socially connected communities throughout the plan period.

9.258 Community facilities and services are essential to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of West Oxfordshire's communities. They provide opportunities for social interaction, access to services, recreation, education, cultural activity and community support, helping to create healthy, inclusive and resilient places. Facilities such as public houses, schools, healthcare facilities, village halls, libraries, post offices, local shops, places of worship, sports facilities and community meeting spaces often play an important role in maintaining the identity and cohesion of both rural and urban communities

9.259 The Council recognises that community facilities can be particularly important in rural areas and smaller settlements where opportunities to access services may be more limited and where the loss of a single facility can have a disproportionate impact on community life, social inclusion and accessibility. The retention and enhancement of valued local facilities supports sustainable communities by reducing the need to travel and enabling residents to meet day-to-day needs locally.

Protection of Existing Social and Community Uses

9.260 Policy DM15 seeks to safeguard existing community facilities and services from unnecessary loss or redevelopment. Proposals involving the loss or change of use of such facilities will be expected to demonstrate robustly that the existing use is no longer viable, needed or capable of continued community use. Evidence submitted should be proportionate to the nature and scale of the facility and may include details of operational history, usage levels, financial performance, condition surveys and local engagement.

9.261 The Council will expect applicants to demonstrate that all reasonable efforts have been made to retain, improve or repurpose a facility for alternative community use before other forms of development are considered. A lack of demand for a more profitable alternative use will not, on its own, be sufficient justification for the loss of a community facility. Community value and social benefit will be given significant weight in decision-making, recognising that some facilities may continue to perform an important social function even where commercial returns are limited.

Marketing Requirements

9.262 To demonstrate non-viability, applicants will normally be required to undertake an active and appropriate marketing exercise, typically for a minimum period of 12 months, at a realistic market value having regard to the nature, condition and lawful use of the facility. Marketing evidence should demonstrate that genuine opportunities have been provided for purchase, lease or community operation of the facility. Financial and viability information may also be required where relevant to support the case presented.

Assets of Community Value

9.263 Particular regard will be had to facilities identified as Assets of Community Value (ACVs). Such designations indicate that a facility is considered by the local community to have significant social value. In these cases, substantial weight will be given to the retention of the facility, and applicants will be expected to demonstrate that community groups and local stakeholders have been fully engaged and given a realistic opportunity to acquire, manage or operate the facility as part of the marketing process.

9.264 Where the loss of a facility is exceptionally justified, the Council will seek appropriate mitigation measures or replacement provision where feasible. Replacement facilities should be of equivalent or improved quality, accessible to the community they serve by sustainable means of transport, and delivered wherever practicable in advance of, or alongside, the redevelopment of the existing site in order to minimise disruption to community access and continuity of service provision.

Provision of New Social and Community Facilities

9.265 DM15 also supports the provision of new and enhanced community facilities to meet the needs of existing and future residents. Population growth, demographic change and evolving patterns of service delivery create a continuing need for flexible and adaptable community infrastructure. Proposals that address identified deficiencies in provision, improve accessibility or support wider objectives relating to health, wellbeing, social inclusion and community resilience will be strongly supported.

9.266 The Council particularly encourages the provision of multi-functional community assets and hubs that combine a range of compatible uses and services within shared premises. These may include combinations of meeting spaces, sports and recreation facilities, healthcare services, workspace, cultural venues, childcare, libraries, cafés or local services. Multi-functional facilities can improve accessibility, increase community participation, strengthen financial resilience and maximise the efficient use of buildings and land.

9.267 New facilities should be designed to be inclusive, adaptable and environmentally sustainable, capable of meeting a variety of community needs over the long term. Proposals should be appropriately located within or adjoining existing settlements and accessible by walking, cycling and public transport wherever possible. High quality design, accessibility and integration with surrounding development will be important considerations.

9.268 Large-scale and strategic development proposals are expected to contribute appropriately to community infrastructure provision. New residential and mixed-use developments can place additional pressure on existing facilities and services and should therefore provide or contribute towards the infrastructure necessary to support sustainable communities. Community Infrastructure Statements will help demonstrate how proposals respond to identified needs, what facilities will be delivered, and how they will be managed and maintained over time.

Policy DM15 - Community Facilities and Services

1. Protection of Existing Community Facilities and Services

a. The Council will safeguard existing community facilities and services, including but not limited to public houses, schools, healthcare facilities, village halls, libraries, post offices, places of worship, recreational spaces, and local shops from development that would result in their unjustified loss or significant harm.

b. Development proposals involving the loss, change of use, or redevelopment of a community facility will only be supported where it can be robustly demonstrated that:

i. The facility is no longer viable, necessary or in active use / no demand for, and that all reasonable efforts have been made to retain or repurpose it for community use, demonstrated through proportionate evidence.

ii. The proposal includes mitigation measures or makes provision for an equivalent or improved replacement facility that is accessible to the same community by sustainable means and where feasible, replacement provision should be delivered in advance of, or in parallel with, the loss.

c. Proposals for the change of use of community services and facilities will be considered on a sequential basis, prioritising alternative community and commercial uses, prior to change to residential use.

2. Provision of New Community Facilities and Services

a. The Council strongly supports the delivery of new or enhanced community facilities where they:

i. Address identified gaps in provision, supported by community consultation or strategic assessments;
ii. Are designed to be accessible, inclusive, flexible, and environmentally sustainable;
iii. Are well located, within or adjacent to existing settlements and accessible by walking, cycling, and public transport;
iv. Contribute to the creation of vibrant, healthy, and resilient communities, promoting opportunities for social interaction and wellbeing.
v. Provide multi-functional community spaces that combine a variety of uses (e.g., meeting, sports, cultural activities) will be particularly supported to maximise social value and long-term sustainability.

b. Large and strategic-scale developments, particularly residential or mixed-use schemes, should include appropriate provision for community infrastructure. Where appropriate, proposals should be supported by a Community Infrastructure Statement outlining:

i. What facilities will be delivered, when, and by whom;
ii. How facilities will be managed and maintained over time;
iii. How proposals respond to the needs of both existing and future populations.

3. Marketing Guidelines

a. Current lack of demand or a more profitable alternative use will not, on its own, be sufficient to demonstrate non-viability.

b. Applicants must demonstrate, through a period of active marketing of an appropriate length (typically 12 months) and price having regard to the nature of the facility, together with financial or viability evidence where relevant, that the existing use is not viable in the longer term.

c. Where a facility, particularly a public house, has been designated or nominated as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), significant weight will be given to its retention. In such cases, applicants must demonstrate that the community has been given adequate and realistic opportunity to bid for or take on operation of the facility, and that local groups have been fully engaged as part of the marketing process.

Policy DM16 - Active and Healthy Travel

9.269 Policy DM16 seeks to promote a comprehensive, connected and high-quality active travel network across West Oxfordshire, supporting healthier communities, reducing car dependency and creating more sustainable and attractive places over the plan period.

9.270 Active and healthy travel plays an important role in supporting sustainable patterns of movement, improving public health and wellbeing, reducing carbon emissions and enhancing the quality and attractiveness of places. Walking, cycling and other forms of active travel can help reduce reliance on private cars, support healthier lifestyles, improve air quality and contribute to more inclusive and resilient communities. Well-designed active travel networks also support local economic activity by improving access to town centres, schools, employment areas, community facilities and public transport.

Protection of Existing Active Travel Infrastructure

9.271 West Oxfordshire benefits from an extensive network of public rights of way, footpaths, bridleways, cycle routes and informal green corridors which provide important recreational, health, ecological and transport functions. These routes are valued community assets and contribute significantly to the character and accessibility of both urban and rural areas. Development can, however, place pressure on existing routes through severance, increased traffic, poor layout design or loss of amenity. DM16 seeks to safeguard existing active travel networks from harmful impacts and ensure that connectivity, accessibility and attractiveness are maintained and, wherever possible, enhanced.

9.272 Where development affects public rights of way or other active travel routes, proposals will be expected to demonstrate how routes will remain safe, convenient and attractive for users. Diversions will only be supported where necessary and where they maintain or improve the functionality, character and accessibility of the route. The Council will seek mitigation measures and enhancements where impacts cannot be entirely avoided, including improved surfacing, signage, accessibility measures, crossings or links to wider networks.

Provision of New and Improvements to Existing Active Travel Infrastructure

9.273 DM16 also aims to secure the delivery of new and improved active travel infrastructure as an integral component of development proposals. Walking and cycling should be prioritised from the earliest stages of site planning and design rather than treated as secondary considerations. Development layouts should provide direct, legible and convenient routes that connect effectively to existing networks and key destinations such as schools, shops, healthcare facilities, employment areas, open spaces and public transport hubs.

9.274 Particular emphasis is placed on achieving high quality design standards in accordance with national guidance. Infrastructure should provide a safe and comfortable environment for all users, including children, older people and disabled people. This may include the provision of segregated walking and cycling routes, accessible gradients, dropped kerbs, wayfinding, safe crossing points, appropriate lighting and traffic calming measures. Development should also

incorporate secure and convenient cycle parking, storage and supporting infrastructure proportionate to the scale and type of development.

9.275 The integration of active travel infrastructure with green infrastructure is strongly encouraged. Multi-functional green corridors can provide opportunities for movement, recreation, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable drainage and climate adaptation simultaneously. Tree planting, landscaping, natural surveillance and high-quality public realm improvements can significantly improve the safety, comfort and attractiveness of routes, encouraging greater levels of walking and cycling while contributing positively to local character and environmental quality.

9.276 New development should support the creation of places where active and healthy travel becomes the natural and attractive choice for short everyday journeys. Well-connected and accessible environments can help reduce inequalities in access to services, improve independence and mobility, and support healthier lifestyles. The policy therefore aligns with wider objectives relating to climate change mitigation, healthy place-shaping and sustainable development.

Active Travel Plans

9.277 Major developments may be required to prepare Active Travel Plans to demonstrate how proposals contribute to wider connectivity and modal shift objectives. Such plans should set out the measures proposed to encourage walking and cycling, the infrastructure to be delivered, the timing of provision and how routes integrate with the surrounding network. Early delivery of active travel infrastructure will be important to ensure sustainable travel patterns are established from the outset of development rather than retrofitted at a later stage.

Policy DM16 – Active and Healthy Travel

1. Safeguarding Existing Active Travel Networks

a. Existing active travel routes, including public rights of way, footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths, will be protected from development that harms their connectivity, accessibility, setting or character.

b. Development proposals affecting these routes must demonstrate how their integrity and usability will be retained or enhanced, avoid severance where possible, and provide appropriate mitigation where impacts cannot be avoided, such as diversions or improvements to alternative routes.

2. New and Enhanced Active Travel Networks

a. Where relevant and practical, development should prioritise walking and cycling as integral components of layout and design. Proposals must:

i. Provide safe, direct and attractive active travel routes that connect with existing networks and key local destinations, including but not limited to schools, workplaces, shops, healthcare facilities and public transport hubs;

ii. Be designed in accordance with relevant national and local standards, including Local Transport Note 1/20 and adopted local guidance;

iii. be integrated with green infrastructure to create attractive, multi-functional corridors that enhance biodiversity, climate resilience and user experience.

iv. incorporate appropriate landscaping, planting and sustainable drainage, and deliver high quality public realm improvements that prioritise pedestrian and cyclist safety through measures such as designing in natural surveillance, traffic calming, pedestrian priority spaces, and safe crossing points.

v. Incorporate segregated walking and cycling paths, where appropriate to support all users, including children, older people and disabled people;

vi. Provide sufficient amenities and proportionate supporting infrastructure, such as cycle parking, storage and charging facilities.

3. Implementation and Compliance

Where necessary and proportionate, major developments should include an Active Travel Plan demonstrating how the proposal supports active and healthy travel and contributes to wider network connectivity.

Active travel enhancements should be phased to ensure early delivery alongside other development types.

Policy DM17 - Parking Standards for New Development (Car and Cycle Parking)

9.278 Policy DM17 seeks to ensure that parking provision supports high quality, accessible and sustainable development across West Oxfordshire, balancing the needs of different users whilst promoting a gradual shift towards healthier and lower-carbon travel choices over the plan period.

9.279 Parking provision is an important component of successful place-making and must be carefully balanced alongside wider objectives relating to sustainable transport, design quality, accessibility, health and climate change. Poorly designed or excessive parking can dominate the public realm, reduce opportunities for landscaping and active travel infrastructure, and detract from the character and appearance of development. Conversely, insufficient or poorly planned parking can lead to inappropriate on-street parking, congestion and highway safety issues.

9.280 DM17 is designed to ensure that parking provision is proportionate, well-designed and responsive to local circumstances, while supporting a transition towards more sustainable and low-carbon patterns of travel. Parking arrangements should form an integral part of the overall design and layout of development from the outset and should contribute positively to the quality, functionality and accessibility of places.

Parking Standards

9.281 The Council will have regard to the most up-to-date Oxfordshire County Council Parking Standards and associated guidance in considering proposals for car and cycle parking provision. These standards provide a consistent framework for assessing parking requirements across the county while allowing sufficient flexibility to respond to the characteristics of individual sites and locations. The amount and type of parking provision should take account of factors such as accessibility to public transport, the availability of walking and cycling routes, local car ownership patterns, the scale and nature of development, and wider sustainability objectives.

9.282 Inclusive and accessible design is an important consideration in all parking provision. Development should provide sufficient accessible parking spaces for Blue Badge holders and other users with mobility impairments, located conveniently and safely in relation to entrances and designed in accordance with relevant standards and best practice guidance. Parking areas should be safe, attractive and easy to use for all users, with appropriate lighting, landscaping and pedestrian connections.

9.283 Parking requirements will differ significantly depending on the location and nature of development. In highly accessible locations, particularly within town centres or areas well-served by sustainable transport and local services, lower levels of parking provision may be appropriate. Proposals for low-car or car-free development will be supported where it can be clearly demonstrated that future occupiers will have realistic and convenient access to alternative transport options and that unacceptable impacts on surrounding streets or highway safety will not arise. Such schemes may also be supported by measures including travel plans, car clubs, improved cycle infrastructure and enhanced pedestrian connectivity.

Parking for Rural Development

9.284 In rural areas, the Council recognises that opportunities for travel by modes other than the private car may be more limited. Parking provision in such locations should therefore respond appropriately to local circumstances while avoiding excessive provision that would undermine opportunities to encourage more sustainable travel choices. Development should ensure that parking demand can be accommodated in a safe and practical manner without creating unacceptable impacts on the surrounding road network or the character of rural settlements.

Parking for Non-Residential Development

9.285 For non-residential development, the Council supports Oxfordshire County Council's 'Decide and Provide' approach to parking provision. This approach seeks to align parking provision with desired sustainable transport outcomes and modal shift objectives rather than solely predicting future car demand. Applicants may therefore be required to provide proportionate transport evidence to demonstrate how proposed parking levels support sustainable travel patterns and reduce reliance on private car use. Any significant departures from adopted parking standards should be robustly justified.

Cycle Parking

9.286 Cycle parking is an essential element of sustainable transport infrastructure and plays an important role in encouraging active travel. Secure, convenient and attractive cycle parking provision should be incorporated into all new development and integrated effectively within the site layout. Provision should be proportionate to the scale and type of development and designed to accommodate a range of users and cycle types, including adapted cycles, family cycles, cargo bikes and electric bicycles where appropriate.

9.287 Cycle parking should be safe, accessible and convenient to use, with priority given to covered, secure and overlooked locations that provide easy access to building entrances and the wider cycle network. Supporting infrastructure such as charging facilities for electric cycles, lockers, changing facilities and showers may also be appropriate for certain forms of development, particularly employment, education and community uses.

Policy DM17 – Parking Standards for New Development (Car and Cycle Parking)

1. General Approach

Proposals for new parking provision must be well designed and located to protect the character and quality of place, ensure safety, and avoid harm to pedestrians and cyclists.

Provision should reflect inclusive design principles, including adequate accessible parking for Blue Badge holders, located as close as practicable to building entrances. Design should accord with relevant local guidance

Parking provision for new development should be informed by and align with the most up-to-date Oxfordshire County Council Parking Standards, taking account of site location, accessibility, availability of sustainable transport, and the ambition to promote active and low-carbon travel.

2. Car Parking Provision

a. Parking provision should be proportionate and responsive to the nature and location of development, having regard to:

   i. Site accessibility, including public transport, walking and cycling connections;
   ii. The type, scale and tenure of development;
   iii. Potential impacts on highway safety and surrounding streets.

b. Reduced levels of parking, including low-car or car-free development, will be supported where accessibility to sustainable transport and local services is demonstrably high.

c. In rural locations, parking provision should balance support for sustainable travel with the need to avoid inappropriate on or off-street parking or other highway safety issues.

d. Non-residential development should follow Oxfordshire County Council's 'Decide and Provide' approach and be supported by proportionate transport evidence, with any deviation from standards clearly justified.

3. Cycle Parking

New development should provide high-quality, secure and accessible cycle parking, conveniently located and integrated into site design. Provision should support a range of cycle types, including larger, electric and adapted cycles, where appropriate.

Policy DM18 - Windfall Housing

9.288 A windfall housing site is defined as one which is not specifically identified in a local plan or neighbourhood plan. National policy encourages local authorities to support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions and as outlined in Policy CP2, windfall sites are expected to contribute around 2,100 new homes in West Oxfordshire over the period 1st April 2029 – 31st March 2043.

9.289 Policy DM18 provides a framework for considering proposals on windfall sites to ensure that any such development supports the overall housing requirement whilst remaining consistent with the spatial strategy set out in Policy SP2.

9.290 The policy seeks to reinforce the plan led approach and ensure that windfall housing is directed towards the district's most sustainable settlements over the plan period. Applying the settlement hierarchy embedded in Policy SP1 will help to ensure that development is focused where residents have access to services, facilities, employment opportunities and public transport, thereby reducing the need to travel and supporting the vitality of existing communities.

9.291 For the purposes of Policy DM18, windfall housing proposals will be categorised as follows:

- Small-scale: 1 - 9 dwellings
- Medium-scale: 10 - 49 dwellings
- Large-scale: 50 - 300 dwellings

9.292 To reinforce the importance of a plan-led approach to development, larger strategic proposals of more than 300 homes will not be expected to come forward through windfall development.

9.293 The Council recognises that opportunities for windfall development can arise throughout the plan period and can make an important contribution to housing supply, choice and flexibility. However, unmanaged or excessive windfall development has the potential to undermine the planned distribution of growth, place pressure on infrastructure and services, or adversely affect the character and function of settlements. DM18 seeks to balance housing delivery with the need to maintain sustainable patterns of development and safeguard local distinctiveness.

9.294 The scale of development considered appropriate within each settlement tier reflects the relative sustainability, size and role of settlements within the hierarchy. The district's principal towns are considered capable of accommodating a broad range of windfall development due to their greater concentration of services, facilities, employment opportunities and transport choices. More limited scales of development are considered appropriate in smaller villages where infrastructure, services and accessibility are typically more constrained.

9.295 In accordance with national policy, isolated homes in the countryside will only be supported where they meet the specific circumstances identified within the NPPF. Such circumstances may include proposals which are essential for rural workers, involve the re-use of existing buildings, secure the optimal viable use of heritage assets or deliver exceptional quality design. Outside these circumstances, sporadic or isolated residential development in the countryside

is unlikely to represent sustainable development and may undermine the character and function of rural areas.

9.296 Policy DM18 introduces a proportional approach to managing cumulative windfall growth across settlements. The purpose of the settlement "cap" is not to impose an absolute restriction on housing delivery, but to provide a monitoring and decision-making framework to ensure that the cumulative effects of unplanned development remain proportionate to the size, character and capacity of individual settlements over the plan period.

9.297 A cap on windfall residential development will therefore be applied on a settlement-by-settlement basis using a baseline number of dwellings as of 1 April 2025. In settlements outside the Cotswolds National Landscape and Oxford Green Belt, windfall development should not normally increase the total number of dwellings within a settlement by more than 10% over the plan period. In recognition of the heightened landscape sensitivity and national policy constraints applying within the Cotswolds National Landscape and Oxford Green Belt, a reduced threshold of 5% will apply within these areas.

9.298 The impacts of cumulative growth vary depending on the characteristics of a settlement, including its environmental sensitivity, infrastructure capacity, landscape setting and availability of services. Once the relevant threshold has been reached, any subsequent windfall proposals will need to demonstrate clearly that the development can be successfully assimilated into the settlement without resulting in unacceptable harm to character, appearance, amenity, infrastructure capacity or community cohesion. Proposals will also need to demonstrate that the benefits of housing delivery significantly and demonstrably outweigh any identified adverse impacts.

9.299 Where relevant, applicants should explain how the proposal responds positively to local character, integrates with the existing built form and avoids adverse cumulative impacts. Consideration may also be given to whether sufficient infrastructure and services exist, or can reasonably be provided, to support additional growth.

9.300 Consistent with national planning policy, the Council strongly supports the efficient use and re-use of land and buildings within settlements. Priority will therefore be given to the redevelopment of previously developed land, underused sites and suitable existing buildings in accessible and sustainable locations before consideration is given to the use of undeveloped greenfield land.

9.301 The re-use of previously developed land can help reduce pressure on the countryside, support urban regeneration, improve environmental outcomes and make efficient use of existing infrastructure and services. Proposals should make effective use of land whilst responding appropriately to local context, character, environmental constraints and design considerations.

9.302 Where undeveloped land outside settlement areas is proposed for residential development, proposals will be closely scrutinised and will only be supported where they fully comply with national policy and the wider development plan. Development proposals should demonstrate why the use of greenfield land is necessary and how adverse impacts on landscape character,

biodiversity, agricultural land, settlement form and infrastructure have been avoided or minimised.

Policy DM18 - Windfall Housing Development on Unallocated Sites

Proposals for new residential development will be supported where they contribute towards the delivery of the overall housing requirement set out in Core Policy 2 and accord with the spatial strategy in Policy SP2.

Windfall development will be managed to ensure that it is delivered in the most sustainable locations, prioritises previously developed land, and does not undermine the planned strategy for growth.

Proposals that would undermine the delivery of allocated sites or the overall spatial strategy will not be supported.

1. **Settlement Hierarchy and Distribution**

    a. Proposals for residential development will be supported in accordance with the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy SP2. A hierarchical approach will be applied to ensure that windfall development is focused in the most sustainable locations:

        i. Tier 1 – Principal Towns – Small, medium and large-scale windfall proposals will be considered.

        ii. Tier 2 – Service Centres – Small and medium-scale windfall proposals will be considered.

        iii. Tier 3 – Large Villages - Small and medium-scale windfall proposals will be considered.

        iv. Tier 4 – Medium Villages - Small-scale windfall proposals will be considered.

        v. Tier 5 – Small Villages, Hamlets and Open Countryside - Small-scale windfall proposals will be considered and only supported where development would accord with Policy SP2 and other relevant policies.

    b. Isolated homes in the countryside will not be supported unless national policy criteria are met.

2. **Assimilating Growth in Settlements**

    a. The following guides to cumulative growth will be applied to windfall residential development, so as not to undermine the delivery of the spatial strategy and ensure growth remains proportionate to the scale and character of settlements:

        i. In all settlements outside the Cotswolds National Landscape or the Oxford Green Belt: Windfall development should not increase the total number of dwellings within a settlement by more than 10% over the plan period, based on the number of dwellings built within the given settlement as of 1 April 2025

ii. In settlements within the Cotswolds National Landscape or the Oxford Green Belt: Windfall development should not increase the total number of dwellings within a settlement by more than 5% over the plan period, based on the number of dwellings built within the given settlement as of 1 April 2025.

b. Any subsequent windfall proposals will only be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that;

i. The level of growth can be assimilated without unacceptable harm to the character, appearance, or amenity of the settlement; and

ii. There is a demonstrable and overriding local need for housing such that any identified harms are significantly outweighed by the benefits of delivery.

3. Sequential Approach to Land

The Council supports the efficient use and re-use of land and buildings within settlement areas.

a. Proposals for windfall residential development must:

i. Prioritise previously developed land and suitable existing buildings;
ii. Make effective use of land in accessible and sustainable locations;
iii. Avoid the unnecessary use of undeveloped (greenfield) land, particularly outside settlement areas.

b. Proposals on undeveloped land outside settlement areas will only be permitted where they comply fully with national policy.

Policy DM19 - Creating Mixed and Balanced Communities

9.303 Policy DM19 aims to ensure that all new residential developments contribute to the creation of mixed and balanced communities by providing an appropriate variety of housing types, sizes, and tenures that meet local needs.

9.304 A balanced and inclusive housing stock is essential for supporting sustainable communities across West Oxfordshire and national policy is clear that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (NPPF 2024, paragraph 63).

9.305 Evidence, including the council's most recent Local Housing Need Assessment (LHNA) consistently shows a need for a wider variety of homes in the district that respond to the changing demographics and housing needs. This includes providing suitable accommodation for families, first-time buyers, older residents, and people with disabilities.

9.306 The council's current LHNA[20] assesses and identifies the need for different types of housing in the district over the plan period. Applicants should refer to this evidence and set out within their planning statement how the proposed development will positively contribute toward meeting these identified needs.

Innovative Housing Models

9.307 The housing market is evolving and diversifying. New housing products have and continue to emerge in response to the demand for more and relatively affordable homes, as well as changing lifestyles and ways of working. These housing products include but are not limited to:

- Self-build and custom-build homes
- Community led housing schemes
- Build to rent, rent to buy, help to buy and shared ownership homes
- Purpose-built shared/co-living schemes

9.308 The council welcomes innovative ways to increase housing supply and provide a greater mix of housing options in the district.

Dwelling Size Mix

9.309 All residential development must provide a mix of homes of an appropriate size to meet local needs identified in the council's most recent published evidence as far as reasonably practicable, considering the context and characteristics of the site. The council's current LHNA identifies the following dwelling size mix requirement for market and affordable homes:

Dwelling size – market homes	Relative need (%)	Dwelling size - affordable homes	Relative need (%)
1 bed	4%	1 bed	21%
2 bed	16%	2 bed	55%
3 bed	49%	3 bed	19%

[20] West Oxfordshire District Council Local Housing Need Assessment, June 2025.

4 bed+	27%	4 bed+	5%

9.310 Household sizes vary across different groups within society. Therefore, a nuanced approach to the provision of housing is required to ensure it meets the needs of all members of the community. The precise dwelling size mix will be subject to negotiation with the council. We will take into account the most recent evidence of housing need, including the council's housing register.

Accessible and Adaptable Homes

9.311 As the population ages, the demand for accessible and adaptable homes is expected to grow. Ensuring that all new homes meet Building Regulations M4(2) standards and requiring a proportion of larger developments to deliver M4(3) standards will ensure development over the plan period provides suitable living environments for people with mobility impairments.

9.312 The council have adopted an approach in line with the Government's intent to raise accessibility standards so that M4(2) is the default minimum standard for new homes set out in their response to the September 2020 consultation on raising accessibility standards of new homes[21]. In addition, the council's most recent LHNA concludes that it is appropriate for West Oxfordshire to continue to require a proportion of new homes to be built to M4(3) standards.

9.313 The requirement for M4(2) and M4(3) standards have been viability tested as part of the council's whole plan viability assessment[22]. This found that the proposed requirement is viable for the range of development typologies tested across the district.

9.314 The relevant category of Building Regulations will be secured through planning condition. Each new dwelling will need to meet all the requirements set out in Part M of the Building Regulations. Approved Document Part M provides clear guidance on how to meet these requirements.

9.315 The policy applies only to buildings covered by Part M Volume 1 of the Building Regulations which are new build homes and homes undergoing material alteration. It does not apply to other forms of housing that do not fall within Use Class C3, such as student housing or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

9.316 To ensure that all potential residents have choice within a development, the requirement for M4(2) and M4(3) standard dwellings will apply to all relevant tenures, including market and affordable tenures.

9.317 Building Regulations M4(3) standards distinguish between homes designed to be M4(3)(b) wheelchair accessible - ready to be used by a wheelchair user on completion, or M4(3)(a) wheelchair adaptable - easily adaptable for a wheelchair user. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that Local Plan policies for M4(3)(b) - wheelchair accessible homes should only be

[21] Raising accessibility standards for new homes: summary of consultation responses and government response – updated July 2022.
[22] West Oxfordshire District Council, West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 Viability Assessment, x.

applied to those dwellings where the local authority is responsible for allocating or nominating a person to live in that dwelling, otherwise they should be adaptable.

Policy DM19 – Creating Mixed and Balanced Communities

All residential development must contribute toward the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities,

1. **Dwelling mix**

    a. All residential development must contribute toward the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities by providing a mix of housing types, sizes, and tenures to meet the identified local housing needs of different groups as far as reasonably practicable,

2. **Design and integration**

    a. All new homes should be designed to be tenure blind as far as reasonably practicable, and tenures be mixed and integrated across the development.

3. **Innovative Housing Delivery**

    a. Innovative models of high-quality housing that contribute to providing a range of housing options in the district will be supported, including build-to-rent and co-living, where these proposals meet an identified need and accord with other relevant policies in the Plan.

4. **Accessible and Adaptable Homes**

    a. All new homes should as a minimum be built to Building Regulations M4(2) accessible and adaptable dwellings standards, or any equivalent replacement standards.

    b. A` minimum 5% of new homes in major developments must be built to Building Regulations M4(3) - wheelchair user dwellings standards.

Policy DM20 - Affordable Housing

9.318 Policy DM20 seeks to ensure that housing delivery over the plan period contributes towards meeting the district's identified need for affordable housing. Providing a sufficient supply of affordable homes is critical to supporting inclusive, sustainable and balanced communities across West Oxfordshire and is a key component of achieving the wider social and economic objectives of the Local Plan.

9.319 Housing affordability remains a significant challenge in West Oxfordshire, driven by high house prices, increasing demand and comparatively limited supply. The district's attractive rural character, proximity to Oxford and other employment centres, high environmental quality and strong transport connections all contribute to elevated land and property values. As a result, many households, particularly first-time buyers, families, lower- and middle-income households and key workers, experience substantial barriers to accessing suitable housing within the district.

9.320 A persistent gap between local wages and house prices has widened over time. At £370,000, median house prices in West Oxfordshire are considerably higher than the national median of £289,995 and almost 10 times higher than median workplace earnings of £40,331. Producing an affordability ratio of 9.71[23]. This affordability pressure has resulted in many households being priced out of the local housing market, increasing reliance on the private rented sector and pushing households to seek accommodation further afield. In turn, affordability pressures can lead to longer commutes, reduced quality of life and difficulties for employers in retaining workers and local communities in supporting strong, inclusive communities.

9.321 The availability of affordable housing is also crucial for ensuring that younger generations, families, and those with specific housing needs can remain in their local communities. Additionally, Access to affordable housing is particularly important in rural communities where limited supply and high market prices can contribute to demographic imbalance, population decline and the loss of local services and facilities. Enabling people to remain within or return to their local communities helps sustain schools, shops, public transport, community facilities and the wider rural economy.

9.322 The council's most recent LHNA identifies a need for 5,412 additional affordable homes over the period 2025 to 2041 (equivalent to 338 new affordable homes per annum). Policy DM20 sets out the framework for how development over the plan period will contribute toward meeting this identified need.

Affordable Housing Threshold and Requirement

9.323 National policy establishes that proposals for major development should be required to provide affordable housing to meet identified local housing needs (NPPF 2024, paragraph 66). In accordance with this approach, DM20 establishes the thresholds and requirements for affordable housing delivery across the district from major development. A lower threshold applies within the Cotswolds National Landscape in recognition of the particular affordability

[23] ONS, House Price to Workplace based Earnings Affordability Ratios, March 2025

pressures and constraints affecting rural and protected areas, consistent with national policy relating to designated landscapes and rural housing delivery.

9.324 The policy requires 40% affordable housing provision on qualifying developments unless specific national policy requirements apply, including the "Golden Rules" associated with certain forms of Green Belt release. This requirement has been tested through the Council's whole plan viability assessment and found to be viable across a range of development typologies and locations within the district.

9.325 National policy and guidance establish that where up to date policies have set out contributions expected from development and been found to be viable through a whole plan viability assessment, planning applications that comply with them should be assumed to be viable (NPPF 2024, paragraph 59). It will therefore be the responsibility of applicants to demonstrate, through robust and transparent evidence, where exceptional site-specific circumstances justify the need for a site-specific viability assessment to determine to level of affordable housing that can be provided on site.

On-site and Off-site Delivery

9.326 Affordable housing should be delivered on-site in order to support mixed and balanced communities and ensure affordable homes are integrated effectively within new development. Off-site provision or financial contributions in lieu of on-site delivery will be considered in exceptional circumstances where robust evidence demonstrates that alternative arrangements would better meet identified housing needs or where on-site delivery is demonstrably not feasible.

Tenure Mix

9.327 The council's most recent LHNA identifies that the greatest need for affordable housing tenures over the plan period is for social rented homes at circa 68% of the 5,412 affordable housing need identified. There is also a significant need for affordable home ownership products at circa 32% of the identified affordable housing need over the plan period. The council have therefore set a requirement for a minimum 65% of affordable housing to be provided as social rent, with the remaining proportion comprising other affordable tenures where supported by evidence of need, including affordable home ownership products.

9.328 The Council is committed to ensuring that affordable housing is fully integrated within developments and indistinguishable in quality and appearance from market housing. Affordable homes should not be visually or physically separated or different in appearance from market housing, and should benefit from equivalent standards of design, amenity and accessibility. This includes access to similar levels of daylight, outlook, landscaping, open space, parking, community facilities and other aspects of environmental quality. On larger schemes, affordable housing should generally be distributed in smaller clusters throughout the site in order to promote integration and avoid concentrations of a single tenure.

Dwelling Size and Type

9.329 Policy DM20 also seeks to ensure that affordable housing provision responds appropriately to local housing needs in terms of dwelling size and type. Current evidence indicates a strong need for smaller affordable homes, particularly one- and two-bedroom dwellings, although an appropriate mix of homes will continue to be required to support a balanced and inclusive community structure.

Rural Exception Sites

9.330 Rural exception sites make an important contribution to meeting identified local affordable housing needs in locations where conventional housing delivery opportunities may be limited. Such schemes can help maintain the long-term sustainability and vitality of rural communities by enabling local people to access affordable housing within or close to the settlements to which they have a connection.

9.331 Policy DM20 supports appropriately scaled rural exception sites adjoining existing settlements where they provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs and are proportionate to the size and character of the community. Priority is given to ensuring that homes remain affordable in perpetuity and continue to serve local housing needs over the long term. In some circumstances, a limited proportion of market housing may be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that such provision is essential to secure the viability and deliverability of the scheme.

Protection of Existing Affordable Homes

9.332 Given the substantial and growing level of need across the district, the loss of affordable homes can significantly undermine the ability to meet local needs and maintain mixed communities. The Council will therefore resist proposals resulting in the net loss of affordable housing unless it is clearly demonstrated that replacement provision of improved quality is required.

9.333 Where redevelopment involving affordable housing is accepted, replacement homes should be provided on a like-for-like basis in terms of tenure, with social rented housing replaced by equivalent social rented provision unless otherwise justified. Development proposals involving demolition and replacement will also be expected, wherever feasible, to deliver an uplift in the overall amount of affordable housing in addition to replacement provision.

Vacant Building Credit

9.334 National policy (NPPF 2024, paragraph 65) relating to Vacant Building Credit will also apply where relevant. It provides an incentive for brownfield development on sites containing vacant buildings, generally known as vacant building credit. It requires that the developer should be offered a financial credit equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of relevant vacant buildings when the local planning authority calculates any affordable housing contribution which will be sought.

Policy DM20 – Affordable Housing

1. Affordable Housing Requirement Threshold

a. Development proposals creating new residential floorspace in the following circumstances are required to provide affordable housing:

i. Major development resulting in a net gain of 10 or more dwellings or involving a site of 0.5 hectares or more.

ii. Development proposals located within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) and resulting in a net gain of 5 or more dwellings.

b. Where the threshold is triggered, 40% of the proposed number of homes must be provided as affordable housing, unless the site is located within the Oxford Green Belt where the Golden Rules set out in national policy apply.

i. The affordable housing requirement must be provided on-site unless exceptional circumstances demonstrate to the council's satisfaction dictate that on-site provision is not feasible or off-site provision would better meet identified housing needs.

ii. Where onsite provision is not feasible or viable, the council will seek a financial contribution for offsite provision of affordable housing in lieu of onsite provision

iii. Market and affordable housing should be integrated across the development so that they are tenure blind.

iv. In large scale schemes, affordable housing should be arranged in small clusters, proportionate to the overall scale of the development.

v. Affordable and market housing should have benefit from equivalent levels of amenity provision, including views, siting, daylight, noise, proximity to open space, play space, community facilities and shops.

2. Tenure Mix of Affordable Homes

a. A minimum 65% of affordable housing must be provided as social rent, with the remaining 35% provided as a range of tenures for which there is an identified need in the district, including affordable home ownership products.

b. The mix of housing types and sizes should be determined in accordance with Policy DM21 but predominantly a combination of 1 and 2 bed dwellings.

3. Rural Exception Sites

a. Proposals for small-scale Rural Exception Sites will be supported where the following criteria are met:

i. The proposal provides affordable housing that contributes toward identified local housing needs
ii. The proposal is well-related to existing settlement areas.

iii. Where family homes are proposed, the site should be within safe walking distance of a primary school.
iv. Affordable homes will be secured in perpetuity to meet local needs.

b. The council will consider on a case-by-case basis if a limited proportion of market homes may be permitted on Rural Exception Sites where essential to support site viability.

4. Protection of Existing Affordable Housing

a. The council will resist the net loss of affordable housing throughout the district, unless it is demonstrated to the council's satisfaction that the existing affordable homes are of sub-standard quality and the loss is needed to provide new high quality affordable homes.

b. Where it is accepted that affordable housing is to be re-provided, it must be provided on a like for like basis i.e. social rent with social rent.

c. All development proposals involving demolition and replacement of affordable housing should seek to provide an uplift in affordable housing in addition to the replacement of affordable housing.

Policy DM21 - Specialist Housing

9.335 Policy DM21 supports the delivery of specialist housing to meet the needs of West Oxfordshire's changing and ageing population, alongside the needs of other groups who require supported or adapted accommodation. It seeks to ensure that specialist housing is provided in suitable and sustainable locations, delivers high quality and accessible accommodation, and supports inclusive communities.

9.336 The NPPF requires LPAs to assess and reflect the needs of different groups within the community, including older people, people with disabilities, people with mental health needs and those requiring supported housing. PPG further explains the importance of providing a wide range of specialist housing options to enable people to live independently for as long as possible.

9.337 Supporting the provision of specialist housing is essential in addressing demographic change within the district. The council's most recent LHNA identifies a substantial increase in the older population over the period 2025-2041 in West Oxfordshire, with an additional 7,844 persons and 7,155 households expected resident in the local area. In light of this, the LHNA identifies a need for 929 new specialist homes for older people between 2025 and 2041, most of which (76.7%) is for specialist housing with support, such as extra care accommodation.

9.338 Specialist housing can take a variety of forms including sheltered or retirement living accommodation, extra care housing, care homes, nursing homes, supported living accommodation and other forms of housing designed to meet specific support or care needs. Specialist accommodation may also include move-on accommodation for people leaving institutional settings or supported environments, including individuals recovering from mental health treatment or those with autism or learning disabilities, enabling residents to live more independently within the community.

Specialist Housing for Older People

9.339 PPG identifies several broad typologies of housing for older people (PPG, Housing for Older and Disabled People, paragraph 10). Retirement living or sheltered housing generally comprises self-contained homes with communal facilities and limited support services. Extra care housing similarly provides self-contained accommodation but with access to higher levels of personal care where required. Residential care homes and nursing homes accommodate residents requiring higher levels of assistance with day-to-day living and medical care.

Location and Integration of Specialist Housing

9.340 Locating specialist housing in sustainable locations close to shops, healthcare, community facilities, services and public transport is important in promoting independence, reducing reliance on private vehicles and supporting social inclusion. Integrating specialist accommodation within existing communities, rather than isolating it from them, can help reduce loneliness and social isolation and support healthier and more active lifestyles. Specialist housing should therefore contribute positively to the creation of mixed and balanced communities.

9.341 DM21 encourages specialist housing to be integrated with general market and affordable housing wherever possible. This approach helps create inclusive communities and avoids the segregation of residents with specialist needs. Proposals should demonstrate how the development layout, communal spaces and wider design approach promote interaction, accessibility and ease of movement for residents and visitors.

Specialist Housing Requirements for Strategic and large-scale Developments

9.342 The Council recognises the important role strategic-scale developments can play in meeting identified specialist housing needs. Large-scale residential developments create opportunities to incorporate specialist housing as part of mixed and balanced communities and to ensure future housing stock better reflects changing demographic requirements over the plan period. Accordingly, proposals for strategic-scale residential development will be expected to make appropriate provision for specialist housing for older people where a need has been identified.

9.343 Where applicants consider that on-site provision is not feasible or appropriate, this will need to be robustly justified. In such circumstances, the Council may consider accepting provision on an alternative site elsewhere within the district, provided that the site is suitable, sustainable and capable of meeting identified needs.

Design Requirements

9.344 All specialist housing proposals must provide homes that are adaptable, safe and accessible for residents over the long term. Policy DM19 sets out the Council's requirements relating to accessible and adaptable housing standards, including wheelchair accessible dwellings where appropriate. Specialist accommodation should also incorporate high quality inclusive design principles, ensuring developments are capable of adapting to residents' changing needs over time.

Affordable Housing Requirements

9.345 Where specialist housing falls within Use Class C3, affordable housing provision will be required in accordance with Policy DM20 unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This includes forms of extra care and sheltered housing that comprise self-contained dwellings. The Council recognises the importance of affordable specialist accommodation in meeting identified local needs, including affordable extra care housing, and will work with partners including Oxfordshire County Council and registered providers to support delivery where viable.

Policy DM21 - Specialist Housing

Proposals for specialist housing, (including extra-care, sheltered housing, care homes and other forms of supported living), will be supported in suitable, sustainable locations, that are well served by existing services, facilities and public transport connections, where they accord with other relevant planning policies and meet and identified local housing need.

1. **Integration and Social Inclusion**

    a. Specialist housing should be integrated with other forms of housing, and designed to encourage social integration and inclusion, enabling residents to remain active and engaged.

2. **Provision of Specialist Housing for Older People**

    a. Proposals for strategic scale development are required to make provision for specialist housing meets identified local housing needs

    b. Where it is demonstrated to the council's satisfaction that making provision for specialist housing is not feasible on-site, the Council may accept provision in a suitable, sustainable off-site location elsewhere in the district.

3. **Design and Accessibility**

    a. All proposals for specialist housing must be designed to meet the needs of residents, including accessibility and adaptability requirements in accordance with Policy DM19.

4. **Mixed Tenure and Affordable Housing**

    a. Proposals for specialist housing that fall within Use Class C3 must provide affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM20.

Policy DM22 - Custom and Self-Build Housing

9.346 Policy DM22 supports the delivery of self-build and custom housebuilding across West Oxfordshire as part of creating a more diverse, flexible and responsive housing market. It seeks to ensure that opportunities for self and custom-build housing are actively delivered through major development schemes, while ensuring that such development is well integrated into communities and contributes positively to high quality placemaking.

9.347 The NPPF supports the delivery of a wide choice of high-quality homes and requires LPAs to consider opportunities to support people wishing to commission or build their own homes. The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016, places a duty on local planning authorities to keep a register of individuals and associations seeking to acquire serviced plots of land for self and custom housebuilding and to grant sufficient development permissions to meet identified demand.

9.348 The Council maintains a Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register which demonstrates ongoing and increasing demand for serviced plots within the district. Supporting self and custom-build housing can help diversify the local housing market, increase housing choice and support delivery of innovative, high quality and sustainable homes tailored to the needs of occupants.

9.349 Self and custom-build housing can also provide opportunities for households to secure homes that are better suited to their long-term needs, including accessibility, adaptability and energy efficiency requirements. This form of housing can also support smaller builders and community-led development initiatives, contributing to greater diversity within the housebuilding sector and supporting local economic activity.

Requirements for Major Development

9.350 Policy DM22 requires major residential development proposals of 100 or more dwellings to provide a proportion of serviced plots for self and custom-build housing, including opportunities for self-finish homes where appropriate. Serviced plots should be capable of development without the need for further significant infrastructure provision and should include suitable access and connections to utilities and essential services.

9.351 The Council's LHNA identifies increasing demand for self and custom-build opportunities across West Oxfordshire and therefore recommends increasing the requirement for serviced plots from large scale development schemes creating 100 or more homes to 10%. This approach was found to be viable across the range of development typologies tested in the Council's whole plan viability assessment.

9.352 The Council recognises that site-specific constraints or other material considerations may affect the ability of developments to accommodate self-build plots. In such circumstances applicants will be expected to provide clear evidence demonstrating why provision cannot reasonably be achieved on-site. Examples may include abnormal infrastructure requirements, site configuration constraints, significant viability impacts or circumstances where this form of housing would not represent an appropriate planning outcome.

9.353 Where on-site provision cannot be justified, the Council may accept provision on an alternative site elsewhere within the district, provided the location is suitable and sustainable and the plots would contribute towards meeting identified demand within an appropriate timeframe.

Marketing Requirements

9.354 The Council also recognises that market demand for serviced plots can vary over time. To ensure opportunities are genuinely available to prospective self and custom builders, serviced plots should be actively marketed for a minimum period of 12 months. Marketing should include direct promotion to individuals and groups registered on the Council's Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register, alongside other appropriate advertising methods. Where plots remain unsold after an appropriate marketing period, and sufficient evidence is provided demonstrating a lack of demand, the Council may permit the plots to revert to conventional market housing in order to support delivery and maintain site viability.

Affordable Housing Requirements

9.355 Affordable self and custom-build housing can provide an important route into home ownership for households who may otherwise be unable to access the housing market, particularly in areas where land and property values are high. Accordingly, proposals for major self and custom-build schemes will be expected to provide an appropriate proportion of affordable plots in accordance with Policy DM20, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Council will particularly support affordable custom and self-build models that widen access to housing opportunities, including discounted market housing, community-led housing initiatives and other intermediate housing products.

Design and Integration

9.356 The design and integration of self and custom-build housing is important in ensuring developments contribute positively to the character and appearance of an area and create cohesive communities. Serviced plots should therefore form an integral part of site master planning rather than appearing isolated or separate from the wider development. While individual plot occupiers may bring forward bespoke house designs, developments should maintain an appropriate level of design coherence and have regard to the West Oxfordshire Design Guide, relevant design codes and national design guidance.

9.357 Custom and self-build housing can play an important role in supporting innovation in sustainable construction, including the delivery of highly energy efficient homes and the use of modern methods of construction. The Council will encourage proposals that demonstrate high standards of environmental performance and contribute towards the creation of healthy, resilient and sustainable communities.

DM22 – Custom and Self-build Housing

Proposals for self-build and custom housebuilding will be supported in suitable, sustainable locations where they accord with other relevant planning policies of the Local Plan.

1. **Provision of Serviced Plots**

    a. All major development proposals creating 100 or more dwellings (gross) are required to provide at least 10% of the residential plots as serviced plots for self-build and custom housebuilding opportunities as far as reasonably practicable. This can include partially completed units for self-finish.

    b. Relevant proposals that do not meet the 10% requirement must demonstrate to the council's satisfaction that:

        i. The site and/or location are not suitable for this form of housing; or
        ii. There are other valid reasons why provision of this form of housing cannot be made, such as viability or site constraints for example.

    c. Where it is demonstrated to the council's satisfaction that meeting the 10% requirement is not feasible on-site, the Council may accept the provision of serviced plots in a suitable, sustainable off-site location elsewhere in the district.

2. **Marketing and Release**

    a. Serviced plots must be actively marketed for a minimum of 12 months, including direct promotion to those on the council's Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register. If the plots remain unsold after this period and it is demonstrated to the council's satisfaction that there is a lack of interest, the plots may be developed by the applicant for market housing.

3. **Affordable Self-build and Custom Housebuilding**

    a. Proposals for self and custom housebuilding that meet the definition of major development, will be required to provide a proportion of the plots as affordable self and custom-build plots in accordance with Policy DM20.

4. **Design and Integration**

    a. Self-build and Custom housing must have regard to the West Oxfordshire Design Guide and other relevant national design guidance.

    b. Serviced plots provided should be integrated into the site's masterplan and contribute to creating a mixed and balanced community.

Policy DM23 - Community-Led Housing

9.358 Policy DM23 supports the delivery of community-led housing as part of creating inclusive, sustainable and resilient communities across West Oxfordshire. It recognises the important role community-led approaches can play in delivering affordable homes, strengthening community cohesion and meeting locally identified housing needs, particularly within rural areas and smaller settlements.

9.359 Community-led housing enables local communities to take a proactive role in bringing forward housing that responds directly to local circumstances and priorities. Such schemes are typically initiated and managed by community-based organisations whose primary purpose is to deliver homes and wider community benefits rather than maximise commercial profit. Community-led housing can help deliver genuinely affordable homes that remain affordable for future generations and can support innovative approaches to housing design, stewardship and long-term community ownership.

9.360 National policy supports opportunities for community-led housing development as part of promoting a sufficient supply and mix of homes (NPPF 2024, paragraph 73). Community-led schemes can also contribute towards supporting rural vitality, maintaining mixed and balanced communities and enabling people with local connections to remain within their communities.

Definition of Community-led Development

9.361 For the purposes of this policy, community-led housing development is development that is initiated and meaningfully controlled by a community-based organisation established primarily to deliver housing and community benefit. This may include community land trusts, co-operatives, cohousing groups, community benefit societies or other not-for-profit organisations. A key characteristic of community-led housing is that local communities and residents play a formal role in the ownership, stewardship or ongoing management of the homes.

9.362 Examples of community-led housing development include:

- A project initiated and driven by a not-for-profit organisation for the primary purpose of meeting local housing needs rather than pursuing commercial gain.
- A project developed by or in partnership with a legally constituted organisation, which may include a co-operative society, community benefit society, or company limited by guarantee.
- A project that is democratically controlled by its members, with open membership available to beneficiaries and prospective beneficiaries.
- A project that is managed or stewarded by the community-led organisation, potentially in collaboration with a Registered Provider of Social Housing.
- A project that is designed to provide clearly defined community benefits, with appropriate measures in place to secure these benefits over time, including in cases where the organisation ceases to operate.

Design and Tenure Mix

9.363 Community-led housing can take a variety of forms and tenures, including affordable rent, social rent, shared ownership, cohousing and co-operative housing models. These approaches can provide opportunities for people to live in supportive and collaborative communities, including older people, younger households and those whose needs may not be met through conventional housing products.

9.364 The Council particularly supports the delivery of affordable homes through community-led approaches. Such schemes can help address affordability challenges in areas where market housing costs are high and where conventional housing delivery has not met locally identified needs. Community-led housing can also support the provision of social rented housing, which remains an important local priority.

9.365 Community-led housing can also support innovation in sustainable design, energy efficiency and shared facilities, helping to create healthy and resilient communities. The Council will support proposals that demonstrate high standards of design and environmental performance and that contribute positively to local character and identity.

Role of Neighbourhood Planning

9.366 Town and Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums can play an important role in identifying opportunities for community-led housing through neighbourhood planning and community engagement. Neighbourhood Plans are encouraged to identify suitable sites and locally specific policies that support community-led development and reflect the aspirations and housing needs of local communities.

Community-led Exception Sites

9.367 Community-led housing schemes may sometimes need to come forward on land that would not otherwise be released for general market housing, particularly where there is a clearly evidenced local need and strong community support. Community-led exception sites are distinct from conventional rural exception sites because they may involve alternative ownership or stewardship arrangements and can deliver long-term community benefits beyond affordable housing provision alone.

9.368 In considering proposals for community-led exception sites, the Council will take account of the scale and nature of the proposal, the extent to which it meets identified local housing needs, the degree of community support and involvement, and the overall sustainability of the location. Although community-led exception sites may in some circumstances be located adjacent to or beyond existing settlement boundaries, proposals must still demonstrate that future residents will have reasonable access to jobs, facilities, services and public transport where possible.

9.369 The predominant form of housing on community-led exception sites should be affordable housing, with particular emphasis placed on the provision of social rented homes in recognition of identified need within the district. However, the Council recognises that some

schemes may require a proportion of market housing to support overall viability and deliverability. In such cases, a limited amount of market housing, not exceeding 20% of total homes, may be supported where it is robustly demonstrated that this is necessary to enable the delivery of the affordable housing and wider community benefits associated with the scheme.

9.370 Appropriate planning conditions or legal agreements may be used to secure the long-term affordability, community governance and stewardship arrangements associated with community-led housing schemes, ensuring that the benefits of development are retained for the local community over time.

Examples of Community-led Housing Schemes in the District

9.371 The Council has already seen positive examples of community-led housing initiatives emerge within West Oxfordshire, including projects in places such as Stonesfield and Chipping Norton. These schemes demonstrate the potential for locally driven approaches to deliver affordable homes, foster community participation and provide long-term stewardship of housing assets.

Policy DM23 - Community-Led Housing

1. Community-led housing development will be supported in suitable, sustainable locations, where proposals accord with other relevant planning policies.

2. Town and Parish councils and Neighbourhood Forums should identify suitable sites for community-led housing in their Neighbourhood Plans, reflecting local priorities and aspirations.

3. Community-led sites will be supported on land that would not otherwise be considered suitable for residential development in accordance with national policy.

4. The predominant form of housing on community-led exception sites should be affordable housing, with a strong emphasis on social rented homes.

5. The council will consider on a case-by-case basis if a limited proportion of market homes (no more than 20% of the total) may be permitted on Community-led Exception Sites where essential to support site viability.

Policy DM24 - Meeting the Needs of Travelling Communities

9.372 National policy establishes that local plans should ensure the accommodation needs of travelling communities, including Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople are met in a way that is inclusive, fair, and sustainable. This includes providing suitable sites in locations that are accessible to transport, healthcare, education, and other vital services while respecting the environmental.

9.373 Policy DM24 seeks to ensure that the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are met over the plan period through the delivery of sufficient, well-designed and sustainable sites across West Oxfordshire.

9.374 National policy requires local authorities to assess and plan for the accommodation needs of travelling communities in a fair, inclusive and sustainable manner. This includes identifying a supply of specific deliverable and developable sites sufficient to provide accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, while ensuring that development respects the character of the area and avoids unacceptable environmental impacts.

Identified Need

9.375 The council's most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment[24] (GTAA) identifies a need for an additional 28 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers over the period 2023/24 – 2041/42, including 2 pitches within the first 5 years (by 2027/28) and 26 pitches over the longer-term (by 2041/42). The assessment also identifies a need for an additional 8 plots for Travelling Showpeople, including 4 in the first 5 years (by 2027/28) and 4 over the longer term (by 2041/42).

9.376 The Local Plan seeks to ensure that sufficient provision is made to address identified need through a combination of existing commitments, intensification and expansion of existing sites where appropriate, allocations and windfall provision.

9.377 The existing allocation for Travelling Showpeople at Cuckoowood Farm, Freeland is not superseded by this Local Plan and has extant permission for 6 additional plots, addressing the need for Showpeople Plots for the first 5 years of the Plan.

Intensification and Expansion of Existing Sites

9.378 The Council recognises that expanding or intensifying existing authorised sites can often represent the most sustainable and effective means of meeting accommodation needs where it can be achieved without unacceptable harm to local amenity, landscape character, highways or environmental interests. Existing sites may already benefit from established infrastructure, community connections and access to local services. Opportunities for intensification or expansion of suitable existing sites, including locations such as Cuckoowood Farm where appropriate, will be considered positively where they accord with relevant planning policies.

[24] West Oxfordshire, Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, December 2024

Site Allocations

9.379 Additional sites are also required to ensure a sufficient long-term supply of accommodation that meets identified needs. Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Plots and pitches will be made within suitably located Strategic Locations for Growth as part of the Area Strategies of the Local Plan.

Location and Design

9.380 DM24 seeks to ensure that all Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation is located in sustainable locations with reasonable access to education, healthcare, shops, community facilities and public transport. Isolated or environmentally harmful locations will generally not be supported unless clear justification exists.

9.381 Well-designed sites can contribute positively to local character and provide a high quality living environment for residents. Proposals should therefore provide adequate space, safe access arrangements, landscaping, utility provision, parking and waste storage, while protecting residential amenity for both site occupants and neighbouring uses. Particular attention should be given to ensuring sites are not adversely affected by noise, pollution, flood risk or other environmental constraints.

9.382 The Council recognises the importance of providing culturally appropriate accommodation that reflects the needs and lifestyles of travelling communities. This includes allowing for sufficient space for caravans, day rooms, touring caravans where appropriate, storage of equipment associated with occupations and safe circulation within sites.

9.383 In determining planning applications, the Council will balance the need to provide accommodation against potential impacts on the natural environment, historic character, landscape quality and local communities. Proposals should avoid causing unacceptable harm to the character or appearance of the countryside, heritage assets or important landscape features.

9.384 The Council will continue to work proactively with neighbouring authorities, service providers, landowners and travelling communities to support the delivery of sufficient accommodation and to maintain an up-to-date understanding of needs and supply across the district.

DM24 – Meeting the needs of Travelling Communities

The Council will meet the identified need for a total 36 new pitches over the plan period, through a combination of extant planning permissions, the expansion or intensification of existing sites, the regularisation of unauthorised sites / pitches or sites and provision of additional plots, pitches and identification of new sites.. This includes;

- 28 new pitches to meet the identified housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers
- 8 new pitches to meet the identified housing needs of Travelling Showpeople

1. Proposals for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation

a. Proposals for new sites or the expansion and/or intensification of existing sites to provide Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople accommodation will be supported in suitable, sustainable locations where they meet the following criteria and accord with other relevant planning policies:

i. The site must be located in proximity to settlements with a range of services and facilities, particularly healthcare and education. Sites should generally be located within 5km of the settlement area of Tier 1, 2 and 3 settlements to ensure access to essential services and facilities.

ii. The site must avoid areas at risk of flooding, pollution and significant noise or disturbance. and must avoid harm to the historic and natural environment,

iii. The site must have safe access to the highway network, with the potential to provide necessary utilities (electricity, drinking water, sewage treatment, and waste disposal) without significant impact.

iv. The site must offer a high-quality living environment, including safe access to outdoor amenity space or provisions for such space on-site, especially child friendly areas.

v. Larger proposals must include arrangements for proper site management to promote community cohesion between settled and traveller communities.

vi. Sites must be capable of being developed efficiently, with clear demarcation of pitch or plot boundaries and appropriate landscaping in keeping with the local context.

b. Proposals for Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople accommodation located in the Cotswolds National Landscape or Oxford Green Belt will be assessed in accordance with national policy.

2. Loss of Existing Sites

a. The loss of existing authorised pitches or plots for Gypsies, Travellers, or Travelling Showpeople accommodation will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated to the council's satisfaction that:

i. The site is no longer suitable for its intended use, and suitable alternative provision is made available on a site of equal or better quality, with access to comparable services.

ii. There is no longer a need for the provision

iii. Any alternative provision must be secured through planning conditions and legal agreements, with replacement pitches made available before the existing site is lost.

3. Community-led Sites

a. Community-led proposals for Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople accommodation will be supported where they are led by, or with, a not-for-profit organisation, meet the needs of the local travelling community and accords with other relevant planning policies.

4. Strategic Site Provision

a. All strategic sites including site allocations, strategic locations for growth and windfall proposals, will be required to assess the potential for including accommodation for travelling communities as part of the overall development mix.

b. Comprehensive evidence must be provided to demonstrate that appropriate consideration has been given to this requirement.

c. Strategic sites that do not include such provision will only be permitted if clear evidence shows that there is no identified need, or if a well-reasoned rationale demonstrates that the site is unsuitable for this purpose.

Policy DM25 - Loss, Replacement and Sub-Division of Existing Dwellings

9.385 Policy DM25 seeks to ensure that proposals involving the subdivision, replacement or loss of existing dwellings make an appropriate contribution towards meeting local housing needs while safeguarding residential amenity, local character and the efficient use of the district's housing stock.

9.386 West Oxfordshire faces a number of development constraints, including environmental and landscape designations, infrastructure considerations, limited land availability and the need to protect the district's rural character and historic environment. In this context, the effective retention, reuse and adaptation of existing housing stock forms an important component of meeting housing needs in a sustainable manner.

9.387 National policy emphasises the importance of making efficient use of land and supporting development that contributes positively to the creation of sustainable communities (NPPF 2024, paragraph 129). The sensitive adaptation and reuse of existing homes can help increase housing choice and supply while reducing the need for additional greenfield development.

Sub-Division of Existing Dwellings

9.388 The subdivision of larger dwellings can provide an important source of smaller homes within the district, helping to address the needs of smaller households, older people, younger people and those seeking more affordable accommodation. The conversion of existing dwellings can also contribute towards making more efficient use of the existing housing stock in sustainable locations. However, poorly designed subdivision can have harmful impacts on the character of buildings and surrounding areas, particularly where excessive alterations, overdevelopment or cramped forms of accommodation are proposed. In some instances, subdivision proposals can also result in unacceptable impacts on neighbouring amenity through increased activity, overlooking, noise, parking pressure or inadequate refuse provision.

9.389 Accordingly, proposals for subdivision will be expected to demonstrate that the resulting homes provide a high standard of accommodation, including adequate outlook, daylight, privacy, internal space, external amenity space and appropriate storage arrangements. Proposals should also provide suitable and accessible arrangements for parking, cycle storage, servicing and refuse collection.

9.390 Particular care will be required where subdivision affects heritage assets, non-designated heritage assets or buildings that make a positive contribution to local character. Alterations associated with subdivision should respect the architectural integrity and appearance of the host building and avoid unsympathetic external changes.

9.391 The Council will also seek to ensure that proposals for subdivision remain proportionate and do not operate as a means of introducing forms of development that would otherwise conflict with the spatial strategy or other policies of the Local Plan.

Replacement of Existing Dwellings

9.392 The replacement of existing dwellings can provide opportunities to improve the quality, accessibility, environmental performance and adaptability of the district's housing stock. Replacement homes may also assist in reducing carbon emissions through improved energy efficiency standards and modern construction methods.

9.393 Policy DM25 supports the principle of one-for-one replacement dwellings where this can be achieved without harm to the character or appearance of the area or the surrounding landscape. Replacement dwellings should generally remain proportionate in scale to the dwelling being replaced and should respond positively to local context, settlement pattern and building character.

9.394 In rural areas and sensitive landscapes, particular attention will be paid to the visual impact of replacement dwellings and whether proposals would result in urbanising effects or disproportionate increases in built form. Replacement proposals should not result in the gradual erosion of rural character through excessive scale, prominence or domestication of the surrounding landscape.

9.395 DM25 also seeks to resist proposals that would result in the unjustified loss of existing residential units. Maintaining the district's housing stock is important in supporting housing supply and meeting identified local needs, particularly given affordability pressures across West Oxfordshire.

Loss of Existing Dwellings

9.396 Existing dwellings represent an important component of the district's housing supply, and the unnecessary loss of homes can undermine the ability to meet identified housing needs and maintain mixed and balanced communities. The Council will therefore resist proposals involving the loss of residential use unless exceptional circumstances apply.

9.397 There may, however, be limited circumstances where the loss of a dwelling is justified. This may include situations where a property is demonstrably unsuitable for continued residential occupation, where accommodation conditions are incapable of reasonable improvement, or where an alternative use would deliver significant and demonstrable benefits to the local community.

9.398 In assessing whether a dwelling is no longer needed to meet local housing needs, the Council will consider factors such as local housing demand, housing mix, affordability pressures and the contribution the dwelling makes towards the existing housing stock.

9.399 Where proposals rely on community benefit justification, applicants will be expected to provide a clear statement of community benefit setting out the nature of the proposed benefits, why these outweigh the loss of the dwelling, and how the benefits will be secured over the longer term. Examples may include the retention or enhancement of valued community services, facilities or infrastructure that support the social and economic wellbeing of local communities.

9.400 In all cases, proposals involving the loss, replacement or subdivision of dwellings should contribute positively to the character, function and sustainability of communities and accord with other relevant policies within the Local Plan.

DM25 - Loss, Replacement and Sub-Division of Existing Dwellings

1. Subdivision of existing dwellings

a. Proposals for the sub-division of existing dwellings will be supported where they meet the following criteria and accord with other relevant planning policies:

i. Respect the character, appearance, and architectural integrity of the existing building and surrounding area.
ii. Not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties, residents, or visitors.
iii. Provide high-quality internal and external living conditions.
iv. Include appropriate levels of private outdoor space, parking provision, highway safety and refuse storage.

2. Replacement of Existing Dwellings

a. Proposals for the 'one-for-one' replacement of existing permanent dwellings will be supported where they meet the following criteria and accord with other relevant planning policies:

i. Do not result in a net loss of residential units.
ii. Are of a scale and design that is proportionate to the original dwelling and in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

3. Loss of Existing Dwellings

a. The loss of existing dwellings will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where one or more of the following criteria are satisfied:

i. The dwelling is located in a demonstrably unsuitable location for residential use.
ii. The property fails to provide satisfactory living accommodation that cannot reasonably be improved.
iii. The dwelling is not needed to meet identified local housing needs.
iv. The proposed use would deliver a demonstrable benefit to the local community, such as enhancing local services, facilities, or amenities. The case of which must be set out in a 'statement of community benefit'.

b. Proposals that result in high concentrations of short-term rental accommodation within communities will not be supported.

Policy DM26 - Conversion, Extension and Alteration of Traditional Buildings

9.401 Policy DM26 seeks to ensure that proposals involving the conversion, extension or alteration of traditional buildings protect and reinforce the distinctive historic and architectural character of West Oxfordshire while enabling buildings to remain viable and in active use.

9.402 Traditional buildings, including historic farmsteads, barns, cottages, mills, workshops and other vernacular structures, form an important part of the district's historic environment and rural landscape. Many of these buildings are valued not only for their age and appearance, but also for their contribution to local identity, landscape character and cultural heritage. They often display locally distinctive building forms, materials and craftsmanship that reflect the historic development of settlements and agricultural practices across West Oxfordshire.

9.403 Such buildings are increasingly under pressure from modern demands, including changes of use and modification to existing traditional buildings. It is important that these forms of development respect those aspects of character and integrity of the original buildings that contribute to local distinctiveness.

9.404 National policy recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Even where buildings are not statutorily listed, traditional buildings can make an important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and the wider setting of villages and the countryside.

9.405 Traditional buildings are often sensitive to change and can be vulnerable to unsympathetic alteration, incremental erosion of historic fabric and inappropriate extensions or domestic alterations. Poorly designed interventions, including standardised detailing, inappropriate materials, excessive openings, large dormers, over-engineered structural works or overly dominant extensions, can undermine the character and integrity of traditional buildings and erode their contribution to the historic environment. However, carefully managed adaptation can secure the long-term future of traditional buildings by enabling them to remain in viable and beneficial use. Sensitive conversion and alteration can also contribute to sustainable development by retaining embodied carbon, reducing waste and making effective use of existing buildings and materials.

9.406 Policy DM26 requires proposals to be based upon a clear understanding of the building's significance, including its architectural qualities, historic evolution, traditional construction methods and relationship to its surroundings. Development proposals should demonstrate how this understanding has informed the design approach and minimised harm to historic fabric and character.

9.407 Particular importance is attached to the retention and repair of original features and materials. Traditional buildings often derive significance from surviving elements such as roof structures, historic openings, fireplaces, joinery, stonework, brickwork, timber framing, flooring, decorative detailing and traditional internal layouts. Retaining these features helps preserve authenticity and maintain the legibility of the building's historic form and function.

9.408 The Council will encourage repair-led approaches that prioritise conservation of existing fabric over replacement. Where replacement is unavoidable, materials and detailing should closely

match the original in terms of appearance, finish, texture and craftsmanship. The use of inappropriate modern materials or detailing that detracts from the building's character will be resisted.

9.409 Extensions and external alterations should remain subordinate to the original building and avoid overwhelming or competing with the historic form. New interventions should respect existing proportions, scale, massing and rooflines and should not result in visual imbalance or suburbanisation of rural and vernacular buildings. Similarly, proposals should avoid excessive domestication of agricultural or utilitarian buildings through inappropriate external features, boundary treatments or engineered landscaping.

9.410 DM26 supports the sensitive incorporation of sustainable design measures where these can be accommodated without unacceptable harm to heritage significance. Traditional buildings were often constructed using passive environmental principles such as natural ventilation, thick walls, building orientation and breathable materials. Proposals should, where possible, build upon these characteristics and use compatible methods and materials when introducing energy efficiency measures or renewable technologies.

9.411 To ensure proposals are informed by an appropriate understanding of significance, applications must be supported by a Heritage Statement proportionate to the scale and importance of the building and the nature of the proposed works. This should explain the building's historical development, architectural significance and contribution to local character, together with an assessment of how the proposals respond to that significance. Evidence from sources such as the Historic Environment Record, Conservation Area Appraisals and local heritage lists should be taken into account where relevant.

9.412 Where proposals would result in harm to heritage significance, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the harm has been minimised through sensitive design and that there is clear justification for the works proposed. The Council will expect proposals to adopt a balanced and conservation-led approach that secures viable long-term use while safeguarding the character and significance of the building.

9.413 The setting and curtilage of traditional buildings are often integral to their significance and understanding. Features such as boundary walls, yards, outbuildings, landscaping and historic access arrangements may positively contribute to the character and historic function of the site. Development proposals should therefore avoid harm to these associated features or to the wider setting of the building.

9.414 Where proposals involve the conversion of traditional buildings to alternative uses, they will also be considered against the requirements of Policy DM28 and any other relevant policies of the Local Plan.

DM26 - Conversion, Extension and Alteration of Traditional Buildings

1. Development proposals involving the conversion, extension, or alteration of traditional buildings will only be supported where they are informed by a clear understanding of the

building's historic significance, architectural qualities and relationship to its setting. Proposals should:

a. Re-use and repair existing features and materials rather than replace them.
b. Minimise the need for substantial structural intervention.
c. Maintain or reinstate traditional layouts, uses or construction methods where this contributes positively to heritage significance.
d. Incorporate traditional sustainable design principles, provided these are compatible with the historic fabric.
e. Avoid unjustified alteration to the existing structure or result in the loss of historic fabric, features of architectural or vernacular interest (such as traditional roof structures, fireplaces, openings, internal layouts, or decorative detailing).
f. Avoid extensions, dormers or new openings that would unbalance, obscure or compromise the original scale, form, massing or proportions of the building.
g. Avoid se inappropriate or unsympathetic materials or detailing that detract from the traditional character or integrity of the building.

2. Proposals that secure the long-term viable use of a traditional building in a manner that sustains and enhances its significance and comply with the requirements of this policy will be supported in principle.

a. All proposals involving the conversion, extension, or alteration of traditional buildings must demonstrate to the council's satisfaction high-quality and sensitive design and construction which responds to the character, appearance, materials, and craftsmanship of the original structure.

b. All development proposals involving the conversion, extension, or alteration of traditional buildings must be supported by a Heritage Statement setting out the building's historic and architectural significance, assessing the impact of proposed changes and explaining how the design responds to this understanding. This includes;

i. The building's age, construction techniques, architectural form and original or historic function.
ii. The contribution it makes to local character, distinctiveness, and landscape setting.
iii. Any evidence from the Historic Environment Record (HER), Conservation Area Appraisals or local heritage list.

c. Where harm is proposed, this must be clearly justified and, where possible, mitigated through careful design and appropriate detailing.
d. Proposals for the conversion of traditional buildings will be considered in accordance with DM28
e. Harm the setting or curtilage of the building, including traditional outbuildings, walls, boundary treatments or landscaping features associated with its historic use.

Policy DM27 - Provision and Protection of Land for Employment

9.415 Policy DM27 seeks to ensure that sufficient, well-located and flexible employment land and premises are delivered, maintained and protected across the district to support sustainable economic growth over the plan period.

9.416 West Oxfordshire's economy is diverse and evolving, with growing demand for high-quality employment space across a range of sectors identified in the Council's most recent Economic Needs Assessment (ENA), including advanced manufacturing, research and development, green technologies, logistics, and business services.

9.417 The ENA identifies a need not only to allocate sufficient land to meet future employment requirements but also to ensure the portfolio of sites is flexible and capable of responding to changing economic circumstances. The ENA recommends a flexible policy approach that safeguards existing employment sites to ensure a robust and readily available supply of premises, while also recognising that, in certain circumstances, alternative uses may be appropriate where employment uses are no longer viable or suitable.

Supporting New Employment Development

9.418 In accordance with national policy, Policy DM27 provides an economic strategy that seeks to enable a range of employment development across different locations, reflecting the varied needs of businesses of different sizes and sectors, aligned with the district's key growth sectors.

9.419 DM27 directs employment development towards the most sustainable locations, including allocated employment sites and the district's main towns and villages, where access to labour, services and infrastructure is greatest. The important role that rural areas play in supporting economic activity is also recognised.

9.420 DM27 also seeks to ensure that employment development is of an appropriate scale and type relative to its location, is well-integrated with existing infrastructure, and promotes sustainable modes of transport. In accordance with the NPPF, particular emphasis is placed on the efficient use of land, including the reuse and intensification of previously developed land, in order to reduce pressure on greenfield sites and support sustainable patterns of development.

9.421 Modern business requirements are increasingly dynamic, and the provision of flexible and adaptable employment floorspace is encouraged to ensure that buildings can respond to changing occupier needs over time. Proposals must also be compatible with surrounding land uses, safeguarding the amenity of nearby residents and the quality of the environment.

Protection of Existing Employment Floorspace

9.422 Protecting the existing stock of employment land and premises is essential to maintaining a strong and resilient local economy. The loss of such sites will only be permitted where it can be robustly demonstrated that they are no longer viable or suitable for employment use, or where their release would not undermine the overall supply of employment land or the Council's economic strategy.

9.423 The marketing requirements set out in DM27 are intended to provide transparency and ensure that all reasonable opportunities for continued employment use have been fully explored. The approach to marketing, viability and the consideration of alternative uses ensures that proposals for the loss of employment land are properly justified, taking into account market conditions, demand and the strategic importance of the site. This is important to ensure the district maintains a balanced portfolio of employment sites capable of meeting both current and future needs.

9.424 Robust justification for the loss of employment floorspace and/or uses is particularly important where facilities have a community function, such as public houses, especially where these have been designated as Assets of Community Value (ACVs). In such cases, applicants must demonstrate meaningful engagement with local communities and provide evidence that the facility has been marketed appropriately to allow community acquisition where viable.

Co-working

9.425 The Council recognises the increasing role of co-working and shared workspace in supporting modern business practices, including remote working, start-ups and small enterprises. Such provision can enhance the flexibility and resilience of the local economy and is particularly encouraged within town and village centres and employment sites where it can support collaboration and reduce the need to travel.

9.426 The provision of high-quality digital connectivity as set out in Policy DM31 will be a key requirement in supporting co-working and flexible workspace provision across the district.

Policy DM27 - Provision and Protection of Land for Employment

Proposals for employment development for all business types and sizes will be supported where they are demonstrably aligned with the Council's economic vision and objectives, particularly where they contribute to the advancement of the district's key growth sectors in accordance with Policy CP3 and align with other policies of the Local Plan.

1. **Provision of employment land and premises**

    a. Proposals for new employment uses will be supported in sustainable locations, including existing and allocated employment sites and at the district's market towns and villages, where they accord with the spatial strategy and other relevant planning policies.

    b. Employment proposals will be supported where they meet the following criteria and accord with other relevant planning policies:

        i. The scale and nature of the development is appropriate to the location and the settlement hierarchy
        ii. The site is well connected to local infrastructure, services, and sustainable transport options.

iii. The scale and type of use/s proposed can be accommodated by existing infrastructure or provision of improved infrastructure, particularly access, parking and servicing.
iv. The proposal makes efficient use of land and buildings, with a preference for the re-use or redevelopment of previously developed (brownfield) land over the use of greenfield sites, including upward extension or infill where appropriate.
v. Provides flexible and adaptable accommodation suitable for future reuse
vi. Are compatible with surrounding land uses and do not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of nearby occupiers or the environment.
vii. Proposals for employment development within Tier 5 settlements and rural locations will be determined under the provisions of Policy DM28 – Supporting the Rural Economy.
viii. Supports flexible working patterns, including the provision of co-working or shared workspace where appropriate to the scale and location of development.

2. Loss of Employment Land and Premises

a. Proposals for the partial or complete loss of employment land or premises will only be permitted where it is demonstrated to the council's satisfaction that:

i. The site is no longer economically viable or suitable for continued employment use, and there is no reasonable prospect of its continued use for employment purposes. This must be demonstrated with evidence of active and realistic marketing for a period of least 12 months.
ii. The proposed loss would not harm the overall supply of employment land in that locality over the plan period and would not undermine the Council's economic objectives.
iii. The proposal would provide significant wider public benefits, such as delivering affordable housing, community infrastructure or environmental enhancements, which outweigh the loss of employment space.

b. In considering proposals for the partial or complete loss of employment land, the Council will have regard to the nature, condition and location of the site, market demand and the strategic importance of the employment use.

3. Marketing Guidelines

a. Current lack of demand or a more profitable alternative use will not, on its own, be sufficient to demonstrate non-viability.

b. Applicants must demonstrate, through a period of active marketing of an appropriate length (typically 12 months) and price having regard to the nature of the facility, together with financial or viability evidence where relevant, that the existing use is not viable in the longer term.

c. Where a facility, particularly a public house, has been designated or nominated as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), significant weight will be given to its retention. In such cases, applicants must demonstrate that the community has been given adequate and realistic opportunity to bid for or take on operation of the facility, and that local groups have been fully engaged as part of the marketing process.

Policy DM28 - Supporting the Rural Economy

9.427 Policy DM28 supports the sustainable growth, diversification and resilience of the rural economy, while safeguarding the intrinsic character, function and environmental quality of the countryside, ensuring that West Oxfordshire's rural areas remain both economically active and environmentally distinctive over the plan period. This approach aligns with national policy objectives to build a strong rural economy, whilst also protect the countryside.

9.428 West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district where agriculture, land-based industries and a wide range of small and micro-businesses play a vital role in supporting economic activity, managing the landscape and sustaining rural communities. Economic uses in rural areas include farming, forestry, equestrian enterprises, tourism and visitor accommodation, rural crafts, small-scale industrial and service businesses, and increasingly digital and home-based enterprises. Supporting these activities is essential to maintaining vibrant, working countryside communities.

9.429 Rural areas face ongoing challenges, including structural change in agriculture, pressures on farm incomes, limited infrastructure, and reduced access to services and housing for rural workers. At the same time, changing patterns of employment and enterprise are creating new opportunities for diversification and innovation. Without an enabling policy framework, there is a risk that rural businesses may struggle to adapt, undermining the long-term sustainability of the rural economy.

Economic Development in Rural Locations

9.430 National policy requires local plans to support the sustainable growth and expansion of rural businesses, including farm diversification, while recognising the intrinsic beauty of the countryside. Policy DM28 delivers this by providing a positive, criteria-based framework that supports appropriate rural economic development while ensuring that impacts on landscape, heritage, amenity and infrastructure are carefully managed.

9.431 DM28 supports small-scale employment development in Tier 5 settlements and the open countryside where it is proportionate to its location, well-related to existing development, and accessible. Given the generally lower levels of accessibility in rural areas, proposals must demonstrate safe access and, where possible, maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and other sustainable transport connections.

9.432 To protect the character of the countryside and ensure efficient use of resources, priority is given to the re-use and adaptation of existing buildings, particularly traditional rural buildings. New or replacement buildings will only be supported where they are justified by a specific rural business need and cannot reasonably be located in more sustainable locations. This approach also reflects national policy, which promotes the effective use of land and the reuse of existing assets.

Farm and Estate Diversification

9.433 Farm and estate diversification is recognised as a key mechanism for supporting the long-term viability of agricultural businesses. Policy DM28 supports well-conceived diversification

schemes that remain subordinate to the primary agricultural use, are compatible with their surroundings, and contribute positively to business resilience. Requiring proportionate supporting information, such as business or estate management plans, ensures that proposals are robust, deliver genuine economic benefits and are sustainable over the long term.

9.434 Retail development in rural areas is carefully controlled to ensure that it forms part of genuine diversification activity, supports local supply chains and does not undermine the vitality and viability of nearby town and village centres, in line with national town centre policy.

Rural Worker Dwellings

9.435 Provision is also made for rural worker dwellings where there is an essential functional need that cannot be met through existing accommodation. Such dwellings must be proportionate and secured to the enterprise they serve to prevent unjustified new housing in the countryside. DM28 also seeks to retain existing agricultural worker dwellings, recognising their importance to the rural economy. Their loss will only be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that they are no longer required and cannot reasonably serve other rural economic uses, with evidence (including marketing where appropriate) to support this conclusion.

Co-working

9.436 The Council supports the provision of small-scale co-working hubs and shared workspace in rural areas where these are proportionate to their setting. Such facilities can help reduce the need for long-distance commuting, support home-based businesses, and provide valuable local employment opportunities, particularly in areas with limited access to traditional employment sites. Proposals should be sensitively designed and, where possible, make use of existing buildings in order to protect rural character.

9.437 Again, provision of high-quality digital connectivity as set out in Policy DM31 will be a key requirement in supporting co-working and flexible workspace provision across the district but particularly in rural locations.

Policy DM28 - Supporting the Rural Economy

Proposals that support the sustainable growth, diversification and resilience of the rural economy in Tier 5 locations will be supported where they are appropriately located, sensitively designed, consistent with the character and function of the countryside and accord with other relevant planning policies.

Employment Development in Rural Areas

1. Small-scale employment proposals in rural locations will be supported where they meet the following criteria and accord with the spatial strategy and other relevant planning policies of the Development Plan:

a. The scale and nature of the proposal is commensurate with the size and character of the settlement or rural location.
b. It does not detract from residential amenity or landscape or historic character.
c. Safe and suitable access is available, and both traffic impacts and impacts on the local road network are acceptable.
d. Opportunities for sustainable transport access are maximised, including opportunities to enhance footpath or cycle connectivity
e. Support new and flexible forms of rural working, including small-scale co-working hubs or shared workspace, where they are appropriate to the location and do not adversely affect residential amenity or rural character.

2. New or replacement buildings for employment use will be supported in Tier 5 settlements and open countryside only where they meet the following criteria and accord with other relevant planning policies:

    a. The proposal is required for a specific rural business need or land-based enterprise that cannot be reasonably accommodated in a more sustainable location.
    b. The scale, design and siting of the development is compatible with a countryside location.
    c. Existing buildings are re-used as far as reasonably practicable.
    d. The development is physically well-related to existing settlements as much as possible and uses previously developed (brownfield) land

Farm and Estate Diversification and Land-Based Enterprises

3. Proposals for farm and estate diversification will be supported where they meet the following criteria and accord with other relevant planning policies:

    a. Form part of an existing farm or rural estate business and will contribute to its ongoing viability
    b. Remain secondary to the primary agricultural function and do not prejudice future agricultural activity.
    c. Are compatible with rural character and landscape setting.
    d. Re-use existing buildings as far as reasonably practicable.
    e. Demonstrate no significant adverse impacts on local amenity, highways or public rights of way.
    f. Include a business plan or whole estate management plan demonstrating long-term viability,
    g. and developed in conjunction with the council to ensure they deliver the economic benefits of diversification
    h. Secure the viable use of traditional buildings with priority given to economic uses for the benefit of the community, estate or business.

4. Diversification proposals that include retail development, will only be supported where they meet the following criteria and accord with other relevant planning policies:
    a. Are part of a genuine farm diversification scheme.

b. Primarily sell produce from the host farm or those in the immediate vicinity.
c. Do not harm the viability and vitality of nearby town or village centres.
d. Are of an appropriate scale and design for their setting.
e. Are subject to planning conditions limiting the sale of non-local goods where necessary.

Rural Worker Dwellings

5. Where essential to the functioning of a rural business, proposals for rural workers' dwellings will be supported where it can be demonstrated that there is an essential operational or specific local need that cannot be met in any other way, including through the re-use of existing buildings.

6. Rural worker dwellings must be proportionate in scale, location, and occupancy to the demonstrated need and will remain tied to the enterprise via condition or legal agreement.

7. The Council will resist the loss of Agricultural Workers Dwellings unless it can be demonstrated that;

    a. The property is no longer required to serve the holding
    b. Is not suitable to serve another agricultural holding in the vicinity of the site
    c. Is not suitable for other uses that are appropriate to serve the rural economy such as visitor accommodation, rural business or affordable housing to meet a local need

Policy DM29 - Learning, Skills and Training Opportunities

9.438 Policy DM29 seeks to ensure that planned growth across the district is accompanied by the provision of education, skills and training opportunities so that local communities can fully benefit from economic development.

9.439 West Oxfordshire has a diverse population, including young people entering the workforce, those seeking to upskill or retrain, and older workers remaining in or returning to employment. Ensuring access to relevant education, training and employment pathways is essential to improving life chances, supporting business growth and fostering inclusive, resilient communities. However, access to such opportunities can be uneven, particularly in rural areas where connectivity and proximity to training providers may be more limited.

9.440 As the district continues to grow, it is important that new development contributes positively to meeting these needs. National policy emphasises the importance of supporting economic growth and productivity, including through the development of a skilled workforce, and ensuring that infrastructure is provided in a timely manner to support development. Policy DM29 reflects this by taking a proactive and collaborative approach to securing education provision and embedding learning, skills and employment opportunities within the development process.

Provision of Education

9.441 DM29 supports proposals for new, expanded or improved education facilities where they align with the spatial strategy and respond to identified needs arising from planned growth. Co-location of education, training and employment uses is encouraged wherever possible, helping to create accessible, integrated environments that support lifelong learning and strengthen links between businesses and training providers.

9.442 Major development proposals are required to contribute to education infrastructure and skills initiatives, either through on-site provision or financial contributions, informed by an appropriate assessment of local need. This ensures that the impacts of development are mitigated and that communities benefit directly from the growth taking place.

Skills and Employment Opportunities

9.443 A key component of Policy DM29 is the requirement for Community Employment and Skills Plans (CESPs) for large and strategic developments. These provide a structured mechanism to secure tangible social and economic benefits, including apprenticeships, vocational training, and local employment opportunities. By embedding such measures within development proposals, the policy helps to ensure that economic growth translates into improved access to jobs and training for local residents.

9.444 CESPs are expected to be proportionate to the scale and nature of development but should demonstrate clear commitments to supporting local labour markets and skills development. This includes promoting apprenticeships and traineeships, particularly for young people and those not in education, employment or training, facilitating pathways into work, and

strengthening engagement between developers, local businesses, education providers and the wider community.

9.445 Policy DM29 also supports inclusive economic growth by encouraging initiatives that address barriers to employment, such as pre-employment training, local recruitment strategies, and partnership working with social enterprises and community organisations. These measures can help to reduce inequalities, support social mobility and ensure that the benefits of growth are more widely shared.

Policy DM29 - Learning, Skills and Training Opportunities

The Council will take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to supporting the development of further education, skills and training opportunities across the district.

Education Provision

1. Proposals for the creation, expansion or improvement of education facilities will be supported where they accord with the spatial strategy and other relevant planning policies, particularly where these directly support planned or committed growth.

2. Development should maximise opportunities to co-locate further education and training facilities alongside employment growth.

3. Major development will be required to make provision for education infrastructure, informed by an appropriate assessment of needs or make a financial contribution towards education, skills and employment initiatives in the district.

Learning, Skills and Employment Integration

4. Proposals for large and strategic scale development will be required to prepare and submit a Community Employment and Skills Plan (CESP), with major development strongly encouraged to do so.

5. The scope of the CESP should be proportionate to the scale of development but should include the following:

    a. Provision of apprenticeships and vocational technical training pathways.
    b. Delivery of employment and training initiatives across all age groups.
    c. Traineeships for young people, particularly those not in employment, education, or training (NEET).
    d. Maximise opportunities for local labour, including pre-employment training programmes and opportunities for local businesses to participate in procurement processes.
    e. Support for local and regional skills and training events.
    f. Engagement initiatives with schools, colleges, and universities.

g. Promotion of inclusive economic development, including partnerships with social enterprises, volunteering opportunities, charitable contributions and community outreach projects related to learning, skills, and employment.

Policy DM30 - Sustainable Tourism

9.446 Policy DM30 seeks to ensure that tourism development supports and strengthens the local economy in a sustainable and balanced way, while safeguarding West Oxfordshire's distinctive environment, heritage and community wellbeing.

9.447 West Oxfordshire is defined by its high-quality natural and built environment, including the Cotswolds National Landscape, the River Thames, historic market towns and attractive villages. These assets make the district a popular visitor destination and tourism plays a key role in supporting the local economy, particularly in rural areas where it provides jobs, supports farm diversification and sustains a wide range of small businesses and local supply chains.

9.448 The popularity of the area also brings pressures, including seasonal peaks in visitor numbers, increased traffic, pressure on infrastructure and services, and impacts on local communities and environmental assets. National policy supports sustainable rural tourism and the need to balance economic benefits with the conservation of the countryside and heritage assets. Policy DM30 responds to the opportunities and challenges of tourism by promoting a managed and sustainable approach to tourism growth.

9.449 DM30 supports tourism and leisure proposals that deliver clear economic and social benefits while protecting and, where possible, enhancing the district's landscape, biodiversity and historic environment. Emphasis is placed on high-quality design that reflects local character, ensuring that new development integrates successfully with its surroundings and reinforces local distinctiveness.

9.450 A key objective of Policy DM30 is to encourage a more sustainable and resilient visitor economy by promoting year-round tourism, increasing overnight stays and supporting longer visitor dwell time. This helps to reduce seasonal pressures, spread economic benefits more evenly, and make more efficient use of infrastructure and services.

9.451 Sustainable travel is also a central consideration. Proposals are expected to encourage low-carbon travel choices and make use of existing public transport and active travel networks wherever possible, helping to reduce reliance on the private car and associated environmental impacts. This reflects wider national objectives to support the transition to a low-carbon economy.

9.452 Policy DM30 promotes the efficient use of land by prioritising the reuse of existing buildings and previously developed land, which can help to limit the impact of new development on the countryside and make use of existing assets. In rural areas, particularly Tier 5 locations, tourism development is carefully controlled to ensure it is appropriate in scale, sensitively

located and justified by a specific need or functional requirement, such as proximity to a particular attraction or its role in supporting farm diversification. This approach ensures that development respects the character and tranquillity of rural areas while still enabling economic opportunities.

9.453 To support sustainable patterns of development, main town centre uses such as hotels, conference facilities and cultural venues are expected to be located, where possible, within or well-related to town and village centres. This helps to reinforce the vitality and viability of centres, support existing services and facilities, and maximise accessibility by sustainable modes of transport. Proposals in alternative locations will need to demonstrate clear justification.

9.454 The policy also addresses the cumulative impacts of tourism, including the proliferation of short-term holiday lets, which in some locations can affect housing availability and community cohesion. By managing concentrations, the policy seeks to maintain balanced and sustainable communities.

9.455 Existing tourist attractions and facilities are important economic assets, and their improvement and expansion is supported where this can be achieved without unacceptable impacts on the landscape or local amenity. Proposals for intensification must be supported by appropriate evidence, including transport management measures where necessary, to ensure impacts are effectively mitigated.

Policy DM30 - Sustainable Tourism

1. Tourism and leisure proposals that positively contribute to the local economy and sustainable communities, enhance the distinct character, landscape, and built environment of West Oxfordshire will be supported, particularly where they meet the following criteria and accord with the spatial strategy and other relevant planning policies:

    a. Promote year-round tourism to reduce seasonal pressures.
    b. Increase dwell time and overnight stays
    c. Encourage low-carbon and sustainable forms of travel and accommodation including support for existing public transport networks.
    d. Engage local communities and support local supply chains.
    e. Conserve and, as far as reasonably practicable, enhance the natural environment, historic assets, and landscape character, particularly within designated areas such as the Cotswolds National Landscape.
    f. Prioritise the reuse of previously developed (brownfield) land and existing buildings as far as reasonably practicable.
    g. Incorporate high-quality design that reflects local character and vernacular.
    h. Avoid proliferations / concentrations of short term holiday lets within settlements

2. Proposals for tourism and leisure uses such as hotels, conference facilities, and cultural venues, should be located where they support other services and facilities, such as town centre locations, unless strong justification is provided for alternative locations based on functional or locational needs.

3. Proposals for new and expanded tourism and visitor proposals in Tier 5 locations will only be supported where they are appropriate to their rural context, meet one or more of the following criteria and accord with other relevant planning policies:

    a. Are functionally linked to a specific rural, historic, or environmental attraction.
    b. Are of a type and scale that cannot reasonably be accommodated within the built area of a Tier 1-4 settlements
    c. Support the diversification of an existing farm enterprise or rural estate.
    d. Involve the sensitive re-use of an existing building that is appropriate in scale, design, and location.
    e. avoid adverse impacts on landscape character, biodiversity, and local amenity and deliver clear economic or community benefits.

4. Development / intensification of existing tourist attractions/facilities will be supported where it is demonstrated to the council's satisfaction that they will have a high design standard, minimal landscape impacts and are supported by a Transport Management Plan.

Policy DM31 - Supporting Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity

9.456 Policy DM31 seeks to ensure that development across the district delivers modern, reliable and future-proof digital connectivity in a way that supports communities, businesses and sustainable growth, while minimising environmental and visual impacts.

9.457 West Oxfordshire's predominantly rural character and dispersed settlement pattern present both challenges and opportunities for digital connectivity. While some areas benefit from good infrastructure, many rural communities continue to experience slower broadband speeds and inconsistent mobile coverage. This can limit access to services, constrain business growth and place residents at a disadvantage in an increasingly digital economy.

9.458 Patterns of working and service delivery are also evolving. The growth of remote and flexible working, digital businesses and online services has increased demand for high-quality connectivity in homes, workplaces and shared environments such as co-working hubs. Ensuring that all parts of the district are digitally connected is therefore essential to supporting economic resilience, enabling innovation and reducing the need to travel, particularly over long distances.

9.459 National recognises the importance of high-quality digital infrastructure in supporting sustainable economic growth and requires planning policies to facilitate the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology and full-fibre broadband. Policy DM31 delivers this by taking a positive and proactive approach to supporting the delivery and upgrading of digital infrastructure, particularly in underserved areas.

9.460 DM31 supports new and enhanced digital infrastructure where it delivers fast and reliable connectivity and contributes to economic growth, innovation and social inclusion. It also requires careful consideration of siting and design to ensure that infrastructure such as masts, towers and equipment cabinets is sensitively integrated into the landscape, particularly in environmentally or visually sensitive areas such as the Cotswolds National Landscape and conservation areas. Proposals must also avoid harm to biodiversity and incorporate appropriate mitigation measures where necessary.

9.461 To minimise visual clutter and the proliferation of infrastructure, the policy promotes the sharing of equipment and the co-location of apparatus wherever feasible. This reflects best practice and helps to balance the need for improved connectivity with the protection of the district's valued landscapes and townscapes.

9.462 In addition to stand-alone infrastructure, DM31 places strong emphasis on embedding digital connectivity within new development. All new residential, commercial and mixed-use schemes are expected to be designed from the outset to incorporate the highest standard of digital infrastructure, including full-fibre connectivity, ensuring that developments are future-ready and capable of meeting evolving technological demands. Early consideration at the master planning and design stage is critical to achieving this in a cost-effective and coordinated way.

9.463 Policy DM31 also requires applicants to demonstrate engagement with key stakeholders, including telecommunications providers and local communities. This helps to ensure that proposals are deliverable, appropriately located and responsive to local needs, particularly in areas where infrastructure provision may currently be limited.

9.464 It is recognised that a significant proportion of digital infrastructure development can be delivered under permitted development rights, particularly in relation to the upgrading of existing apparatus and the installation of certain small-scale equipment. While such development may not always require planning permission, the Council will continue to work proactively with operators and communities to encourage high standards of design, appropriate siting, and the use of shared infrastructure. Where planning permission is required, Policy DM31 provides a clear framework for assessing proposals in a consistent and balanced manner.

9.465 The Council will also work in partnership with developers, infrastructure providers and other stakeholders to facilitate the timely delivery of digital infrastructure, address barriers to deployment, and encourage its integration within wider development and regeneration projects.

9.466 Digital infrastructure may involve the delivery of towers and mono poles. The Council will work in partnership with developers, telecommunications providers, and local communities to facilitate the roll-out of digital infrastructure in line with national and local priorities, address barriers to delivery, such as access to funding or permissions for fixed and mobile infrastructure deployment and encourage the integration of digital connectivity improvements into wider regeneration or development projects.

DM31 - Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity

1. Where planning permission is required, the provision of new and upgraded fixed and mobile digital infrastructure will be supported where it meets the following criteria and accords with other relevant planning policies, particularly where it would deliver benefits to underserved areas of the district:

    a. Delivers fast, reliable, and future-proof connectivity, such as full-fibre broadband and 5G networks.
    b. Facilitates flexible and sustainable working practices, including remote working and the development of co-working hubs.
    c. Contributes to the district's economic resilience and competitiveness by supporting home-based businesses, start-ups, and innovation.
    d. Is designed and sited to minimise visual intrusion, particularly in sensitive locations such as the Cotswolds National Landscape or Conservation Areas.
    e. Avoids harm to the natural environment, including protected habitats and species, and incorporate mitigation measures where necessary.
    f. Uses shared infrastructure, such as mast-sharing or co-location, to reduce unnecessary proliferation of equipment.

2. All new development proposals must meet the following criteria:

    a. Be designed to incorporate the highest standard of digital connectivity, including full-fibre broadband infrastructure, from the outset.
    b. Ensure that new residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments provide sufficient capacity to meet current and future digital connectivity needs.
    c. Treat digital connectivity as a key consideration at the master planning and design stages.

Evidence Requirements

All planning applications involving digital infrastructure or major new development must provide evidence of consultation with relevant stakeholders, including telecommunications providers and the local community.

Appendix 1 - Strategic Locations for Growth Development Templates

CA5 – Land west of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth

1. Key Design Principles

Development proposals should establish a clear vision for a high-quality, sustainable new village that responds positively to its rural setting and relationship with Carterton. The scheme should promote a strong sense of place, with well-defined character areas, legible street hierarchy, and a coherent layout that prioritises walkability and connectivity. Design should reflect local vernacular influences where appropriate, while delivering a modern, climate-responsive development. Proposals should incorporate a mix of housing types and tenures to support a balanced and inclusive community.

2. Transport and movement

The development should be designed to prioritise active travel and reduce reliance on the private car. A comprehensive network of safe and attractive walking and cycling routes should be provided, linking key destinations within the site and connecting to Carterton and surrounding settlements. Vehicular access points should be carefully designed to integrate with the existing highway network and minimise impacts on surrounding roads. Opportunities to support public transport provision, including new or enhanced bus services, should be explored and incorporated.

3. Heritage

Development proposals should be informed by an appropriate assessment of heritage assets and their settings, including any nearby listed buildings or conservation areas. The layout and design should conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of heritage assets. Key views and landscape features that contribute to local character should be identified and respected.

4. Landscape

A landscape-led approach should underpin the masterplanning of the site. The development should respond to the existing landscape character, retaining and integrating important features such as hedgerows, trees, and field patterns where appropriate. New planting and structural landscaping should be used to create a strong green framework, provide visual containment, and soften the transition between the built form and surrounding countryside.

5. Green Infrastructure (GI) and Biodiversity

A comprehensive green infrastructure network should be delivered across the site, providing multifunctional spaces for recreation, biodiversity, and climate resilience. Development should deliver measurable biodiversity net gain and incorporate habitat creation and enhancement, including the protection and strengthening of ecological corridors. Public open space, play areas, and natural green spaces should be well-distributed, accessible, and integrated into the overall layout.

6. Flood risk / drainage

Development must be informed by site-specific flood risk assessment and incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water runoff. Proposals should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere and, where possible, reduce existing risks. Drainage features should be designed as integral components of the green infrastructure network, contributing to amenity and biodiversity.

- The site is divided by an overland flow route and the Shill Brook, and so bridges may be required to be located in flood zone areas in order to link parts of the site together. It is

recommended that these bridges be clear span bridges with their soffits set to achieve an appropriate freeboard (at least 600-mm) above the design flood level.

- Take a sequential approach to site layout prioritising flood zone 1 and areas identified to be at risk of surface water flooding.
- A site-specific FRA should investigate the requirement for bridges and their design, with modelling likely to be required for any works in flood risk areas.
- The drainage strategy for the proposed development should be suitably designed to manage additional runoff arising from the development and ensure that surface water flood risk at the site and to third party land is not increased.
- The use of infiltration SuDS solutions may be possible. A geotechnical investigation is required to obtain further information to confirm infiltration rates.
- Attenuated discharge to a watercourse or a sewer will also need to be considered as part of a site-specific FRA.

7. Infrastructure

The development should provide or contribute to the timely delivery of necessary infrastructure to support the new community. This includes, but is not limited to, education, healthcare, utilities, open space, and community facilities. Infrastructure provision should be coordinated with relevant providers and aligned with the scale and phasing of development.

8. Phasing / Delivery

A clear and deliverable phasing strategy should be prepared to demonstrate how the development will be implemented over time. This should ensure that infrastructure, services, and facilities are delivered in step with housing growth to support a sustainable and well-functioning community from the outset. Proposals should also demonstrate how early phases will establish a strong sense of place and avoid isolated or incomplete development.

CA6 - Land North of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth

Comprehensive masterplanning

1. Development proposals shall be informed by a comprehensive masterplan or development framework for the Strategic Location as a whole, prepared in consultation with the Council, relevant infrastructure providers, statutory consultees and the local community.
2. The masterplan shall demonstrate how the Strategic Location will function as a coordinated, landscape-led northern extension to Carterton comprised of new villages.
3. The masterplan shall identify the broad distribution of land uses, developable areas, structural landscaping, green and blue infrastructure, access points, active travel routes, public open space, drainage areas, ecological buffers, noise mitigation, infrastructure requirements and phasing.
4. Development shall avoid piecemeal proposals which would prejudice the proper planning, infrastructure delivery, including active travel, green infrastructure connectivity or long-term management of the development.

Housing and land use

5. Development shall provide a residential-led scheme between 700 and 800 dwellings, subject to design-led testing and detailed assessment.
6. Development shall provide a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in accordance with the relevant policies of the Local Plan.
7. The layout shall make provision for public open space, children's play space, informal recreation and, where required, sports provision, either on-site or through appropriate contributions. It should also accommodate the expansion of Carterton Football Club.
8. The development shall include a mixed-use local centre within the eastern part of the development, supporting local convenience, community interaction and sustainable travel.

Access and movement

9. Safe and suitable vehicular access shall be provided from Burford Road and Shilton Road, supported by a transport assessment.
10. Pedestrian, cycle and wheeling routes shall be designed to be direct, legible, attractive, safe and as permeable as possible, connecting the site with Carterton town centre, nearby schools, services, employment areas, public transport routes, open spaces and the wider public rights of way network.
11. The layout shall include a connected network of legible routes to the east and south, including links with the residential development immediately south of the site, Kilkenny Country Park and these with the future development to the east, so that the site integrates with adjoining neighbourhoods.
12. Development shall maximise opportunities to better link to, upgrade and integrate with existing public rights of way, specifically with footpath 2 and bridleway 4.
13. Development shall be designed for, and shall make proportionate contributions towards, enhanced active travel routes in the area, including improvements to active travel infrastructure along Shilton Road and Swinbrook Road and Kilkenny Lane, in line with the Carterton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

14. Contributions and/or works shall be provided towards public transport, active travel and highway improvements, including traffic mitigation measures necessary to address the impacts of development on Burford Road and the wider Carterton highway network.

Landscape character, green infrastructure and settlement edge

15. A landscape-led approach shall be taken to the design and layout of the development, informed by appropriate landscape and visual assessment
16. The layout, scale and design of development shall respond sensitively to the character of the northern edge of Carterton, the setting of Kilkenny Country Park and minimise intervisibility in the surrounding countryside.
17. The north and western parts of the site shall be provided as a natural and semi-natural green buffers, contributing towards the gap between the settlements of Carterton and Shilton, and creating a defensible and softened settlement edge.
18. The development shall deliver an internal green infrastructure network that maximises opportunities for an east to west ecological corridor.
19. Development shall respect the existing landscape structure, including field patterns, hedgerows, trees and other landscape features.
20. Development shall be designed to work positively with landform, with layout, street alignment, building placement, roofscape, storey heights, finished floor levels and boundary treatments responding sensitively to topography.

Ecology and biodiversity

21. Development shall protect and enhance existing habitats, trees, hedgerows and ecological networks within and adjoining the site, including deciduous woodland.
22. Proposals shall be supported by ecological assessment and shall provide appropriate buffers, biodiversity net gain, habitat creation and long-term management measures.
23. The green and blue infrastructure network shall be designed to strengthen ecological connectivity across and around the site.

Heritage and archaeology

24. Development proposals shall be informed by a heritage impact assessment and archaeological assessment.
25. The layout, scale, design and landscape mitigation of development shall conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of nearby heritage assets and their settings, including Shilton Conservation Area.
26. Archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be undertaken where required.

Drainage, noise and utilities

27. An appropriate surface water drainage strategy shall be provided, incorporating sustainable drainage systems as part of the site's green and blue infrastructure and public realm networks and responding to the site's landform.
28. Development proposals shall be supported by a noise assessment and shall incorporate any necessary mitigation to demonstrate that acceptable living conditions will be achieved for future residents, with particular regard to noise from the future A40 Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Corridor and the quarry to the north.

29. Wastewater treatment capacity and other necessary utilities infrastructure shall be confirmed and delivered in step with development, including any investment required to improve the capacity of existing infrastructure.

Infrastructure, phasing and long-term management

30. A phasing, infrastructure delivery and long-term management strategy shall be submitted to and agreed with the Council.

31. The strategy shall demonstrate how necessary infrastructure, mitigation, open space, green infrastructure, drainage, biodiversity assets, active travel improvements, noise mitigation and utilities upgrades will be secured, delivered and managed over time.

32. Development shall provide proportionate contributions towards infrastructure and mitigation in accordance with the relevant infrastructure, transport, open space, biodiversity, education, health and developer contribution policies of the Local Plan.

CA7 – Land north east of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth

1. Comprehensive masterplanning

a. Development proposals shall be informed by a comprehensive masterplan or development framework for the Strategic Location as a whole, prepared in consultation with the Council, Oxfordshire County Council, relevant infrastructure providers, statutory consultees and the local community.
b. The masterplan shall demonstrate how the Strategic Location will function as a coordinated, landscape-led extension new village to the north of Carterton within Brize Norton, having regard to the wider strategic growth area and the need to secure comprehensive infrastructure delivery.
c. The masterplan shall identify the broad distribution of land uses, developable areas, local centre provision, structural landscaping, green and blue infrastructure, access points, active travel routes, public open space, drainage areas, ecological buffers, education infrastructure, community infrastructure requirements and phasing.
d. Development shall avoid piecemeal proposals which would prejudice the proper planning, infrastructure delivery, active travel connectivity, green infrastructure connectivity or long-term management of the development.

2. Housing and land use

a. Development shall provide a residential-led scheme of approximately 1,500 dwellings, subject to design-led testing and detailed assessment.
b. Development shall provide a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in accordance with the relevant policies of the Local Plan.
c. The development shall include an appropriate mix of supporting uses, including local convenience, community, education, open space, recreation and other neighbourhood facilities necessary to support a sustainable new community.
d. The layout shall make provision for public open space, children's play space, informal recreation and, where required, sports provision, either on-site or through appropriate contributions.
e. A local centre or equivalent neighbourhood hub shall be provided in a location which is accessible by walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport, and which supports the creation of a walkable neighbourhood.

3. Access and movement

a. Safe and suitable vehicular access shall be provided from the local highway network, supported by a transport assessment.
b. Pedestrian, cycle and wheeling routes shall be designed to be direct, legible, attractive, safe and as permeable as possible, connecting the site with Carterton town centre, Brize Norton, nearby schools, services, employment areas, public transport routes, open spaces and the wider public rights of way network.
c. Development shall deliver substantial improvements to active travel infrastructure, including enhanced connections to Carterton, Brize Norton, local schools, employment areas and the wider Carterton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan network.
d. Development shall provide safe, direct and attractive walking, cycling and wheeling routes to existing and future primary and secondary school provision, including any off-site routes required to support safe travel to school.

e. Development shall provide or contribute towards enhanced public transport services and infrastructure, including improved bus connections to Carterton, Witney, Oxford and other key destinations.
f. Development shall include a mobility hub or equivalent integrated transport facility, providing convenient access to public transport, cycle parking, shared mobility, electric vehicle charging and other sustainable transport measures as appropriate.
g. Development shall be designed to reduce reliance on the private car, including through the provision of connected neighbourhoods, local facilities, mobility hubs, bus priority measures where appropriate and high-quality walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure.
h. Development shall make provision for high-quality public transport penetration within the site, ensuring that homes are within convenient walking distance of bus stops and that bus services can be delivered efficiently from the early phases of development.
i. Contributions and/or works shall be provided towards public transport, active travel and highway improvements, including traffic mitigation measures necessary to address the impacts of development on the B4477, the A40 corridor, Carterton, Brize Norton and the wider highway network.
j. Development shall avoid inappropriate traffic routing through existing villages and residential areas, including through the design of access, internal movement networks and off-site mitigation.

4. Landscape character, green infrastructure and settlement edge

a. A landscape-led approach shall be taken to the design and layout of the development, informed by appropriate landscape and visual assessment.
b. The layout, scale and design of development shall respond sensitively to the character of the north-eastern edge of Carterton, the setting of Brize Norton and the wider rural landscape.
c. Development shall provide appropriate strategic landscape buffers and edge treatments to protect the separate identity and setting of Carterton, Brize Norton and Shilton.
d. Development shall respect the existing landscape structure, including field patterns, hedgerows, trees and other landscape features.
e. The development shall deliver a connected green and blue infrastructure network, including structural planting, drainage features, ecological corridors, public open space and active travel routes.

5. Ecology and biodiversity

a. Development shall protect and enhance existing habitats, trees, hedgerows and ecological networks within and adjoining the site.
b. Proposals shall be supported by ecological assessment and shall provide appropriate buffers, biodiversity net gain, habitat creation and long-term management measures.
c. The green and blue infrastructure network shall be designed to strengthen ecological connectivity across and around the site.

6. Heritage, archaeology and minerals safeguarding

a. Development proposals shall be informed by a heritage impact assessment and archaeological assessment.
b. The layout, scale, design and landscape mitigation of development shall conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of nearby heritage assets and their settings.
c. Archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be undertaken where required.

d. Minerals safeguarding considerations shall be addressed, including whether prior extraction is necessary, practicable and environmentally acceptable.

7. Drainage, noise and utilities

a. An appropriate surface water drainage strategy shall be provided, incorporating sustainable drainage systems as part of the site's green and blue infrastructure and public realm networks.
b. Development proposals shall be supported by a noise assessment and shall incorporate any necessary mitigation to demonstrate that acceptable living conditions will be achieved for future residents, with particular regard to nearby roads, infrastructure corridors and any other relevant noise sources.
c. Wastewater treatment capacity and other necessary utilities infrastructure shall be confirmed and delivered in step with development, including any investment required to improve the capacity of existing infrastructure.

8. Education, infrastructure, phasing and long-term management

a. Development shall provide land and funding for on-site primary and nursery provision, unless otherwise agreed with Oxfordshire County Council, together with appropriate contributions towards secondary and special educational needs provision.
b. Development shall safeguard land for strategic education provision where required by Oxfordshire County Council, including potential secondary school provision to serve the wider Carterton and Brize Norton growth area, either on this site or as part of a coordinated approach with other strategic allocations.
c. A phasing, infrastructure delivery and long-term management strategy shall be submitted to and agreed with the Council.
d. The strategy shall demonstrate how necessary infrastructure, mitigation, open space, green infrastructure, drainage, biodiversity assets, active travel improvements, public transport improvements, education provision, noise mitigation and utilities upgrades will be secured, delivered and managed over time.
e. Development shall provide proportionate contributions towards infrastructure and mitigation in accordance with the relevant infrastructure, transport, open space, biodiversity, education, health and developer contribution policies of the Local Plan.

CA8 – Land east of Brize Norton Strategic Location for Growth

1. Comprehensive masterplanning

a. Development proposals shall be informed by a comprehensive masterplan or development framework for the Strategic Location as a whole, prepared in consultation with the Council, Oxfordshire County Council, relevant infrastructure providers, statutory consultees and the local community.
b. The masterplan shall demonstrate how the Strategic Location will function as a coordinated, landscape-led extension to Brize Norton and Carterton, while avoiding the creation of an isolated or car-dependent settlement.
c. The masterplan shall identify the broad distribution of land uses, developable areas, local centre provision, structural landscaping, green and blue infrastructure, access points, active travel routes, public open space, drainage areas, ecological buffers, education infrastructure, community infrastructure requirements and phasing.
d. Development shall avoid piecemeal proposals which would prejudice the proper planning, infrastructure delivery, active travel connectivity, green infrastructure connectivity or long-term management of the development.

2. Housing and land use

a. Development shall provide a residential-led scheme of approximately 1,500 dwellings, subject to design-led testing and detailed assessment.
b. Development shall provide a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in accordance with the relevant policies of the Local Plan.
c. The development shall include an appropriate mix of supporting uses, including local convenience, community, education, open space, recreation and other neighbourhood facilities necessary to support a sustainable new community.
d. The layout shall make provision for public open space, children's play space, informal recreation and, where required, sports provision, either on-site or through appropriate contributions.
e. A local centre or equivalent neighbourhood hub shall be provided in a location which is accessible by walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport and which supports the creation of a walkable neighbourhood.

3. Access and movement

a. Safe and suitable vehicular access shall be provided from the local highway network, supported by a transport assessment.
b. Pedestrian, cycle and wheeling routes shall be designed to be direct, legible, attractive, safe and as permeable as possible, connecting the site with Brize Norton, Carterton, Witney, nearby schools, services, employment areas, public transport routes, open spaces and the wider public rights of way network.
c. Development shall deliver substantial improvements to active travel infrastructure, recognising the current weaknesses in walking, cycling and public transport connectivity.
d. Development shall provide safe, direct and attractive walking, cycling and wheeling routes to existing and future primary and secondary school provision, including any off-site routes required to support safe travel to school.
e. Development shall provide or contribute towards enhanced public transport services and infrastructure, including improved bus connections to Carterton, Witney, Oxford and other key destinations.

f. Development shall include a mobility hub or equivalent integrated transport facility, providing convenient access to public transport, cycle parking, shared mobility, electric vehicle charging and other sustainable transport measures as appropriate.
g. Development shall make provision for high-quality public transport penetration within the site, ensuring that homes are within convenient walking distance of bus stops and that bus services can be delivered efficiently from the early phases of development.
h. Development shall provide or contribute towards high-quality off-road or segregated active travel routes linking the site with Brize Norton, Carterton, Witney and strategic public transport corridors, where required to make sustainable travel safe and attractive.
i. Development shall provide or contribute towards strategic transport infrastructure necessary to support the wider Carterton and Brize Norton growth area, including any required new or improved road links, junction improvements, public transport infrastructure and active travel corridors.
j. Any new road link or strategic access arrangement, including any link between the A4095 and Witney Road, shall be designed to reduce inappropriate traffic movements through Brize Norton village and adjoining residential areas, while avoiding unacceptable landscape, heritage, ecological or amenity impacts.
k. Contributions and/or works shall be provided towards public transport, active travel and highway improvements, including traffic mitigation measures necessary to address the impacts of development on Brize Norton, Carterton, the A4095, Witney Road, the A40 corridor and the wider highway network.

4. Landscape character, green infrastructure and settlement edge

a. A landscape-led approach shall be taken to the design and layout of the development, informed by appropriate landscape and visual assessment.
b. The layout, scale and design of development shall respond sensitively to the setting of Brize Norton, the wider rural landscape and the relationship with Carterton and nearby villages.
c. Development shall protect the separate identity and setting of Brize Norton through appropriate landscape buffers, strategic planting, sensitive layout and edge treatment.
d. Development shall respect the existing landscape structure, including field patterns, hedgerows, trees and other landscape features.
e. The development shall deliver a connected green and blue infrastructure network, including structural planting, drainage features, ecological corridors, public open space and active travel routes.

5. Ecology and biodiversity

a. Development shall protect and enhance existing habitats, trees, hedgerows and ecological networks within and adjoining the site.
b. Proposals shall be supported by ecological assessment and shall provide appropriate buffers, biodiversity net gain, habitat creation and long-term management measures.
c. The green and blue infrastructure network shall be designed to strengthen ecological connectivity across and around the site.

6. Heritage, archaeology and minerals safeguarding

a. Development proposals shall be informed by a heritage impact assessment and archaeological assessment.
b. The layout, scale, design and landscape mitigation of development shall conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of nearby heritage assets and their settings, including the setting of Brize Norton and any relevant archaeological remains.

c. Archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be undertaken where required.
d. Minerals safeguarding considerations shall be addressed, including whether prior extraction is necessary, practicable and environmentally acceptable.

7. Drainage, noise and utilities

a. An appropriate surface water drainage strategy shall be provided, incorporating sustainable drainage systems as part of the site's green and blue infrastructure and public realm networks.
b. Development proposals shall be supported by a noise assessment and shall incorporate any necessary mitigation to demonstrate that acceptable living conditions will be achieved for future residents, with particular regard to nearby roads, infrastructure corridors and any other relevant noise sources.
c. Wastewater treatment capacity and other necessary utilities infrastructure shall be confirmed and delivered in step with development, including any investment required to improve the capacity of existing infrastructure.

8. Education, infrastructure, phasing and long-term management

a. Development shall provide land and funding for on-site primary and nursery provision, unless otherwise agreed with Oxfordshire County Council, together with appropriate contributions towards secondary and special educational needs provision.
b. Development shall safeguard land for strategic education provision where required by Oxfordshire County Council, including potential secondary school provision to serve the wider Carterton and Brize Norton growth area, either on this site or as part of a coordinated approach with other strategic allocations.
c. A phasing, infrastructure delivery and long-term management strategy shall be submitted to and agreed with the Council.
d. The strategy shall demonstrate how necessary infrastructure, mitigation, open space, green infrastructure, drainage, biodiversity assets, active travel improvements, public transport improvements, education provision, noise mitigation and utilities upgrades will be secured, delivered and managed over time.
e. Development shall provide proportionate contributions towards infrastructure and mitigation in accordance with the relevant infrastructure, transport, open space, biodiversity, education, health and developer contribution policies of the Local Plan.

WIT5 – Land South of Witney Strategic Location for Growth

1. Comprehensive masterplanning

a. Development proposals shall be informed by a comprehensive masterplan or development framework for the Strategic Location as a whole, prepared in consultation with the Council, relevant infrastructure providers, statutory consultees and the local community.
b. The masterplan shall demonstrate how the Strategic Location will function as a coordinated, landscape-led southern extension to Witney, having regard to the relationship with Curbridge, Ducklington, the A40 and the A415.
c. The masterplan shall identify the broad distribution of land uses, developable areas, structural landscaping, green and blue infrastructure, access points, active travel routes, public open space, drainage areas, ecological buffers, amenity mitigation, infrastructure requirements and phasing.
d. Development shall avoid piecemeal proposals which would prejudice the proper planning, infrastructure delivery, active travel connectivity, green infrastructure connectivity or long-term management of the development.

2. Housing and land use

a. Development shall provide a residential-led scheme of approximately 600-800 dwellings, subject to design-led testing and detailed assessment.
b. Development shall provide a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in accordance with the relevant policies of the Local Plan.
c. The layout shall make provision for public open space, children's play space, informal recreation and, where required, sports provision, either on-site or through appropriate contributions.
d. The distribution of land uses shall have regard to nearby employment, infrastructure and environmental constraints, including the need to protect residential amenity from odour, noise and other potential impacts.

3. Access and movement

a. Safe and suitable vehicular access shall be provided from the local highway network, supported by a transport assessment.
b. Pedestrian, cycle and wheeling routes shall be designed to be direct, legible, attractive, safe and as permeable as possible, connecting the site with Witney town centre, nearby schools, services, employment areas, public transport routes, open spaces and the wider public rights of way network.
c. Development shall maximise opportunities to provide enhanced active travel connections across and around the A40 and A415, including links towards Witney town centre, Ducklington, Curbridge and existing employment areas.
d. Development shall respond to the severance effects of the A40 and A415 and shall provide or contribute towards measures which improve the safety, attractiveness and convenience of walking, cycling and wheeling routes.
e. Development shall support improvements to public transport services and infrastructure serving Witney, Carterton and Oxford, including appropriate bus stop provision, service enhancements and connections to strategic public transport corridors.
f. Development shall safeguard land and/or make appropriate provision for any relevant strategic public transport corridor, including the potential Carterton-

Witney-Eynsham corridor, where required by the Council and relevant transport authority.

g. Contributions and/or works shall be provided towards public transport, active travel and highway improvements, including traffic mitigation measures necessary to address the impacts of development on the A40, A415, Ducklington Lane, Curbridge Road and the wider Witney highway network.

4. Landscape character, green infrastructure and settlement edge

a. A landscape-led approach shall be taken to the design and layout of the development, informed by appropriate landscape and visual assessment.

b. The layout, scale and design of development shall respond sensitively to the southern edge of Witney, the landscape setting of Curbridge and Ducklington and the wider countryside to the south and west.

c. Development shall maintain and enhance the existing landscape structure, including field patterns, hedgerows, trees and other landscape features which contribute to the visual containment of the area.

d. Appropriate landscape buffers and edge treatments shall be provided to create a defensible and softened transition between the built form, adjoining settlements, infrastructure corridors and open countryside.

e. The development shall deliver a connected green and blue infrastructure network, including structural planting, drainage features, ecological corridors, public open space and active travel routes.

5. Ecology and biodiversity

a. Development shall protect and enhance existing habitats, trees, hedgerows and ecological networks within and adjoining the site.

b. Proposals shall be supported by ecological assessment and shall provide appropriate buffers, biodiversity net gain, habitat creation and long-term management measures.

c. The green and blue infrastructure network shall be designed to strengthen ecological connectivity across and around the site.

6. Heritage and archaeology

a. Development proposals shall be informed by a heritage impact assessment and archaeological assessment.

b. The layout, scale, design and landscape mitigation of development shall conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of nearby heritage assets and their settings.

c. Archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be undertaken where required.

7. Drainage, amenity and utilities

a. An appropriate surface water drainage strategy shall be provided, incorporating sustainable drainage systems as part of the site's green and blue infrastructure and public realm networks.

b. Development proposals shall be supported by appropriate assessments of odour, noise, air quality and other amenity impacts, with particular regard to nearby employment uses, the sewage treatment works and the abattoir.

c. The layout and design of development shall incorporate any necessary mitigation to demonstrate that acceptable living conditions will be achieved for future residents.

d.	Wastewater treatment capacity and other necessary utilities infrastructure shall be confirmed and delivered in step with development, including any investment required to improve the capacity of existing infrastructure.
e.	A phasing, infrastructure delivery and long-term management strategy shall be submitted to and agreed with the Council.
f.	The strategy shall demonstrate how necessary infrastructure, mitigation, open space, green infrastructure, drainage, biodiversity assets, active travel improvements, amenity mitigation and utilities upgrades will be secured, delivered and managed over time.
g.	Development shall provide proportionate contributions towards infrastructure and mitigation in accordance with the relevant infrastructure, transport, open space, biodiversity, education, health and developer contribution policies of the Local Plan.

WIT6 – Land west of Witney Strategic Location for Growth

Comprehensive masterplanning

1. Development proposals shall be informed by a comprehensive masterplan or development framework for the Strategic Location as a whole, prepared in consultation with the Council, relevant infrastructure providers, statutory consultees and the local community.
2. The masterplan shall demonstrate how the Strategic Location will function as a coordinated, landscape-led western extension to Witney
3. The masterplan shall identify the broad distribution of land uses, developable areas, structural landscaping, green and blue infrastructure, access points, active travel routes, public open space, drainage areas, ecological buffers, noise mitigation, infrastructure requirements and phasing.
4. Development shall avoid piecemeal proposals which would prejudice the proper planning, infrastructure delivery, including active travel, green infrastructure connectivity or long-term management of the development.

Housing and land use

5. Development shall provide a residential-led scheme of approximately 600-800 dwellings, subject to design-led testing and detailed assessment.
6. Development shall provide a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in accordance with the relevant policies of the Local Plan.
7. The layout shall make provision for public open space, children's play space, informal recreation and, where required, sports provision, either on-site or through appropriate contributions.

Access and movement

8. Safe and suitable vehicular access shall be provided from Burford Road and the Wheatfield Drive residential development, supported by a transport assessment.
9. Pedestrian, cycle and wheeling routes shall be designed to be direct, legible, attractive, safe and as permeable as possible, connecting the site with Witney town centre, nearby schools, services, employment areas, public transport routes, open spaces and the wider public rights of way network.
10. The layout shall include a connected network of legible routes to the east and north, including links with the residential development at Wheatfield Drive and with Burford Road, so that the site integrates with adjoining neighbourhoods.
11. Development shall maximise opportunities to better link to, upgrade and integrate with existing public rights of way, specifically with footpaths 6 and 6A to the west.
12. Development shall be designed for, and shall make proportionate contributions towards, enhanced active travel routes along Burford Road, including improvements to active travel infrastructure towards Witney town centre and Minster Lovell, in line with the Witney Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
13. Contributions and/or works shall be provided towards public transport, active travel and highway improvements, including traffic mitigation measures necessary to address the impacts of development on Burford Road and the wider Witney highway network.

Landscape character and settlement edge

14. A landscape-led approach shall be taken to the design and layout of the development, informed by appropriate landscape and visual assessment.
15. The layout, scale and design of development shall respond sensitively to the character of the western edge of Witney, the wider Windrush Valley landscape, the setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape and views to and from the surrounding countryside.
16. A substantial part of the western side of the site shall be provided as a natural and semi-natural green infrastructure corridor, forming a strong north-south landscape and ecological connection between the upper Windrush Valley to the north and the golf course to the south, and creating a defensible and softened settlement edge.
17. The development shall deliver an internal green infrastructure network that maximises opportunities to connect the main green infrastructure corridor with the development area and the settlement to the east.
18. Development shall assist in establishing a permanent green gap between Witney and Minster Lovell.
19. Development shall respect the existing landscape structure, including field patterns, hedgerows, trees and other landscape features.
20. Development shall be designed to work positively with the sloping landform, with layout, street alignment, building placement, roofscape, storey heights, finished floor levels and boundary treatments responding sensitively to topography.

Ecology and biodiversity and natural resources

16. Development shall protect and enhance existing habitats, trees, hedgerows and ecological networks within and adjoining the site.
17. Proposals shall be supported by ecological assessment and shall provide appropriate buffers, biodiversity net gain, habitat creation and long-term management measures.
18. The green and blue infrastructure network shall be designed to strengthen ecological connectivity across and around the site.

Heritage and archaeology

19. Development proposals shall be informed by a heritage impact assessment and archaeological assessment.
20. The layout, scale, design and landscape mitigation of development shall conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of nearby heritage assets and their settings, including Minster Lovell Conservation Area.
21. Archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be undertaken where required.

Flood risk, drainage and utilities

19. Development proposals shall be informed by a heritage impact assessment and archaeological assessment.
20. The layout, scale, design and landscape mitigation of development shall conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of nearby heritage assets and their settings, including Minster Lovell Conservation Area.

21. Archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be undertaken where required.

- Take a sequential approach to site layout prioritising land within flood zone 1 and avoiding areas identified to be at risk of surface water flooding. This risk is primarily located along a potential surface water flow path in the south of the site draining to a small watercourse.
- A site-specific FRA should consider surface water flood risk in more detail how quickly, including it occurs and the degree of hazard to the site and its access.
- A drainage strategy for the proposed development should be suitably designed to manage additional runoff arising from the development and ensure that surface water flood risk at the site and to third party land is not increased.
- If the development has a lifetime 2069, the site-specific FRA should consider the climate change impacts for the 2080's epoch (2075-2125).
- Site-specific surface water flood modelling may be required to better define flood risk depending on the final development layout.
- The use of infiltration SuDS solutions may be possible. A geotechnical investigation is required to obtain further information and confirm infiltration rates.
- Attenuated discharge to a watercourse or a sewer will also need to be considered as part of a site-specific FRA.

Infrastructure, phasing and long-term management

26. A phasing, infrastructure delivery and long-term management strategy shall be submitted to and agreed with the Council.

27. The strategy shall demonstrate how necessary infrastructure, mitigation, open space, green infrastructure, drainage, biodiversity assets, active travel improvements, noise mitigation and utilities upgrades will be secured, delivered and managed over time.

28. Development shall provide proportionate contributions towards infrastructure and mitigation in accordance with the relevant infrastructure, transport, open space, biodiversity, education, health and developer contribution policies of the Local Plan.

WIT 7 - Land north of Burford Road Strategic Location for Growth

Comprehensive masterplanning

1. Development proposals shall be informed by a comprehensive masterplan or development framework for the Strategic Location as a whole, prepared in consultation with the Council, relevant infrastructure providers, statutory consultees and the local community.
2. The masterplan shall demonstrate how the two component parcels will function together as a coordinated northern / north-western extension to Witney.
3. The masterplan shall identify the broad distribution of land uses, developable areas, structural landscaping, green and blue infrastructure, access points, active travel routes, public open space, drainage areas, ecological buffers, infrastructure requirements and phasing.
4. Development shall avoid piecemeal proposals which would prejudice the proper planning or delivery of either component parcel or the wider Strategic Location for Growth.
5. Development proposals shall be supported by a site specific infrastructure delivery plan

Housing and land use

6. Development shall provide a residential-led scheme of approximately 700 dwellings, subject to design-led testing and detailed assessment.
7. Development shall provide a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in accordance with the relevant policies of the Local Plan.
8. The layout shall make provision for public open space, children's play space, informal recreation and, where required, sports provision, either on-site or through appropriate contributions.

Access and movement

9. Safe and suitable vehicular access shall be provided from Burford Road and/or other appropriate points on the local highway network, supported by a transport assessment.
10. Pedestrian and cycle links shall be provided to connect the Strategic Location with Witney town centre, nearby schools, services, employment areas, public transport routes and the wider public rights of way network.
11. Development shall maximise opportunities to upgrade and integrate existing public rights of way as part of a connected active travel network.
12. Contributions and/or works shall be provided towards public transport, active travel and highway improvements, including measures to improve connections towards Oxford and mitigate impacts on the local highway network.

Landscape character and settlement edge

13. The layout, scale and design of development shall respond sensitively to the northern edge of Witney, the wider Windrush Valley landscape and the setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape.
14. A landscape-led approach shall be taken to the design and layout of the development, informed by appropriate landscape and visual assessment.

15. A structural landscape framework shall be provided, including the retention and reinforcement of existing trees, hedgerows and field boundaries.

16. Appropriate landscape buffers and edge treatments shall be provided to create a defensible and softened transition between the built form and open countryside.

Nature Recovery

17. Development shall protect Maggots Grove ancient woodland, the adjacent Local Wildlife Site and any priority habitat within or adjoining the Strategic Location.

18. Proposals shall be supported by ecological assessment and shall provide appropriate buffers, biodiversity net gain, habitat creation and long-term management measures in accordance with the LNRS.

19. The green and blue infrastructure network shall be designed to strengthen ecological connectivity across and around the Strategic Location.

Heritage and archaeology

20. Development proposals shall be informed by a heritage impact assessment and archaeological assessment.

21. The layout, scale, design and landscape mitigation of development shall conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of nearby heritage assets and their settings.

22. Archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be undertaken where required.

Flood risk, drainage and utilities

23. Built development shall avoid areas at greatest flood risk, including land within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

24. Flood-sensitive land shall be used positively, where appropriate, for green infrastructure, recreation, drainage, biodiversity, allotments or landscape mitigation.

25. An appropriate surface water drainage strategy shall be provided, incorporating sustainable drainage systems as part of the site's green and blue infrastructure network.

26. Wastewater treatment capacity and other necessary utilities infrastructure shall be confirmed and delivered in step with development.

Infrastructure, phasing and long-term management

27. A phasing, infrastructure delivery and long-term management strategy shall be agreed with the Council.

28. The strategy shall demonstrate how necessary infrastructure, mitigation, open space, green infrastructure, drainage and biodiversity assets will be secured, delivered and managed over time.

29. Development shall provide proportionate contributions towards infrastructure and mitigation in accordance with the relevant infrastructure, transport, open space, biodiversity, education, health and developer contribution policies of the Local Plan.

CN3 – Land East of Chipping Norton at London Road Strategic Location for Growth

1. **Comprehensive masterplanning**

    a. Development proposals shall be informed by a comprehensive masterplan or development framework for the Strategic Location as a whole, prepared in consultation with the Council, Oxfordshire County Council, relevant infrastructure providers, statutory consultees and the local community.
    b. The masterplan shall demonstrate how the Strategic Location will function as a coordinated, landscape-led eastern extension to Chipping Norton, having regard to existing and committed development, London Road, Banbury Road and the wider eastern approach to the town.
    c. The masterplan shall identify the broad distribution of land uses, developable areas, structural landscaping, green and blue infrastructure, access points, active travel routes, public open space, drainage areas, ecological buffers, education infrastructure, infrastructure requirements and phasing.
    d. Development shall avoid piecemeal proposals which would prejudice the proper planning, infrastructure delivery, active travel connectivity, green infrastructure connectivity or long-term management of the development.

2. **Housing and land use**

    a. Development shall provide a residential-led scheme of approximately 750 dwellings, subject to design-led testing and detailed assessment.
    b. Development shall provide a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in accordance with the relevant policies of the Local Plan.
    c. The layout shall make provision for public open space, children's play space, informal recreation and, where required, sports provision, either on-site or through appropriate contributions.
    d. The distribution of land uses shall support integration with the existing town and nearby services, including health, shopping, education and public transport facilities.

3. **Access and movement**

    a. Safe and suitable vehicular access shall be provided from London Road, Banbury Road and/or other appropriate points on the local highway network, supported by a transport assessment.
    b. Pedestrian, cycle and wheeling routes shall be designed to be direct, legible, attractive, safe and as permeable as possible, connecting the site with Chipping Norton town centre, nearby schools, health facilities, shopping areas, public transport routes, open spaces and the wider public rights of way network.
    c. Development shall maximise opportunities to upgrade and integrate existing public rights of way as part of a connected active travel network, including routes towards Chipping Norton School and adjoining residential areas.
    d. Development shall provide or contribute towards improvements to active travel infrastructure along London Road, Banbury Road and other key routes between the site and Chipping Norton town centre.
    e. Development shall provide or contribute towards improvements to Public Right of Way 166/28/10, or equivalent routes, where this would improve walking, cycling and wheeling connections to Chipping Norton School and surrounding residential areas.
    f. Development shall address pedestrian and cycle safety issues associated with the London Road / Banbury Road / Over Norton Road / Horse Fair double roundabout and provide or contribute towards necessary mitigation.

g. Development shall address the lack of continuous footways and safe active travel provision on London Road, Burford Road and Banbury Road where necessary to provide safe and attractive connections between the site and the town.
h. Development shall provide or contribute towards public transport, active travel and highway improvements, including traffic mitigation measures necessary to address the impacts of development on London Road, Banbury Road, Over Norton Road, Horse Fair, the A44 corridor and the wider Chipping Norton highway network.
i. Development shall provide appropriate gateway, speed management and crossing measures to ensure that the site is safely integrated into the built-up area of Chipping Norton.

4. Landscape character, green infrastructure and settlement edge

a. A landscape-led approach shall be taken to the design and layout of the development, informed by appropriate landscape and visual assessment.
b. The layout, scale and design of development shall respond sensitively to the eastern edge of Chipping Norton, the character of the London Road approach and the wider rural landscape.
c. Development shall provide appropriate landscape buffers and edge treatments to create a defensible and softened transition between the built form and open countryside.
d. Development shall respect the existing landscape structure, including field patterns, hedgerows, trees and other landscape features.
e. The development shall deliver a connected green and blue infrastructure network, including structural planting, drainage features, ecological corridors, public open space and active travel routes.

5. Ecology and biodiversity

a. Development shall protect and enhance existing habitats, trees, hedgerows and ecological networks within and adjoining the site.
b. Proposals shall be supported by ecological assessment and shall provide appropriate buffers, biodiversity net gain, habitat creation and long-term management measures.
c. The green and blue infrastructure network shall be designed to strengthen ecological connectivity across and around the site.

6. Heritage and archaeology

a. Development proposals shall be informed by a heritage impact assessment and archaeological assessment.
b. The layout, scale, design and landscape mitigation of development shall conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of nearby heritage assets and their settings, including the character and setting of Chipping Norton.
c. Archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be undertaken where required, having regard to the archaeological potential of the site and surrounding area.

7. Drainage and utilities

a. An appropriate surface water drainage strategy shall be provided, incorporating sustainable drainage systems as part of the site's green and blue infrastructure and public realm networks.
b. Wastewater treatment capacity and other necessary utilities infrastructure shall be confirmed and delivered in step with development, including any investment required to improve the capacity of existing infrastructure.

8. Education, infrastructure, phasing and long-term management

a. Development shall provide appropriate land and/or proportionate contributions towards early years, primary and special educational needs provision in accordance with the latest requirements of Oxfordshire County Council.

b. Development shall provide contributions towards secondary education provision where required by Oxfordshire County Council, having regard to the availability of capacity at Chipping Norton School and the latest pupil forecasts at the time of any planning application.
c. A phasing, infrastructure delivery and long-term management strategy shall be submitted to and agreed with the Council.
d. The strategy shall demonstrate how necessary infrastructure, mitigation, open space, green infrastructure, drainage, biodiversity assets, active travel improvements, public transport improvements, education provision and utilities upgrades will be secured, delivered and managed over time.
e. Development shall provide proportionate contributions towards infrastructure and mitigation in accordance with the relevant infrastructure, transport, open space, biodiversity, education, health and developer contribution policies of the Local Plan.

Appendix 2 – Housing Trajectory

Appendix 3 - Delivery and Monitoring Framework

Policy	Plan objectives met by the policy	Indicators	Sources of information
Policy SP1 – Settlement hierarchy	3,5	• Total amount of development of allocated sites by settlement tier • Total amount of development of windfall sites by settlement tier	• Housing monitoring/completions data
Policy SP2 – Spatial Strategy	1,2,3,4,5,6	• Percentage of journeys made by sustainable travel • Total amount of development of allocated sites by settlement tier • Total amount of development of windfall sites by settlement tier	• Housing monitoring/completions data
Policy SP3 – Key development principles	2,3	• Percentage of development refused for reasons of key development proposals	• Infrastructure Funding Statement
Policy SP4 – Cotswold National Landscape (CNL)	3	• Number of planning applications approved in the CNL • Number of planning application refused	• Planning applications • Planning decision statements

		for reason relating to the CNL	
Policy SP5- A40 Mass Rapid Transport (MRT) Corridor	1,2	• Amount of development approved within the identified MRT corridor • Total amount of developer contributions towards the delivery of the MRT solution • Number of new mobility hubs per settlement per annum	• Planning decision statements • Infrastructure Funding Statement

Policy	Plan Objectives met by the policy	Indicator	Sources of information
Core Policy 1 - Mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts	1,2,3	• Percentage of new developments which meet all of the policy requirements of Policy DM9 to reduce carbon emissions • Total permissions for/delivery of new renewable energy sources per annum • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel	• BNG metric

		• Total biodiversity net gain per annum	
Core Policy 2 – Delivering new houses	5	• Total number of new dwellings per annum • Total number of permissions/completions per annum on allocated sites • Total number of permissions/completions per annum on windfall sites • Percentage of new homes contributing to Oxford's unmet housing need • 5-year housing land supply	• Housing monitoring/completions data • 5-year housing land supply data • AMR
Core Policy 3 – Economic growth and local prosperity	1,3,6	• Total new employment floorspace from existing commitments • Total new employment floorspace from allocated, strategic sites • Total amount of new businesses per annum in the outlined key sectors • Total amount of new business per annum in non-key sectors • Total loss of employment floorspace	• AMR

Core Policy 4 – Delivering infrastructure in step with new developments	2,4,6	• Amount of new infrastructure per annum by type • Amount of enhanced infrastructure per annum by type • Percentage of development not commenced or occupied due to unsecured infrastructure • Contributions secured through S106 agreements • Contributions secured through CIL contributions	• Infrastructure funding statement • AMR
Core Policy 5 – Water environment	1,2,3	• Number and type of applications permitted within Flood Zones 2 and 3 • Total number of applications refused due to flood risk • Percentage of development with Grampion conditions imposed	• Planning decisions statements
Core Policy 6 – Design excellence and place making	3,4	• Number of refused applications on design grounds	• Planning decision statements

Core Policy 7 – Healthy place shaping	2,4	• Secured developer contributions towards improving accessibility and equality • Number of stakeholders participating in early engagement • Number of applications refused on health impact grounds	• Planning decision statements • Infrastructure Funding Statement
Core Policy 8 – Sustainable transport	1,2,4	• Percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling and cycling in rural and urban settlements • Percentage of journeys made by public transport in rural and urban settlements • Percentage of journeys made by private car in rural and urban settlements • Percentage of people working at home • Air quality including AQMAs at Witney and Chipping Norton and Oxford Meadows SAC • S106 and CIL contributions funding towards sustainable transport	• Infrastructure Funding Statement

Core Policy 9 – Historic Environment	3	• Percentage of applications refused due to impact on the historic environment or landscape • Conservation areas with an up-to-date Character Appraisal • Number of applications refused due to the impact on non-designated heritage assets	• Planning decision statements
Core Policy 10 – Nature Recovery	1,3	• Total biodiversity net gain per annum • Developer contributions towards nature recovery • Long-term maintenance and monitoring	• BNG metric

Policy	Plan objectives met by the policy	Indicator	Sources of information
Policy DM1 – Green Infrastructure	1,2,3	• Total area of new green infrastructure per annum • Total loss of green infrastructure per annum • Amount of developer contributions secured for improvements to green infrastructure	• West Oxfordshire Open Space study • Infrastructure Funding Statement

Policy DM2 – Ecological protection – Biodiversity Net Gain and Nature Recovery	1,3	• Total biodiversity net gain per annum • Percentage of developments providing off site BNG • Amount of compensation received from developers for loss of ecological features • Percentage of developers joining the Great Crested Newt District Licensing Scheme	• BNG metric • Planning applications
Policy DM3 – Conserving and enhancing landscape character through new development	1,3	• Amount of refused development on the basis of landscape character impact	• Planning application refusal data
Policy DM4 – Light pollution and dark skies	3	• Long term management and maintenance of lighting systems in approved development	• Planning application reserve matters
Policy DM5 – Efficient use of land	1,2,4,5,6	• Number of permissions for development on brownfield sites • Average density of development by area	• Planning Applications • Brownfield site register
Policy DM6 – Trees and hedgerows	1,3	• Total number of new trees/hedgerows planted • Total loss of trees/hedgerows	• TPO register • Planning applications

		• Total number of trees and hedgerows provided by replacement planting • Total number of trees protected by a TPO	
Policy DM7 – Sport, recreation and play	2	• Total number of new playing pitches, sport, recreation and play facilities per annum • Total loss of playing pitches, sport, recreation and play facilities per annum • Identified need for new playing pitches, sport, recreation and play facilities as guided by the latest relevant WODC studies • Developer contributions secured for new sport, recreation and play facilities	• Open Space Study • West Oxfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy • Infrastructure Funding Statement
Policy DM8 – A healthy food environment	2,3	• Total number of allotment/community food growing plots in the district • Total number of new allotment/community food growing plots per annum • Total loss of allotment/community	• Open Space study • Allotment waiting lists

		food growing plots per annum • Number of people on waiting lists for an allotment plot	
Policy DM9 – Net zero carbon development	1	• Percentage of new developments which meet all of the policy requirements • Total reduction of fossil fuel use • Total reduction in carbon emissions • Air quality across the district • Total permissions for/delivery of new renewable energy sources per annum • Total loss of renewable energy sources per annum	• Energy statements • Air quality annual reports • Planning applications
Policy DM10 – Renewable and low carbon energy development	1,3	• Total permissions for/delivery of new renewable energy sources per annum • Total capacity of renewable energy in the district • Total loss of renewable energy sources per annum	• Energy statements
Policy DM11 – Retrofitting for energy	1	• Number of buildings retrofitted for energy	• Planning applications

efficiency, carbon reduction and climate resilience		efficiency, carbon reduction and climate resilience	
Policy DM12 – Waste and the Circular Economy	1	• Percentage of household waste being sent for recycling/reuse per household • Percentage of waste being sent to landfill per household	• AMR
Policy DM13 – Air quality and pollution	1,3	• Air quality including in AQMAs and Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation	• LAQM framework • Annual status report
Policy DM14 – Town Centres	2,4,6	• Total amount of retail development per Town Centre per annum • Total loss of retail development per Town Centre per annum • Vacancy rates per town centre	• Town centre strategies • AMR
Policy DM15 – Community Facilities and Services	2,4	• Number of community facilities and services per area of the district • Total amount of floorspace permitted for new community uses per annum • Total loss of floorspace for community uses per annum	• AMR • Planning applications

		• Number of facilities or services allocated as assets of community value per annum • Developer contributions secured for new community facilities and services	
Policy DM16 – Active and healthy travel	1,2,4	• Percentage of journeys completed by walking, wheeling and cycling • Developer contributions (CIL and S106) for active travel enhancements • Air quality improvements including AQMAs at Chipping Norton and Witney	• Public surveys? • Infrastructure Funding Statement • Annual air quality reports
Policy DM17- Parking standards for new development (car and cycle parking)	1,2	• Amount and capacity of available public car parking spaces • Amount and capacity of available public cycle spaces	• West Oxfordshire Car Parking Strategy
Policy DM18 – Windfall housing development on unallocated sites	1,5	• 5-year land supply • Number of windfall permissions/completions per settlement • Proportion of windfall permissions/completions already granted by settlement	• Housing monitoring/completions data • 5-year land supply data • Brownfield site register • Planning applications

		• Proportion of brownfield sites allocated for windfall housing	
Policy DM19 – Creating mixed and balanced communities	2,4,5	• Proportion of homes built to Building Regulation M4(3) – wheelchair adaptable • Proportion of home built to accessible and adaptable standards • Proportion of residential permissions/completions by type, size and tenure	• Housing monitoring/completions data • Planning Applications • 5-year land supply data
Policy DM20 – Affordable Housing	2,4,5	• Number of affordable housing permissions/completions per annum • Proportion of total housing completions which are affordable • Number of people on the WODC affordable housing waiting list	• Housing monitoring/completions data • Affordable housing waiting list • 5-year land supply data
Policy DM21 – Specialist Housing	2,4,5	• Total permissions for specialist housing per annum • Delivery of specialist housing per annum	• Housing monitoring/completions data • 5-year land supply data
Policy DM22 – Custom and Self-build housing	4,5	• Amount of land allocated for self-build and custom projects per annum	• Housing monitoring/completions data • Self-build register

		• Number of self-build and custom housing permissions granted per annum • Number of people on the WODC self-build register who require a plot	• 5-year land supply data
Policy DM23 – Community Led Housing	2,4,5	• Total amount of floor-space permitted for community-led housing	• Housing monitoring/completions data • 5-year land supply data
Policy DM24 – Meeting the needs of Travelling Communities	2,4,5	• Total number of pitches/plots for travelling communities • Total number of new pitches/plots for travelling communities • Level of identified need	• AMR • Oxfordshire Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Show person and Boat Dweller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)
Policy DM25 – Loss, replacement and sub-division of existing dwellings	1,5	• Total number of new dwellings created by sub-division • Total number of replaced dwellings, on a 1:1 basis • Total loss of dwellings • Number of empty residential dwellings	• Housing monitoring/completions data • 5-year land supply data • AMR • List of empty homes
DM26 - Conversion, Extension and Alteration of Traditional Buildings	1,3	• Number of planning applications approved for the conversion, extension and alteration of existing buildings	• Planning applications • AMR

		• Number of planning applications approved for the conversion, extension and alteration of existing buildings	
Policy DM27 – Provision and Protection of Land for Employment	1,4,6	• Total amount of employment floorspace available • Total amount of employment floor space lost to alternative uses per annum • Total amount of new employment land generated per annum • Total amount of new businesses per annum	• AMR • Planning applications
DM28 – Supporting the Rural Economy	1,3,6	• Total amount of rural employment space in Tier 5 settlements • Total area of floor space permitted for farm and estate diversification • Total number of rural worker's dwellings permitted	• Planning applications • AMR
DM29 – Learning, Skills and Training Opportunities	2,4,6	• Number of new or improved educational and training facilities • Percentage of approved development that has a CESP	• Planning applications • OCC data?
DM30 – Sustainable Tourism	1,2,3,4,6	• Estimates of number of tourism related visitors	• Town surveys • Planning applications

		at different points of the year • Percentage of brownfield land and existing buildings which are reused for tourism purposes • Number of new short-term holidays lets per annum by location • Percentage of tourism developments which include local procurement/supply chain commitments • Number of tourism proposals approved which are not in main or rural service centres	• AMR • Brownfield site register? Planning permissions for/delivery of new short-term holiday lets
DM31- Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity	2,4,6	• Percentage of new homes and businesses with full connectivity, including in underserved communities • Net additional flexible and sustainable working spaces, facilitated by improved connectivity • Percentage of new digital infrastructure that is not located in a place where it causes visual harm or harm to the environment	• Planning applications

Policy	Plan objectives met by the policy	Indicators	Sources of information
Policy CA1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Carterton Area	1,2,3,4,5,6	• Total amount of employment floorspace available • Total amount of employment floor space lost to alternative uses per annum • Total amount of new employment land generated per annum, including those that complement RAF Brize Norton • Total amount of new businesses per annum • Total number of new dwellings per annum, by type, including MOD housing • Total amount of development on brownfield sites • Total biodiversity net gain per annum • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Amount of new or enhanced community	• AMR • Brownfield site register • BNG metric • Infrastructure Funding Statement • Planning decision statements

		infrastructure per annum by type • Total amount of contributions secured through S106 and CIL agreements • Total area of new green infrastructure per annum • Total loss of green infrastructure per annum • Amount of refused development on the basis of landscape character impact	
Policy CA2 – Carterton Town Centre	2,3,4,5,6	• Total gain of new retail development by type, per annum • Total loss of retail development by type, per annum • Total gain of new businesses by type, per annum • Total loss of businesses by type, per annum • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Total number of new dwellings per annum	• AMR • Brownfield site register

		• Total amount of development on brownfield sites • Total amount of development on infill sites • Total area of new green infrastructure per annum • Total loss of green infrastructure per annum	
Policy CA3 – RAF Brize Norton	2,4,6	• Number of refused applications for reasons relating to RAF Brize Norton • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum related to the support of RAF Brize Norton • Total amount of contributions secured through S106 and CIL agreements related to the support of RAF Brize Norton	• Infrastructure Funding Statement • Planning decision statements
Policy CA4 – MOD Housing Area of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)	1,2,3,4,5	• Number of refused applications for reasons relating to RAF Brize Norton • Number of new MOD dwellings per annum, by type	• Planning decision statements • AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement

		• Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum related to the support of RAF Brize Norton • Total amount of contributions secured through S106 and CIL agreements related to the support of RAF Brize Norton	
Policy CA5 – Land West of Carterton Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)	1,2,3,4,5	• Number of new homes per annum, by type • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Total increase in Biodiversity Net Gain onsite • Total increase in Biodiversity Net Gain offsite • Total amount of new green infrastructure • Total loss of green infrastructure	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement • BNG metric

Policy CA6 – Land North of Carterton	2,3,4,5	• Number of development applications refused for reasons associated with safeguarded land for the West Oxfordshire Mass Rapid Transport Corridor • Number of new homes per annum, by type • Number of affordable homes per annum, by type • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Total increase in Biodiversity Net Gain onsite • Total increase in Biodiversity Net Gain offsite • Total amount of new green infrastructure • Total loss of green infrastructure • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum, including the expansion of Carterton Football Club •	• Planning decision statements • AMR • BNG metric • Infrastructure Funding Statement
Policy CA6 – Land Northeast of Carterton	2,3,4,5	• Number of new homes per annum, by type	• AMR • BNG metric

		• Number of affordable homes per annum, by type • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Total increase in Biodiversity Net Gain onsite • Total increase in Biodiversity Net Gain offsite • Total amount of new green infrastructure • Total loss of green infrastructure • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum, including for education provision • Provision of new highway infrastructure	• Infrastructure Funding Statement
Policy CA7 – Land East of Brize Norton	2,3,4,5	• Number of new homes per annum, by type • Number of affordable homes per annum, by type • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Total increase in Biodiversity Net Gain onsite	• AMR • BNG metric • Infrastructure Funding Statement

		• Total increase in Biodiversity Net Gain offsite • Total amount of new green infrastructure • Total loss of green infrastructure • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum, including for education provision • Provision of new highway infrastructure	
Policy WIT1 – Witney Area Strategy	1,2,3,4,5,6	• Total amount of employment floorspace available • Total amount of employment floor space lost to alternative uses per annum • Total amount of new employment land per annum • Total amount of new businesses per annum • Total loss of businesses per annum • Total number of new dwellings per annum, by type	• AMR • Brownfield site register • Annual air quality reports • BNG metric • Infrastructure Funding Statement • Planning decisions statements

		• Total amount of affordable housing per annum • Total amount of development on brownfield sites • Air quality at Witney AQMA • Total biodiversity net gain per annum • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Total amount of contributions secured through S106 and CIL agreements • Total area of new green infrastructure per annum • Total loss of green infrastructure per annum • Total amount of refused development on the basis of the impact on Witney's historic or natural assets	
Policy WIT2 – Witney Town Centre	1,2,3,4,6	• Total gain of new retail development by type, per annum	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement

		• Total loss of retail development by type, per annum • Total gain of new businesses by type, per annum • Total loss of businesses by type, per annum • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum • Total amount of development on brownfield sites • Total amount of development on infill sites • Total area of new green infrastructure per annum • Total loss of green infrastructure per annum • Total amount of refused development on the basis of the impact on Witney's historic or natural assets	• Brownfield register • Planning decisions notices

Policy WIT3 – Windrush Valley	1,3	• Number of development and land management proposals refused for reasons of landscape character or the Cotswold National Landscape	• Planning decision statements
Policy WIT4 – Land at Welch Way Area of Redevelopment Opportunity	1,2,3,4,5,6	• Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum • Total gain of new retail development by type, per annum • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Average density of development	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement
Policy WIT5 – Land South of Witney	2,3,4,5	• Number of new homes completed • Number of affordable homes completed • Provision of/contribution towards supporting infrastructure • Total increase in on-site Biodiversity Net Gain • Total increase in off-site Biodiversity Net Gain	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement • BNG metric

Policy WIT6 – Land West of Witney, South Burford Road	2,3,4,5	• Number of new homes completed • Number of affordable homes completed • Provision of/contribution towards supporting infrastructure • Total increase in on-site Biodiversity Net Gain • Total increase in off-site Biodiversity Net Gain	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement • BNG metric
Policy WIT7 – Land North of Burford Road, Witney	2,3,5	• Number of new homes completed • Number of affordable homes completed • Provision of/contribution towards supporting infrastructure • Total increase in on-site Biodiversity Net Gain • Total increase in off-site Biodiversity Net Gain	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement • BNG metric
Policy CN1 – Chipping Norton Area Strategy	1,2,3,4,5,6	• Total amount of development refused on the basis of the impact on the Cotswold National Landscape or Chipping Norton's historic environment	• Planning decisions statements • Brownfield site register • AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement

		• Total amount of development on brownfield sites • Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Total amount of employment floorspace available • Total amount of employment floor space lost to alternative uses per annum • Total amount of new employment land per annum	
Policy CN2 – Chipping Norton Town Centre	2,3,4,6	• Total gain of new retail development by type, per annum • Total loss of retail development by type, per annum • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Visitor numbers per annum	• AMR • Town Centre surveys

Policy BA1 – Bampton Area Strategy	1,2,3,4,5	• Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum • Total number of affordable houses per annum • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Total increase in BNG	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement • BNG metric
Policy BA2 – Land East of Bampton	1,2,3,4,5	• Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum • Total number of affordable houses per annum • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Total increase in on-site Biodiversity Net Gain • Total increase in off-site Biodiversity Net Gain	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement • BNG metric
Policy BU1 – Burford Area Strategy	1,2,3,4,5,6	• Total amount of development refused on the basis of the impact on the Cotswold National Landscape or Burford's historic environment	• Planning decision statements • AMR • Town surveys • Infrastructure Funding Statement

		• Number of new dwellings per annum, by type • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Visitor numbers per annum • Number of parking spaces • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum	• West Oxfordshire Parking Strategy
Policy BU2 – Burford Town Centre	1,2,3,4,6	• Total gain of new retail development by type, per annum • Total loss of retail development by type, per annum • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Visitor numbers per annum • Air quality • Total amount of development refused on the basis of the impact on the Cotswold National Landscape or Burford's historic environment	• AMR • Town Centre Surveys • Annual Air Quality report • Planning Decision Statements
Policy BU3 – Land South of Sheep Street	2,3,4,5	• Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement

		• Total number of affordable houses per annum • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Number of new parking spaces • Total increase in on-site Biodiversity Net Gain • Total increase in off-site Biodiversity Net Gain	• BNG metric • West Oxfordshire Parking Strategy
Policy CH1 – Charlbury Area Strategy	1,2,3,4,5,6	• Number of visitors per annum • Number of new dwellings per annum, by type • Amount of development on brownfield sites • Total amount of development refused on the basis of the impact on the Cotswold National Landscape or Charlbury's historic environment • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum	• AMR • Brownfield site register • Planning decision statements • Infrastructure Funding Statement

Policy CH1 – Land at Jefferson's Piece	2,3,5	• Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum • Total number of affordable houses per annum • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Total increase in on-site Biodiversity Net Gain • Total increase in off-site Biodiversity Net Gain	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement • BNG metric
Policy CH2 – Land South of Hydac		• Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum • Total number of affordable houses per annum • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Total increase in on-site Biodiversity Net Gain • Total increase in off-site Biodiversity Net Gain	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement • BNG metric
Policy EYN1 – Eynsham Area Strategy	1,2,3,4,5,6	• Number of new dwellings per annum, by type • Amount of new employment floorspace	• AMR • BNG metric

		• Amount loss of retail floorspace to other uses • Total biodiversity net gain per annum • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure that is shared with Salt Cross Garden Village per annum by type	• Infrastructure Funding Statement
Policy LH1 – Long Hanborough Area Strategy	2,3,4,5	• Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum • Total number of affordable houses per annum • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum • Amount of development on brownfield or infill sites • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel, including from Hanborough Station • Total increase in Biodiversity Net Gain	• AMR • Brownfield site register • Infrastructure Funding Statement • BNG metric • Planning decision statements

		• Total amount of development refused on the basis of the impact on Pinsley Wood or nearby SACs • Total amount of development refused on the basis of the Cotswold National Landscape	
Policy HAN1 – Land West of Hanborough Station	1,2,3,4,5	• Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum • Total number of affordable houses per annum • Total employment floor space completed • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Total increase in on-site Biodiversity Net Gain • Total increase in off-site Biodiversity Net Gain • Total amount of development refused on the basis of the impact on Pinsley Wood or nearby SACs	• AMR • BNG metric • Infrastructure Funding Statement • Planning decision statements

Policy ARO3 – Hanborough Station Area of Redevelopment Opportunity	1,2,3,4	• Amount of contributions towards the enhancement of rail infrastructure and station facilities • Improved active travel and public transport links between the station and its surrounding settlements • Adequate parking spaces •	• Infrastructure Funding Statement
Policy WO1 – Woodstock Area Strategy	1,2,3,4,5,6	• Total amount of development refused on the basis of the impact on Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site or Woodstock's historic townscape • Amount of development on brownfield or infill sites • Number of new dwellings per annum, by type • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Visitor numbers per annum • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum	• Planning decision statements • AMR • Brownfield site register • Town Centre Surveys

Policy WO2 – Woodstock Town Centre	1,2,3,4,6	• Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum • Amount of development utilising the reuse of vacant or underused buildings • Visitor numbers per annum • Amount of new retail and other independent businesses	• AMR • Town Centre Surveys
Policy WO3 – Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site	3	• Total number of development applications refused on the basis of the impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site	• Planning decision statements
Policy RA1 – Rural Area Strategy	1,2,3,4,5,6	• Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum • Total number of affordable houses per annum • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement • BNG metric

		• Total number of new public and community transport services • Percentage of journeys made by sustainable transport or active travel • Total increase in Biodiversity Net Gain	
Policy RA2 – Land North of Aston	1,2,3,4,5	• Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum • Total number of affordable houses per annum • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Total increase in on-site Biodiversity Net Gain • Total increase in off-site Biodiversity Net Gain	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement • BNG metric
Policy RA3 – Land at Kingham Station	1,2,3,4,5,6	• Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum • Total number of affordable houses per annum • Total employment floor space completed	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement • BNG metric

		• Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Total increase in on-site Biodiversity Net Gain • Total increase in off-site Biodiversity Net Gain	
Policy RA4 – Land at the Down's, Standlake	2,3,5	• Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum • Total number of affordable houses per annum • Total employment floor space completed • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Total increase in on-site Biodiversity Net Gain • Total increase in off-site Biodiversity Net Gain	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement • BNG metric
Policy RA5 – Rousham Road, Tackley	2,3,5	• Total number of new dwellings by type, per annum • Total number of affordable houses per annum	• AMR • Infrastructure Funding Statement • BNG metric

		• Total employment floor space completed • Amount of new or enhanced community infrastructure per annum by type • Total increase in on-site Biodiversity Net Gain • Total increase in off-site Biodiversity Net Gain	
Policy RA6 – Enstone Business Park	1,2,3,6	• Total employment floor space completed • Percentage of journeys made to the site by public transport or active travel • Total increase in Biodiversity Net Gain • Total amount of new green infrastructure • Total contributions from development to support the viability, delivery and operations of Enstone Airfield	• AMR • BNG metric • Infrastructure Funding Statement

Appendix 3 – Glossary

AAP - Area Action Plan	A detailed planning framework for a specific area, such as Salt Cross Garden Village.
Active Travel	Getting about in a way that makes you physically active, like walking, wheeling or cycling.
Affordability ratio	The affordability ratio is a measure of the house price to income ratio in an area.
Affordable home ownership products	
Affordable housing	Housing which is affordable to those who cannot afford market priced housing locally to rent or purchase. There are a number of forms of affordable housing including social rented housing, affordable rented housing, first homes etc.
Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is declared for an area where the local air quality is unlikely to meet the Government's national air quality objectives.
Best and most versatile agricultural land	Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.
Biodiversity	Refers to the variety of life on Earth at all its levels.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	An approach to development and/or land management that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand.
BNG hierarchy	A structured framework that dictates how developers in England must avoid, mitigate and compensate for ecological impacts
Building for a Healthy Life	A widely used design tool for creating places that are better for people and nature.
Building with Nature	A voluntary framework of standards for delivering good green infrastructure. Consists of 12 standards built around the themes of core, wellbeing, water and wildlife.
Build to rent	Purpose built housing that is typically 100% rented out. Schemes will usually offer longer tenancy agreements of three years or more and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.
Carbon sequestration	The capturing, removal and storage of carbon dioxide (CO2) from the earth's atmosphere.
CIA – Climate Impact Assessment	A report required for major developments to assess how proposals address climate risks and contribute to net-zero goals.
CIL - Community Infrastructure Levy	A charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area.

Circular economy	A model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible.
Climate adaptation	Adaptation seeks to reduce the risks posed by climate changes, and to benefit from any associated opportunities where possible. It is one of two main policy responses to climate change, the other being mitigation.
Climate mitigation	Efforts to reduce or prevent emission of greenhouse gases.
Clustering of developments	
Community Employment Plans	Community Employment Plans (CEPs) also known as Employment and Skills Plans provide opportunities for people to access skills and training associated with large development sites.
Community-led or co-housing	Community-led housing is an umbrella term for a range of models that includes cohousing, Community Land Trusts (CLTs), cooperatives, self-help and self-build housing.
Community Masterplan	A masterplan which has been informed by a process of demonstrably meaningful and effective community engagement.
Community Right to Build Orders	An Order made by the local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a site-specific development proposal or classes of development.

Conservation Management Plans	Conservation management plans have been developed as a tool to help pull together an understanding of what matters and why and how to conserve and manage it. From this informed basis, plans are then used to develop programmes of repair, restoration or to draw up proposals for change.
Core Policies	Strategic policies that apply across the entire district and address key issues such as climate change, housing, infrastructure and design.
Cotswolds National Landscape	A nationally designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covering part of West Oxfordshire.
Custom and self-build housing	Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing.
Dark skies	Dark Sky Reserves are designated by the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA). They are areas that offer exceptional starry nights and are specifically protected for scientific, natural, educational, cultural, heritage and/or public enjoyment.
Decide and provide	
Design Code	A set of simple, concise, illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area.
Design Guide	A document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice.

Development plan	Is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and 72 published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force. Neighbourhood plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan, unless the local planning authority decides that the neighbourhood plan should not be made.
Ecosystem services	The direct and indirect contributions ecosystems (known as natural capital) provide for human wellbeing and quality of life. This can be in a practical sense, providing food and water and regulating the climate, as well as cultural aspects such as reducing stress and anxiety.
Embodied carbon	Embodied carbon is the amount of carbon emitted during the construction of a building. The extraction of raw materials, the manufacturing and refinement of materials, transportation, installation and disposal of old supplies can all produce embodied carbon emissions.
Energy Hierarchy	A framework for reducing energy use and emissions: Lean (reduce demand), Clean (use efficient systems), Green (use renewables).
Food poverty	The inability of individuals and households to secure an adequate and nutritious diet. It can affect those living on low incomes, with limited access to transport and poor cooking skills.
Fossil fuel	A hydrocarbon-containing material such as coal, oil, and natural gas, formed naturally in the Earth's crust from the remains of dead plants and animals that is extracted and burned as a fuel.

Fuel poverty	Fuel poverty in England is measured using the Low-Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) indicator. Under this indicator, a household is considered to be fuel poor if they are living in a property with a fuel poverty energy efficiency rating of band D or below and when they spend the required amount to heat their home, they are left with a residual income below the official poverty line.
Golden rules for green belt development	Contributions which should be made ('Golden Rules') where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application
Green Belt	A planning designation intended to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
Green infrastructure	A network of multi-functional green space and other green features, urban and rural, which can deliver quality of life and environmental benefits for communities.
Grey water recycling	The treatment of wastewater from appliances such as showers, baths and sinks, to be re-used and fed back into a property for non-potable purposes such as flushing toilets.
Health Impact Assessments (HIA)	A tool to identify and optimise the health and wellbeing impacts of planning.
Healthy Homes Principles	To ensure better and more inclusive health outcomes, the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) has identified 11 Healthy Homes principles that all new homes must provide including access to natural light and climate resilience

Healthy place shaping	A collaborative approach which aims to create sustainable, well designed, thriving communities where healthy behaviours are the norm and which provide a sense of belonging, identity and community.
HELAA - Housing and Economic Land Availability	An assessment of land availability identifies a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses.
Heritage Assets	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
Heritage Impact Assessments	A document that outlines the historic or archaeological significance of a building or landscape within its wider setting. It includes an outline of any proposed works, an assessment of their impact on the building or landscape and a mitigation strategy.
Historic Environment	The physical evidence of past human activity, including buildings, monuments and landscapes.
HIA – Health Impact Assessment	A tool to identify and optimise the health and wellbeing impacts of planning.
HRA - Habitat Regulations Assessment	Require Natural England to secure compliance with the requirements of the Directives when specifically discharging its nature.

IDP - Infrastructure Delivery Plan	Sets out the infrastructure that is required to support the delivery of the allocated housing and employment growth through the Local Plan to 2043.
Infrastructure	The physical and institutional systems that underpin society. Examples include roads and other transport facilities, flood defences, schools and other educational facilities, medical facilities, sporting and recreational facilities and open space.
Innovative housing delivery models	
Key workers	A key worker, critical worker or essential worker is a public-sector or private-sector employee who is considered to provide an essential service (e.g. health and social care, education)
Large scale development	Development of between 50 and 299 units
LDS – Local Development Scheme	Sets out a work programme in relation to main planning policy documents.
Lighting buffer zones	An area surrounding a protected, dark or ecologically sensitive space where light spill is strictly controlled or prohibited
Living local	Local living provides people with the opportunity to meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home.

LNRS – Local Nature Recovery Strategies	Strategies that propose how and where to recover nature and improve the wider environment across England, to be prepared by Oxfordshire County Council as the 'responsible body'.
Local Development Scheme (LDS)	Sets out a work programme in relation to main planning policy documents.
Local Green Space	The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them.
Local Plan	A Local Plan guides decisions on future development proposals and addresses the needs and opportunities of a specific area.
Major development	For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m2 or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
Marketing Guidelines	A set of guidelines which should be followed (typically for a period of at least 12 months) to demonstrate active marketing before the loss of employment land or community facilities can be considered
Medium and high distinctiveness habitats	
Medium scale development	Development of between 10 and 49 units

Mobility Hubs	Where several transport modes and community facilities are located together for seamless interchange.
Natural capital	The world's stock of natural resources, which includes geology, soils, air, water, habitats and all living organisms.
Natural flood management	The implementation of natural measures which help to alleviate the risk of flooding.
Nature Recovery	A strategic approach to restoring and enhancing biodiversity and ecological networks.
NDP - Neighbourhood Development Plan	A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. Sets out the vision for an area and the planning policies for the use and development of land within the parish or neighbourhood.
Neighbourhood Development Orders	An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) through which parish councils and neighbourhood forums can grant planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.
Net Zero Carbon	The term net zero means achieving a balance between the carbon emitted into the atmosphere, and the carbon removed from it. This balance – or net zero – will happen when the amount of carbon we add to the atmosphere is no more than the amount removed.
NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework	Sets out the Governments planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

On-site renewable energy generation	
Operational carbon	The term used to describe the emissions of carbon dioxide and other global warming gases during the in-use operation of a building (e.g. providing heat or cooling).
Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy	A county-wide strategy to guide biodiversity restoration and nature-based planning.
Oxfordshire Strategic Vision	Sets out a highly ambitious pathway for long-term change towards a more sustainable future. Prepared by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, the Vision is designed to be overarching and cross-cutting to inform a range of local and national plans, strategies and programmes.
Place-Based Policies	Policies that apply to specific geographic areas within the district, such as the Cotswolds National Landscape or Blenheim Palace WHS.
PPA – Planning Performance Agreement	A proactive and beneficial way of working with the council to develop your proposals.
PPG - Planning Policy Guidance	Sets out the government's policies on different aspects of planning policy.
Preferred Policy Options	The Council's emerging proposals for how key planning issues should be addressed in the new Local Plan.

Previously developed (brownfield) land/buildings	Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.
Principal Towns / Service Centres / Villages	Categories within the settlement hierarchy that determine the scale and type of development appropriate in each location.
Priority species	An animal, plant or fungus officially identified as being highly threatened, in decline or ecologically important
Proportionate scale growth	Growth that ensures that the size and number of new homes built in an area directly align with the size, character and infrastructure capacity of the existing community
Regenerative farming	Any form of farming which at the same time improves the environment. This primarily means regenerating the soil.
Regulation 18	Preparation of a Local Plan
Regulation 19	Publication of a Local Plan

Renewable and low-carbon energy provision	Renewable energy refers to energy derived from natural sources that are replenished at a higher rate than they are consumed (e.g. sunlight and wind). Low-carbon energy refers to the electricity generated from energy sources that emit significantly less greenhouse gas emissions than conventional fossil fuels.
Retrofit	In this context it refers to when a property is fitted with renewables or energy efficiency measures after it has been built (i.e. retrospectively).
River Basin Management Plans	River basin management plans (RBMPs) set the legally binding locally specific environmental objectives that underpin water regulation (such as permitting) and planning activities. A key aspect of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.
Rural economy	
SA – Sustainability Appraisal	To appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of a plan from the outset.
Safe routes to schools	Safer Routes to School schemes are packages of measures designed to tackle safety concerns and reduce dependence on travelling to school by car.
SCI – Statement of Community Involvement	A document that outlines how a local authority will involve the public in the planning process

SDA – Strategic Development Area	Large-scale sites identified for significant housing and infrastructure development.
Settlement Hierarchy	A classification of settlements based on their size, services and role in the district, used to guide the distribution of development.
SHELAA - Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment	Confirms the availability of land and assesses the potential suitability of development sites for allocation in the local plan.
Spatial Strategy	A strategy which takes into account social, economic and environmental factors such as health and housing, and which does not purely focus on the regulation and the control of land.
SPD – Supplementary Planning Documents	Information about adopted and forthcoming planning documents which provide guidance for anyone submitting planning applications.
Specialist housing	
Stewardship	A fundamental aspect of the Garden City model, which outlines how the right financial and governance structures can provide a framework to pay for the creation and maintenance of community assets in perpetuity.

Strategic scale development	Residential development of more than 300 units
SuDS – Sustainable Drainage Systems	Drainage solutions that manage surface water runoff in a sustainable way, reducing flood risk and improving water quality.
Supplementary Planning Documents	Information about adopted and forthcoming planning documents which provide guidance for anyone submitting planning applications.
Sustainability Appraisal	To appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of a plan from the outset.
20-minute neighbourhood	The 20-minute neighbourhood concept is one method of supporting local living and aims to provide access to the majority of daily needs within a 20-minute walk, wheel or cycle.
Urban cooling	Measures that can help to reduce temperatures in urban areas such as providing additional tree and vegetation cover.
Village Design Statements	Tools that local communities use to influence the design of new development locally by identifying, describing and analysing local character and drawing guidance directly from this character.
Whole building approach	An approach that uses an understanding of a building in its context to find balanced solutions that save energy, sustain heritage significance, and maintain a comfortable and healthy indoor environment. A whole building approach also takes into account wider environmental, cultural, community and economic issues, including energy supply.

WHS – World Heritage site	A site of outstanding cultural or natural importance designated by UNESCO, such as Blenheim Palace.
Windfall Sites	Housing sites that come forward unexpectedly and are not specifically allocated in the Local Plan.

Appendix 4 – Local Plan 2031 Superseded Policies

Policy Reference	Title	Superseded / Not Superseded	Superseded by What?
OS1	POLICY OS1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development	Superseded	National Planning Policy Framework
OS2	POLICY OS2: Locating development in the right places	Superseded	Policy SP1 – Settlement Hierarchy Policy SP2 – Spatial Strategy
OS3	POLICY OS3: Prudent use of natural resources	Superseded	Policy SP3 – General Development Principles Policy CP3 – Water Environment Policy DM8 – Healthy Food Environment
OS4	POLICY OS4: High quality design	Superseded	Policy CP6 – Design Excellence and Placemaking
OS5	POLICY OS5: Supporting Infrastructure	Superseded	Policy CP4 – Delivering Infrastructure In-step with nrew development
H1	POLICY H1: Amount and distribution of housing	Superseded	Policy CP2 – Delivering New Homes

H2	POLICY H2: Delivery of New Homes	Superseded	Policy CP2 – Delivering New Homes
H3	POLICY H3: Affordable housing	Superseded	Policy DM20 – Affordable Housing
H4	POLICY H4: Type and mix of new homes	Superseded	Policy DM19 – Creating Mixed and Balanced Communities
H5	POLICY H5: Custom and self-build housing	Superseded	Policy DM22 – Custom and Self Build Housing
H6	POLICY H6: Existing housing	Superseded	Policy DM25 – Loss, Replacement and Sub-Division of Existing Dwellings
H7	POLICY H7: Travelling communities	Superseded	Policy DM24 – Meeting the Needs of Travelling Communities
H8	POLICY H8: Land at Cuckoowood Farm, Freeland	Not Superseded	

E1	POLICY E1: Land for employment	Superseded	Policy CP3 – Supporting Economic Growth and Local Prosperity Policy DM27 – Provision and protection of land for Employment
E2	POLICY E2: Supporting the Rural Economy	Superseded	Policy DM28 – Supporting the Rural Economy
E3	POLICY E3: Re-use of non-residential buildings	Superseded	Conversion, Extension and Alteration of Traditional Buildings
E4	POLICY E4: Sustainable tourism	Superseded	Policy DM30 – Sustainable Tourism
E5	POLICY E5: Local services and community facilities	Superseded	Policy DM15 – Community Facilities and Services
E6	POLICY E6: Town centres	Superseded	Policy DM14 – Town Centres
T1	POLICY T1: Sustainable transport	Superseded	Policy CP8 – Sustainable Transport

T2	POLICY T2: Highway Improvement Schemes	Superseded	Policy CP8 - Sustainable Transport
T3	POLICY T3: Public transport, walking and cycling	Superseded	Policy CP8 - Sustainable Transport Policy DM16 – Active and Healthy Travel
T4	POLICY T4 : Parking provision	Superseded	Policy DM17 – Parking standards for new development (Car and Cycle Parking)
EH1	POLICY EH1: Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Superseded	Policy SP4 – Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL)
EH2	POLICY EH2: Landscape character	Superseded	Policy DM3 – Conserving and enhancing landscape character through new development
EH3	POLICY EH3: Biodiversity and geodiversity	Superseded	Policy DM2 – Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Nature Recovery
EH4	POLICY EH4: Public realm and green infrastructure	Superseded	Policy DM1 – Green Infrastructure

EH5	POLICY EH5: Sport, recreation and children's play	Superseded	Policy DM7 – Sport, Recreation and Play
EH6	POLICY EH6: Decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy development (excepting wind turbines)	Superseded	Policy DM10 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development
EH7	POLICY EH7: Flood risk	Superseded	Policy CP5 – Water Environment
EH8	POLICY EH8: Environmental protection	Superseded	Polic DM4 – Light Pollution and Dark Skies Policy DM13 – Air Quality and Pollution
EH9	POLICY EH9: Historic environment	Superseded	Policy CP9 – Historic Environment
EH10	POLICY EH10: Conservation areas	Superseded	Policy CP9 – Historic Environment
EH11	POLICY EH11: Listed buildings	Superseded	Policy CP9 – Historic Environment

EH12	POLICY EH12: Traditional Buildings	Superseded	Policy CP9 – Historic Environment
EH13	POLICY EH13: Historic landscape character	Superseded	Policy CP9 – Historic Environment
EH14	POLICY EH14: Registered historic parks and gardens	Superseded	Policy CP9 – Historic Environment
EH15	POLICY EH15: Scheduled monuments and other nationally important archaeological remains	Superseded	Policy CP9 – Historic Environment
EH16	POLICY EH16: Non-designated heritage assets	Superseded	Policy CP9 – Historic Environment
WIT1	POLICY WIT1: East Witney Strategic Development Area (450 homes)	Superseded	Approved Planning Application 20/02654/OUT
WIT2	POLICY WIT2: North Witney Strategic Development Area (1,400 homes)	Not Superseded	

WIT3	POLICY WIT3: Woodford Way Car Park, Witney	Not Superseded	
WIT4	POLICY WIT4: Land West of Minster Lovell	Superseded	Development Completed
WIT5	POLICY WIT5: Witney Town Centre Strategy	Superseded	Policy WIT2 – Witney Town Centre
WIT6	POLICY WIT6: Witney sub-area strategy	Superseded	Policy WIT1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Witney Area
CA1	POLICY CA1: REEMA North and Central	Superseded	Approved Planning Application 25/02878/FUL
CA2	POLICY CA2: Land at Milestone Road, Carterton	Superseded	Development Complete
CA3	POLICY CA3: Land at Swinbrook Road, Carterton	Superseded	Development Complete

CA4	POLICY CA4: Carterton Town Centre Strategy	Superseded	Policy CA2 – Carterton Town Centre
CA5	POLICY CA5: Carterton sub-area strategy	Superseded	Policy CA1 – Strategic Framework for the Carterton Area
CN1	POLICY CN1: East Chipping Norton strategic development area (1,200 homes)	Superseded	Policy CN3 – Land east of Chipping Norton at London Road Strategic Location for Growth (SLG)
CN2	POLICY CN2: Chipping Norton Sub-Area Strategy	Superseded	Policy CN1 - Strategic Development Framework for the Chipping Norton Area
EW1	POLICY EW1: Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Strategic Location for Growth (2,200 homes)	Not Superseded	Approved Planning Application 18/02574/RES
EW2	POLICY EW2: West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (1,000 homes)	Not Superseded	
EW3	POLICY EW3: Land East of Woodstock (300 homes)	Superseded	Approved Planning Application 16/01364/OUT

EW4	POLICY EW4: Land north of Hill Rise, Woodstock (120 homes)	Superseded	Approved Planning Application 21/00189/FUL
EW5	POLICY EW5: Land north Banbury Road, Woodstock (180 homes)	Superseded	Approved Planning Application 21/00217/OUT
EW6	POLICY EW6: Land at Myrtle Farm, Long Hanborough (50 homes)	Superseded	Allocation Removed
EW7	POLICY EW7: Land at Oliver's Garage, Long Hanborough (25 homes)	Superseded	Development Completed
EW8	POLICY EW8: Former Stanton Harcourt Airfield (50 homes)	Superseded	Development Completed
EW9	POLICY EW9: Blenheim World Heritage Site	Superseded	Policy WO3 – Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site (WHS)
EW10	POLICY EW10: Eynsham – Woodstock Sub - Area Strategy	Superseded	Policy EYN1 – Strategic Framework for the Eynsham Area Policy LH1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Long Hanborough Area

			Policy WO1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Woodstock Area Policy RA1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Rural Area
BC1	POLICY BC1: Burford – Charlbury sub-area strategy	Superseded	Policy BU1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Burford Area Policy CH1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Charlbury Area Policy RA1 – Strategic Development Framework for the Rural Area

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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West Oxfordshire

Local Development Scheme (LDS)

July 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1 This is the West Oxfordshire District Council Local Development Scheme (LDS). It explains what planning policy documents the Council already has in place and what will be prepared during the three-year period July 2026 – July 2029.

1.2 During the three-year period covered by the LDS, local government reorganisation is expected to take place across Oxfordshire. The exact form and timing of any changes are not yet known and may affect the structure and responsibilities of existing councils. However, the LDS remains an important document in setting out the Council's intended programme for preparing and reviewing planning policy documents.

1.3 The documents identified within it, in particular the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan, will continue to have effect once adopted, regardless of any changes to local government arrangements. This ensures continuity in the planning framework and provides clarity for communities, developers and stakeholders throughout the transition period and beyond.

2. West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031

2.1 The current West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 was formally adopted on 27 September 2018. The plan provides an overall framework for growth in the period up to 2031.

2.2 Because the Local Plan became five years old in September 2023, a formal review was undertaken in accordance with Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

2.3 The review concluded that although the adopted local plan policies remain generally consistent with national policy, many of them could usefully be strengthened and updated, in particular those policies relating to the plan's housing requirement given they are based on evidence dating from 2014.

2.4 Work on a new Local Plan to 2043 is therefore now well underway as outlined below.

3. West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043

3.1 The District Council is currently in the process of producing a new Local Plan. Originally it was proposed that the plan would cover the period up to 31st March 2041, but to ensure a minimum 15-year period from the anticipated date of adoption, the end date is proposed to be extended to 31st March 2043.

3.2 To date there have been four main periods of public consultation carried through the Regulation 18 'plan preparation' stage, in October 2022 (initial scoping) October 2023 (ideas and objectives), June 2025 (preferred policy options). And November 2025 (Preferred Spatial Options).

3.3 The first consultation sought general views on the overall scope of the new Local Plan. A consultation summary report has been made available online.

3.4 The second consultation started to explore draft plan objectives and potential patterns of development. It also included a specific call for sites, ideas and opportunities. A consultation summary report has again been made available online.

3.5 The third consultation outlined the Council's current thinking on the plan's overall structure and direction, with a draft vision and objectives and a series of preferred policy options. A consultation summary report has been made available online.

3.6 The fourth Regulation 18 consultation on preferred spatial options was undertaken for 7 weeks from early November to December 2025. The main focus of the consultation was on a series of preferred locations for residential and commercial development. A consultation summary report has been made available online.

3.7 The regulation 19 pre-submission draft plan will be formally published for a statutory period of consultation in August 2026. This will cover a minimum period of at least 6-weeks.

3.8 Subject to Member approval, the Regulation 19 draft Plan will be submitted for examination before the end of December 2026.

- Publication of draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) August 2026
- Submission for examination December 2026

3.9 Further information on the purpose, scope and timing of the Local Plan 2043 is set out at Appendix 1.

4. Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)

4.1 A key element of the adopted Local Plan 2031 is the allocation of land to the north of the A40 near Eynsham for a new garden village of around 2,200 homes, together with business space and other supporting uses and facilities. The proposal - known as Salt Cross Garden Village - is being supported by central Government through its locally led garden village, towns and cities programme.

4.2 The detailed planning of the garden village is to be led by the Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan which was formally adopted by the Council on 25 February 2026. The adopted AAP and accompanying documents are available to view online.

4.3 Further information on the purpose, scope and timing of the AAP is set out at Appendix 1.

5. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

5.1 Supplementary planning documents do not form part of the statutory development plan but are important material considerations in the determination of planning applications. Their main purpose is to elaborate on specific local plan policies and explain in more detail how those policies will operate.

5.2 At present, the Council has four adopted SPDs:

- West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD – adopted in 2016
- Affordable Housing SPD – adopted in October 2021
- Developer Contributions SPD – adopted in July 2023
- Combe Village Design Statement SPD – adopted in July 2023

5.3 These are all available online.

6. Neighbourhood Planning

6.1 Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.

6.2 There are currently ten adopted Neighbourhood Plans in West Oxfordshire including:

- Brize Norton Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 11 September 2025)
- Cassington Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 26 June 2023)
- Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 14 June 2021)
- Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 15 March 2016)
- Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 6 February 2020)
- Hailey Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 2 September 2019)
- Milton under Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 26 June 2023)
- Shilton Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 2 September 2019)
- South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 8 January 2019)
- Woodstock (adopted 23 January 2023)

6.3 There are seven other Neighbourhood Plans currently in progress including:

- Ascott under Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan
- Ducklington Neighbourhood Plan
- Hanborough Neighbourhood Plan
- Minster Lovell Neighbourhood Plan
- North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan
- Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan
- Wootton by Woodstock Neighbourhood Plan

6.4 Because the progress and timing of neighbourhood plans are beyond the control of the District Council, the LDS does not include any information on their anticipated timetables. Further information can however be obtained from the District Council's website.

7. Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

7.1 A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) explains how local communities and other stakeholders will be engaged in the preparation of the Local Plan and other related documents. It also provides information about how local communities and other stakeholders will be engaged in relation to the determination of planning applications.

7.2 The Council's most recent SCI was adopted in February 2025 and is available to view online.

8. LDF Monitoring Report

8.1 In accordance with national planning regulations the Council is required to produce a monitoring report addressing various matters including plan progress and implementation, neighbourhood planning, CIL (where applicable) and the duty to co-operate.

8.2 The Council's most recently published monitoring report covers the period 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025 and is available online.

9. LDS availability and updates

9.1 The LDS must be made publicly available and kept up-to-date.

9.2 In terms of availability, a copy of this LDS is available online

9.3 Hard copies are also available in the locations listed in the following table.

9.4 The LDS will be updated annually or more often if there are any significant changes in timescales or documents being prepared.

West Oxfordshire District Council Witney Town Centre Shop 3 Welch Way Witney OX28 6JH Tel: 01993 861000 Open: Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm	Witney Town Council Town Hall Market Square Witney OX28 6AG Tel: 01993 704379 Open: Mon, Tues and Thurs 8.30am to 5pm, Wed 9.30am to 5pm and Fri 8.30am to 4.30pm.	Carterton Town Council 19 Alvescot Road Carterton OX18 3JL Tel: 01993 842156 Open: Monday – Friday 9.30am to 4.00pm
Chipping Norton Town Council The Town Hall Market Place Chipping Norton OX7 5NA Open: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9am to 5pm	Bampton Library Old Grammar School Church View Bampton OX18 2NE Tel: 01993 850076	Burford Library 86A High Street Burford OX18 4QF Tel: 01993 823377
Carterton Library 6 Alvescot Road Carterton OX18 3JH Tel: 01993 841492	Charlbury Library Charlbury Community Centre Enstone Road Charlbury OX7 3PQ Tel: 01608 811104	Chipping Norton Library Goddards Land Chipping Norton OX7 5NP Tel: 01608 643559
Eynsham Library 30 Mill Street Eynsham OX29 4JS Tel: 01865 880525	North Leigh Library Memorial Hall Park Road North Leigh OX29 6SA Tel: 01993 882935	Stonesfield Library Village Hall Longore Stonesfield OX29 8EF Tel: 01993 898187
Witney Library Welch Way Witney OX28 6JH Tel: 01993 703659	Woodstock Library The Oxfordshire Museum Fletcher's House Park Street Woodstock OX20 1SN Tel: 01993 814124 07759 140531	Wychwood Library 29 High Street Milton-under-Wychwood OX7 6LD Tel: 01993 830281

Appendix 1 – Document Profiles

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043	
Status	Development Plan Document (DPD)
Overview	The Local Plan will set out the overall framework for future growth in West Oxfordshire to 2043. This is expected to include strategic policies dealing with the overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development as well as non-strategic policies dealing with other matters including site allocations and development management policies.
Geographical coverage	District-wide
Timetable	Regulation 18 initial scoping consultation – **August - October 2022** **(COMPLETE)** Regulation 18 focused consultation on draft plan objectives and spatial strategy options along with a 'call for sites' exercise – **August – October 2023** **(COMPLETE)** Regulation 18 consultation on preferred policy options – **June 2025** **(COMPLETE)** Regulation 18 consultation on preferred spatial options – **November 2025** **(COMPLETE)** Publication of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) – **August 2026** Submission of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Regulation 22) – **December 2026** Examination and adoption – **2027**
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – December 2024 and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council's Planning Policy Team under the direction of the Planning Policy Manager. Cross Party Member Working Group established to oversee the process.

Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Council's Planning Policy Team with input from other teams and services as appropriate via Local Plan Officer Working Group. External resources will be drawn upon in terms of the production of supporting technical evidence.
Community engagement	Engagement to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)	
Status	Development Plan Document (DPD)
Overview	The AAP establishes a vision for the garden village, supported by a series of core objectives and policies arranged on a thematic basis. A key focus of the AAP is delivery and implementation.
Geographical coverage	Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Strategic Location for Growth (SLG) north of Eynsham (now referred to as Salt Cross Garden Village).
Timetable	Submission – **February 2021** **(COMPLETE)** Examination hearings – **June/July 2021** **(COMPLETE)** Consultation on Main Modifications – **September/November 2022** **(COMPLETE)** Inspector's Report received – **March 2023** **(COMPLETE)** Examination re-opened to consider Policy 2 - Net Zero Carbon Development – **April 2024** **(COMPLETE)** Hearing Session – **June 2025** **(COMPLETE)** Post-Hearing Letter – **August 2025** **(COMPLETE)** Consultation on Main Modifications – **October 2025** **(COMPLETE)** Inspector's Final Report – **January 2026** **(COMPLETE)** Adoption – **February 2026** **(COMPLETE)**
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and the West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031).
Management arrangements	Document production led by the Council's Planning Policy Team under the direction of the Planning Policy Manager.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprised the Council's Planning Policy Team with input from other teams and services as

	appropriate. External resources will be drawn upon in terms of the production of supporting technical evidence.
Community engagement	Engagement on the preparation of the document carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Appendix 2 – Overall Timetable

Document	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sep-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26
West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043							FC	FC			S
Salt Cross Area Action Plan (AAP)	A										
Key: IC = Informal Consultation; FC = Formal Consultation; S = Submission; A = Adoption											

Sustainability Appraisal of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043

Regulation 19 SA Report

Volume 1 of 3: Non-Technical Summary

Client Review Version
July 2026

LEPUS CONSULTING
LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, PLANNING & URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability Appraisal of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043

Volume 1 of 3: Non-Technical Summary of the Regulation 19 SA Report

LC-1127	Document Control Box
Client	West Oxfordshire District Council
Report title	Sustainability Appraisal of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043, Regulation 19 Volume 1 of 3: SA Non-Technical Summary
Status	Client Review Version
File name	LC-1127_West Oxon_R19 SA_NTS_Vol1of3_3_130726ND.docx
Date	July 2026
Author	BL
Reviewed	ND
Approved	ND

Front Cover: XXX

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this report

N1. West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) has appointed Lepus Consulting Ltd (Lepus) to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043. The appraisal also meets the legal requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). It considers the likely social, economic and environmental effects of the Plan to help ensure that it supports sustainable development and identifies opportunities to avoid or reduce adverse effects.

N2. Local Plans are prepared through a series of stages set out in planning legislation. Earlier stages involved considering different options for accommodating future development across the district. The Plan has now reached the Publication Stage (also known as the Regulation 19 stage), where the Council is seeking representations on the version of the Plan it intends to submit for independent examination.

N3. The Regulation 19 Sustainability Appraisal Report explains how the Plan has been assessed and how sustainability considerations have informed its preparation. This Non-Technical Summary (NTS) provides an overview of that assessment, highlighting the likely sustainability effects of the policies and site allocations included in the Plan.

N4. This document is Volume 1 of the Sustainability Appraisal and should be read alongside Volume 2 (Main Sustainability Appraisal Report) and Volume 3 (Appendices), which provide further detail on the assessment process and findings.

The West Oxfordshire Local Plan

N5. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 has been prepared by WODC to establish a comprehensive planning framework for managing growth and development across the district to 2043. It replaces the adopted Local Plan 2031 and provides the spatial strategy, policies and site allocations needed to deliver sustainable development while responding to the district's environmental, social and economic challenges.

N6. Addressing the climate and ecological emergency is a central consideration of the Local Plan. The Plan seeks to support the delivery of new homes, employment opportunities and infrastructure whilst ensuring that development contributes towards achieving net zero carbon emissions, supports nature recovery, enhances biodiversity, protects the district's valued landscapes and historic environment, and promotes healthy, inclusive and resilient communities. The Plan has been informed by an extensive evidence base, Sustainability Appraisal and consideration of reasonable alternatives through previous stages of consultation.

N7. The Local Plan identifies a settlement hierarchy, spatial strategy and priority growth locations alongside strategic and development management policies that guide where and how development should take place. It seeks to balance meeting West Oxfordshire's identified development needs, including contributing towards Oxford City's unmet housing need, with protecting the district's distinctive rural character, nationally important landscapes and heritage assets. Once adopted, the Local Plan will form part of the

statutory development plan for West Oxfordshire and will provide the basis for determining planning applications across the district in accordance with national planning policy.

The West Oxfordshire Local Plan

N8. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 sets out the Council's vision for how the district should grow and develop over the period to 2043. It replaces the adopted Local Plan 2031 and provides the planning framework that will guide decisions about where new development should take place and how it should be designed. The Plan includes planning policies and allocates land for new homes, employment, infrastructure and other forms of development.

N9. The Plan aims to support sustainable growth while responding to some of the district's most important challenges, including climate change, nature recovery, housing needs and economic development. It seeks to reduce carbon emissions, protect and enhance biodiversity, conserve the district's landscapes and historic environment, and create healthy, inclusive and resilient communities. The Plan has been informed by a wide range of technical evidence, consultation with communities and stakeholders, and Sustainability Appraisal carried out throughout its preparation.

N10. The Local Plan sets out a spatial strategy that identifies where future development should be focused, together with planning policies that will guide decisions on future planning applications. It aims to meet the district's housing, employment and infrastructure needs, including making a contribution towards Oxford City's unmet housing need, whilst protecting the qualities that make West Oxfordshire distinctive. Once adopted, the Local Plan will become part of the statutory development plan and will be used by the Council when determining planning applications across the district.

What is Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment?

N11. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process used to assess the likely effects of a Local Plan as it is being prepared. It considers the Plan's social, economic and environmental impacts so that potential benefits can be maximised and any adverse effects avoided or reduced wherever possible. The process helps ensure that sustainability is considered throughout plan preparation rather than only once the Plan has been completed.

N12. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the environmental component of the appraisal process. It focuses on the likely effects of the Plan on the environment and is required by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations. In England, SA incorporates the requirements of SEA, enabling environmental, social and economic issues to be considered together. The appraisal also considers reasonable alternatives, helping to explain why the Council's preferred approach has been selected.

N13. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires Sustainability Appraisal to be undertaken for Local Plans. Together, SA and SEA provide an important evidence base for plan-making and help demonstrate that the Plan has been prepared in a robust and transparent way.

N14. Sustainable development is commonly defined as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Achieving

sustainable development requires a balanced approach that recognises the relationship between society, the economy and the environment (see **Figure N.1.1**).

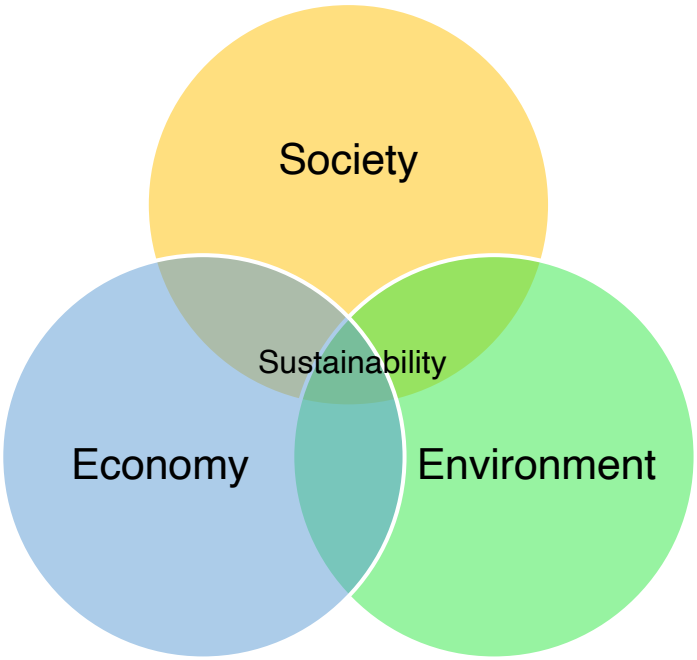

Figure N.1.1: *Sustainable development*

N15. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan has reached the Publication (Regulation 19) stage of the plan-making process. At this stage, the Council is consulting on the version of the Plan that it intends to submit for independent examination. This is illustrated at Stage C in **Figure N.1.2.**

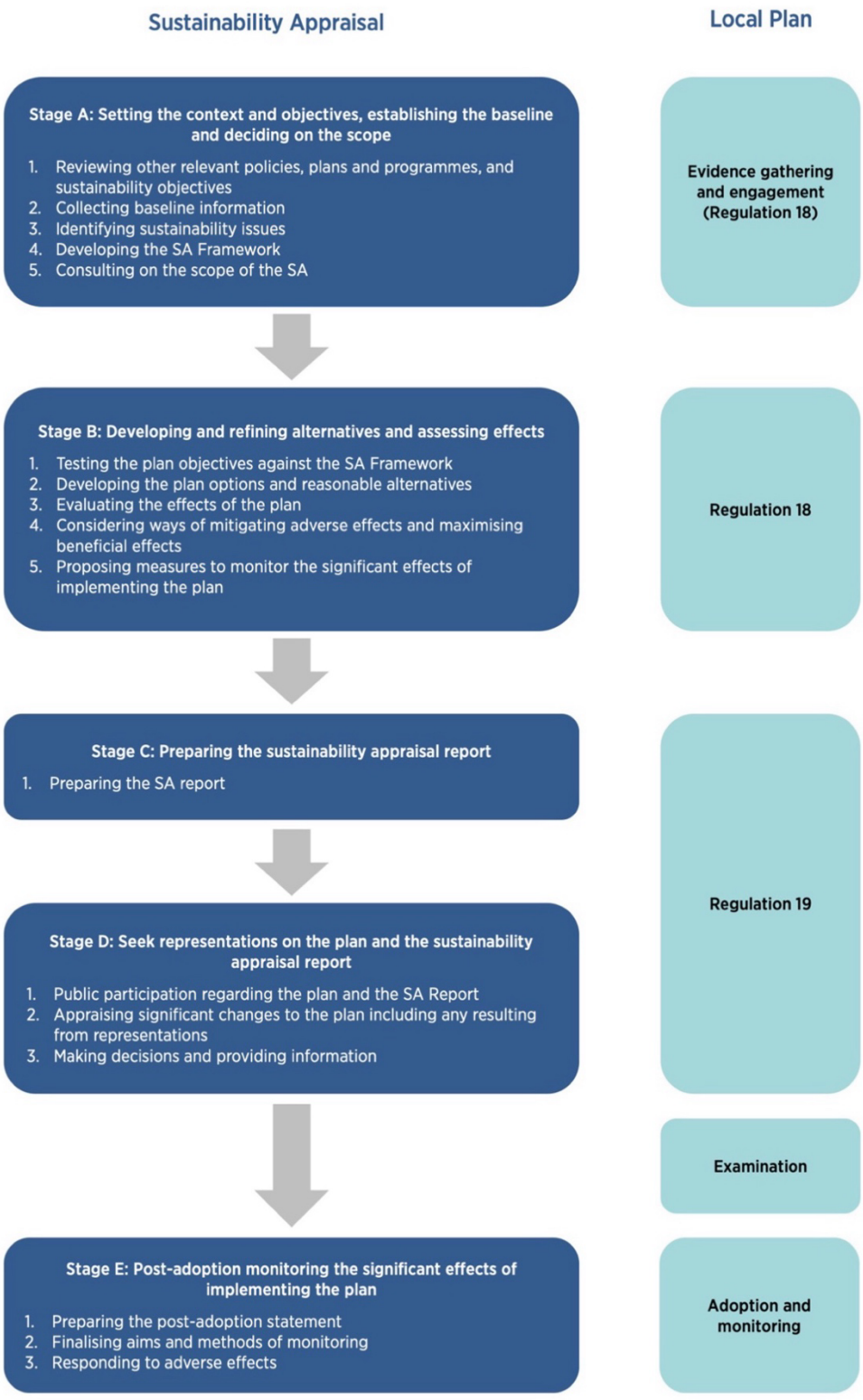

Figure N.1.2: *Sustainability Appraisal and the Local Plan process*

West Oxfordshire Local Plan Area

N16. **Figure N.1.3** shows the administrative boundary of West Oxfordshire. It is a primarily rural district, with the three main towns of Witney, Carterton, and Chipping Norton, alongside numerous smaller settlements. The City of Oxford lies adjacent to the district to the east, with a small proportion of Oxford's Green Belt falling within the district.

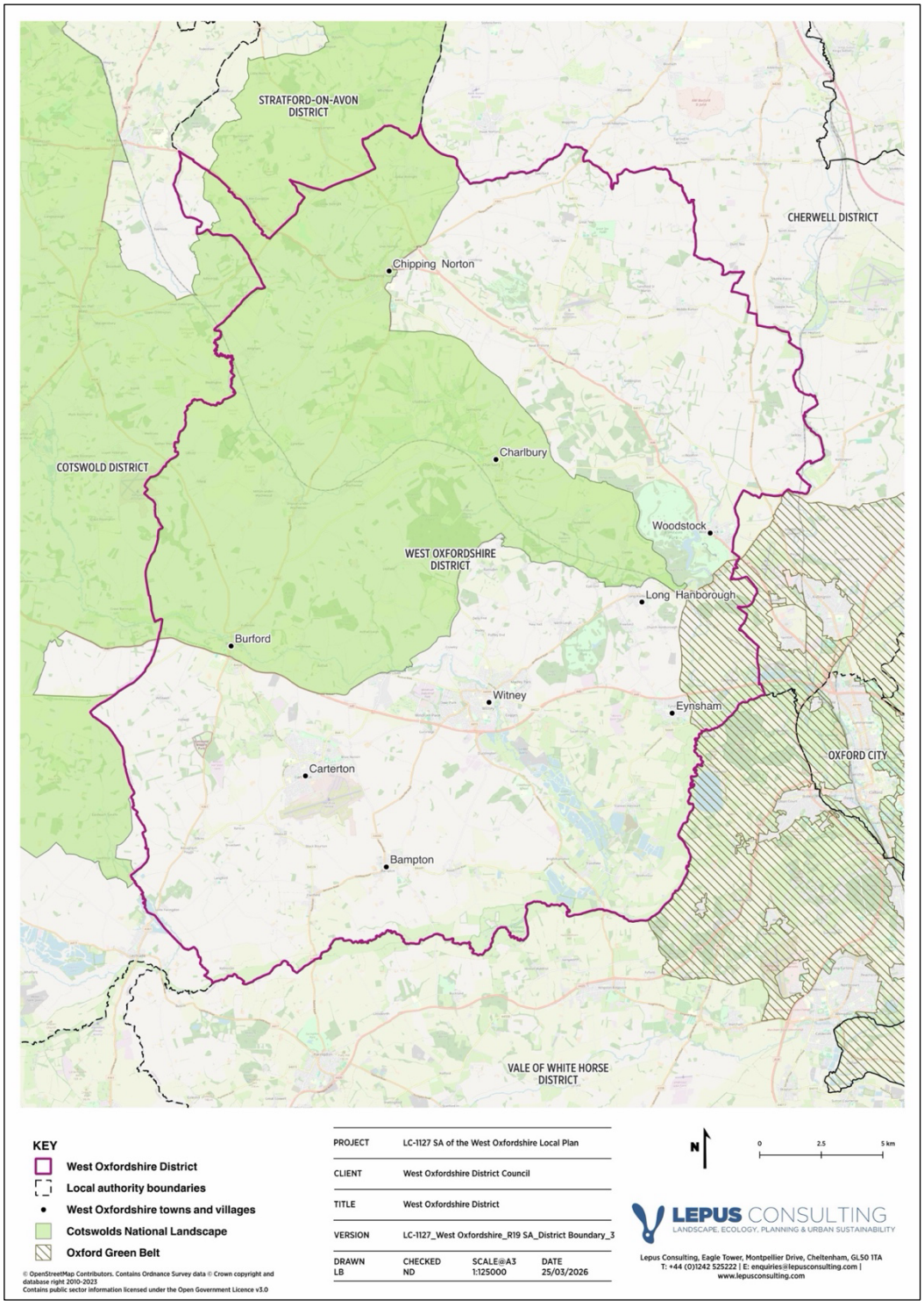

Figure N.1.3: *West Oxfordshire Local Plan area*

The SA process alongside the West Oxfordshire Local Plan

N17. **Figure N.1.4** provides an overview of the stages that have been undertaken during the preparation of the Local Plan and accompanying SA outputs, summarising the purpose and content of each.

N18. Each stage included consultation with the statutory bodies for SA/SEA (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) as well as public consultation with other stakeholders and interested parties. Comments received were considered during the preparation of the SA outputs (see **Appendix C**).

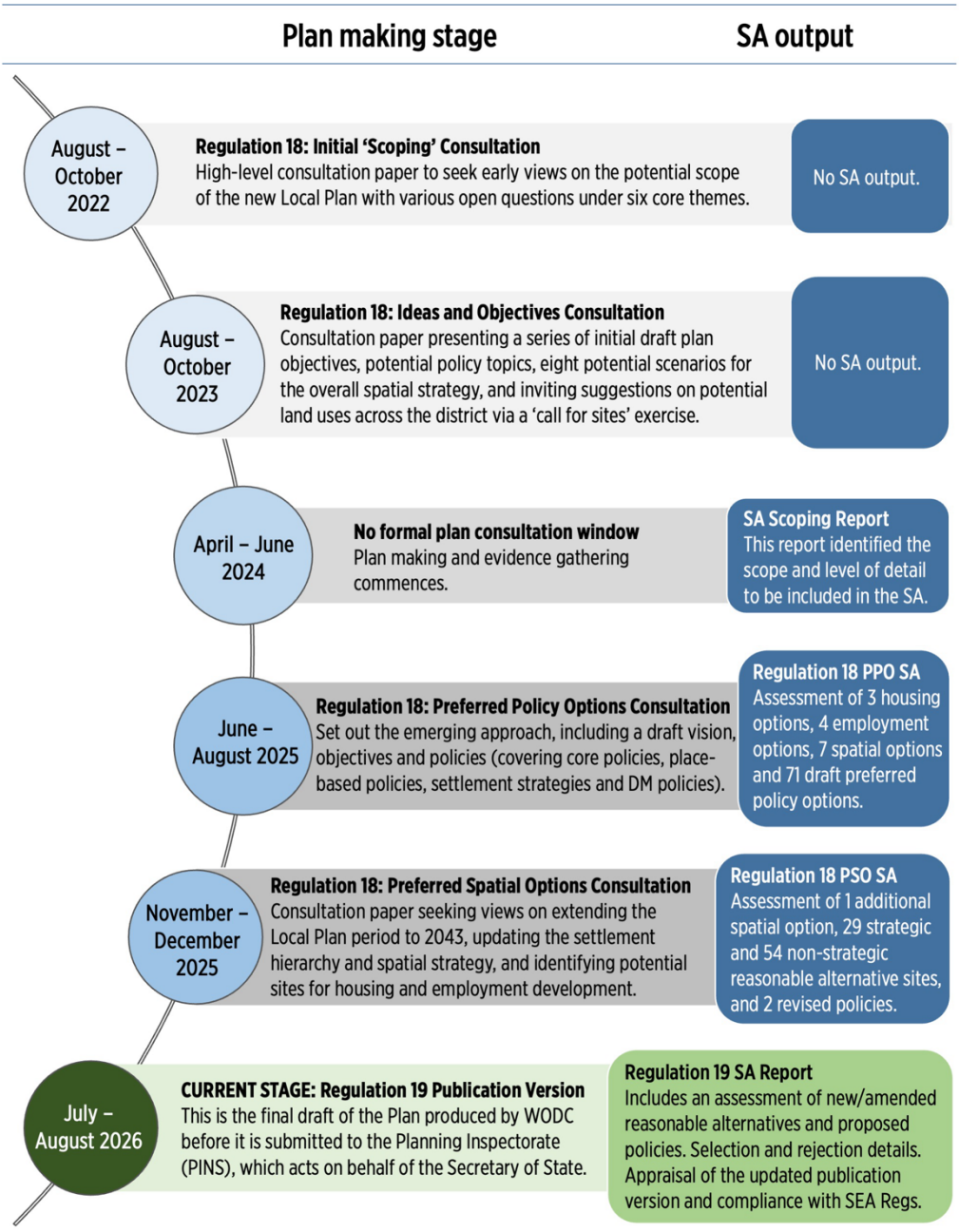

Figure N.1.4: *The West Oxfordshire Local Plan and SA process so far*

2 Purpose and content of the Regulation 19 SA Report

About the Regulation 19 SA Report

N19. The Regulation 19 SA Report presents the overall findings of the SA of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, which is composed principally of 68 policies, 8 strategic allocations and 9 non-strategic site allocations. The SA Report summarises the SA process to date and has been prepared to help inform the examination stage of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.

N20. The purpose of the SA of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan is to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely sustainability effects of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan proposals and their reasonable alternatives;
- Inform the Council's decision making and preparation of the Local Plan; and
- Provide an opportunity for statutory consultees, interested parties and the public to offer views on any aspect of the SA.

Structure of the Regulation 19 SA Report

N21. The SA of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan is presented in three volumes:

N22. **Volume 1**: **Non-Technical Summary** (NTS) (this document) provides a summary of the Regulation 19 SA.

N23. **Volume 2: Main SA Report** contains the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1** presents an introduction to this report.
- **Chapter 2** sets out information about the Local Plan and the SA process to date.
- **Chapter 3** presents the evolution of the environment without the Local Plan.
- **Chapter 4** sets out the SA methodology.
- **Chapter 5** presents details of the reasonable alternatives considered throughout the SA process.
- **Chapter 6** presents details on the preferred approach as set out in the Local Plan.
- **Chapters 7 to 15** set out the likely significant effects on the environment, per SEA topic.
- **Chapter 16** summarises the cumulative effects identified.
- **Chapter 17** sets out a range of monitoring recommendations for the Local Plan.
- **Chapter 18** summarises ways in which the SA has influenced the Local Plan throughout the plan making process, including through recommendations made in the SA.
- **Chapter 19** outlines the conclusions, residual effects and next steps

N24. **Volume 3: Appendices**.

3 Baseline and key sustainability issues for the West Oxfordshire District

Overview

N25. The Sustainability Appraisal has considered the environmental, social and economic context for the Local Plan. This included reviewing relevant plans, policies and legislation, together with information about the current state of the environment and the key sustainability issues affecting West Oxfordshire.

N26. **Volume 2** (the main Regulation 19 SA Report) includes information relating to the baseline and key issues for West Oxfordshire, drawing on information gathered during the Scoping stage, relating to the following sustainability topics (which incorporate the topics identified in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations[1]):

- Air;
- Biodiversity, flora and fauna;
- Climatic factors;
- Cultural heritage;
- Human health;
- Landscape;
- Population and material assets; and
- Soil and water resources.

N27. The Sustainability Appraisal has also considered how these topics might change if the Local Plan were not prepared. This 'no plan' scenario provides a baseline against which the likely effects of the Local Plan can be assessed. Without a new Local Plan, development would continue to be determined through the existing development plan, national planning policy and other relevant legislation. However, there would be greater uncertainty over where development would take place and whether future growth would be coordinated to deliver homes, jobs, infrastructure and environmental improvements.

Table N.3.1: *Summary of key issues by topic*

Topic	Main issues considered
Air quality	Reducing pollution and encouraging sustainable travel.
Biodiversity	Protecting important habitats and species while supporting nature recovery.
Climate change	Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to flooding and extreme weather.
Historic environment	Conserving heritage assets and local character.

[1] Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations identifies the likely significant effects on the environment, including "*issues such as (a) biodiversity, (b) population,(c) human health, (d) fauna, (e) flora, (f) soil, (g) water, (h) air, (i) climatic factors, (j) material assets, (k) cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, (l) landscape and (m) the interrelationship between the issues referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (l).*"

Topic	Main issues considered
Health	Supporting healthy communities with access to services, green space and recreation.
Landscape	Protecting the character of West Oxfordshire, including the Cotswolds National Landscape.
Population and housing	Meeting housing needs alongside infrastructure and employment.
Soil	Protecting the best agricultural land and reducing unnecessary land take.
Water	Managing water resources, wastewater and flood risk.

4 SA methodology

The SA Framework

N28. Following consideration of key sustainability issues, as discussed in **NTS Chapter 3**, an SA Framework was established which includes SA Objectives, decision-making criteria and indicators. The SA Framework provides a way in which sustainability effects can be described, analysed and compared, and can be used in monitoring the Plan.

N29. Full details of the SA Framework used throughout the SA process including indicators is presented in **Appendix A**, with a summary of the 14 SA Objectives shown in **Table N.4.1**. It should be noted that the order of SA Objectives does not infer any prioritisation.

Table N.4.1: *SA Objectives*

	SA Objectives	Relevance to Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations
1	**Climate change mitigation:** Minimise West Oxfordshire District's contributions towards the causes of climate change	Climatic factors
2	**Climate change adaptation:** Adapt to the anticipated levels of climate change	Climatic factors and water
3	**Biodiversity and geodiversity:** Conserve, enhance and restore the district's biodiversity and geodiversity	Biodiversity, flora and fauna
4	**Landscape:** Conserve, enhance and manage the quality and character of landscapes and townscapes	Landscape
5	**Cultural heritage:** Conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets and support the effective management of the historic environment	Cultural heritage
6	**Air quality:** Protect and improve air quality, creating cleaner and healthier air	Air
7	**Water:** Maintain and improve water quality and ensure efficient use of water resources	Water
8	**Natural resources and waste:** Ensure efficient use of the district's soil and mineral resources and reduce waste	Soil and material assets
9	**Housing and equality:** Provide affordable, high quality and environmentally sound housing for all, whilst reducing crime and social deprivation	Population, human health and material assets
10	**Health and wellbeing:** Safeguard and improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities in health	Population and human health

	SA Objectives	Relevance to Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations
11	**Transport and accessibility:** Improve accessibility, increase the proportion of travel by sustainable modes, and reduce the need to travel	Population and material assets
12	**Education:** Increase access to education and improve attainment to develop and maintain a skilled workforce	Population and material assets
13	**Economy and employment:** Ensure sufficient employment land and premises are available to develop and support innovative and sustainable economic growth	Population and material assets

Significant effects

N30. Each policy, site allocation and reasonable alternative has been assessed against the Sustainability Appraisal objectives. The likely effect of each is then evaluated using the assessment framework set out in **Table N.4.2**. The reasons for each assessment are explained in the accompanying assessment text, with the full results presented in Volume 3 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

N31. The Sustainability Appraisal identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects of implementing the Local Plan. This includes positive and negative effects, short-, medium- and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, and any secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects where these are likely to occur.

Table N.4.2: *Guide for likely significant effects*

Significance	Definition (not necessarily exhaustive)
Major Negative **- -**	The size, nature and location of a development proposal will be likely to: • Permanently degrade, diminish or destroy the integrity of a quality receptor, such as a feature of international, national or regional importance; • Cause a very high-quality receptor to be permanently diminished; • Be unable to be entirely mitigated; • Be discordant with the existing setting; and/or • Contribute to a cumulative significant effect.
Minor Negative **-**	The size, nature and location of development proposals will be likely to: • Not quite fit into the existing location or with existing receptor qualities; and/or • Affect undesignated yet recognised local receptors.
Negligible **0**	Either no impacts are anticipated, or any impacts are anticipated to be negligible.
Uncertain **+/-**	It is uncertain whether impacts will be positive or adverse.
Minor Positive **+**	The size, nature and location of a development proposal will be likely to: • Improve undesignated yet recognised receptor qualities at the local scale; • Fit into, or with, the existing location and existing receptor qualities; and/or • Enable the restoration of valued characteristic features.

Significance	Definition (not necessarily exhaustive)
Major Positive ++	The size, nature and location of a development proposal will be likely to: • Enhance and redefine the location in a positive manner, making a contribution at a national or international scale; • Restore valued receptors which were degraded through previous uses; and/or • Improve one or more key elements/features/characteristics of a receptor with recognised quality such as a specific international, national or regional designation.

N32. The methods, assumptions and limitations used in the Sustainability Appraisal are described in Chapter 4 of the Main Sustainability Appraisal Report (Volume 2), with further topic-specific information provided in Appendix E (Volume 3).

5 Reasonable alternatives

What are reasonable alternatives?

N33. The SEA Regulations require the Sustainability Appraisal to identify, describe and evaluate the reasonable alternatives considered during the preparation of the Local Plan.

N34. There is no statutory definition of a 'reasonable alternative'. In practice, reasonable alternatives are realistic options that are capable of meeting the objectives of the Local Plan. During plan preparation, the Council has considered a range of alternatives, including different spatial strategies, policies and site allocations.

N35. Each reasonable alternative has been assessed against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework to identify its likely sustainability effects. The findings have informed the Council's preparation of the Local Plan alongside the wider evidence base, helping to explain why the preferred approach has been selected.

N36. The Regulation 18 Sustainability Appraisal Report presents the reasonable alternatives considered during the preparation of the Local Plan. These include alternative spatial strategies for accommodating growth, strategic site options, non-strategic site allocations and, where appropriate, alternative policy approaches. The Sustainability Appraisal identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects of each reasonable alternative.

N37. Following the lastest round of Regulation 18 consultation on reasonable alternatives, sites have been selected and rejected for inclusion in the local plan; there are 8 strategic locations for growth and 9 non-strategic allocations. The SA evaluation of these sites can be found at Appendix F and G respectively in the main report.

6 Likely significant effects on the environment

Identified residual effects

N38. The main report has identified overall effects for the plan. **Table N.6.1** identifies the likely residual positive sustainability effects of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.

Table N.6.1: *Likely residual positive sustainability effects of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan*

	Summary of residual positive effects
1	**Housing provision** The Local Plan is expected to result in a long-term positive effect through the delivery of 18,318 new homes, providing sufficient housing land to meet identified needs and supporting the delivery of a range of housing types and tenures.
2	**Employment provision** The Local Plan is expected to result in a long-term positive effect through the provision of sufficient employment land to support economic growth, job creation and investment within West Oxfordshire.
3	**Access to services and facilities** The Local Plan is expected to support improved access to local services and facilities through the delivery of new development, associated infrastructure investment and developer contributions.
4	**Health and wellbeing** The Local Plan is expected to have a positive effect on health and wellbeing through the provision of new green infrastructure, recreational opportunities and improvements to walking, cycling and sustainable transport networks.
5	**Green infrastructure provision** The Local Plan is expected to have a positive effect through the delivery of new and enhanced green infrastructure, supporting recreational access, biodiversity enhancement and climate resilience.
6	**Climate change adaptation** The Local Plan is expected to support improved resilience to climate change through policies relating to sustainable design, flood risk management, sustainable drainage and the protection and enhancement of green and blue infrastructure.
7	**Sustainable transport** The Local Plan is expected to support improvements in sustainable transport through the promotion of walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure, helping to reduce reliance on private vehicles over the longer term.

N39. **Table N.6.2** identifies the likely residual adverse sustainability effects of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.

Table N.6.2: *Likely residual positive sustainability effects of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan*

	Summary of residual adverse effects
1	**Habitat fragmentation** The Local Plan is expected to result in a significant long-term cumulative adverse effect on biodiversity due to the loss and fragmentation of habitats, increased recreational pressure and potential impacts on ecological networks. Mitigation and biodiversity net gain are unlikely to fully offset all cumulative impacts.
2	**Landscape character and visual amenity** The Local Plan is expected to result in a long-term cumulative adverse effect on landscape through the introduction of development into rural areas, affecting landscape character, tranquillity and views, particularly within sensitive landscapes and areas close to the Cotswolds National Landscape.
3	**Cultural heritage** The Local Plan is expected to result in a moderate and potentially long-term cumulative adverse effect on cultural heritage. New development has the potential to alter the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets and contribute to incremental changes in historic landscape character.
4	**Climate change mitigation** The Local Plan is expected to result in a long-term cumulative adverse effect on climatic factors through increased greenhouse gas emissions associated with construction, energy use and transport, alongside the loss of greenfield land and carbon storage functions.
5	**Soil resources** The Local Plan is expected to result in a long-term permanent adverse effect through the loss of previously undeveloped land and potential best and most versatile agricultural land. Opportunities to mitigate soil loss are limited due to the irreversible nature of development.
6	**Air quality** The Local Plan is expected to result in a short to medium-term cumulative adverse effect on air quality due to increased traffic flows and associated emissions, particularly around areas of existing air quality constraints and the strategic road network.
7	**Water resources and water quality** The Local Plan is expected to result in a long-term cumulative adverse effect on water resources and water quality due to increased demand for water supply and wastewater treatment capacity. Delivery of infrastructure improvements and mitigation measures will be important in managing these effects.
8	**Waste management** The Local Plan is expected to result in increased pressure on waste management infrastructure due to additional waste generation associated with population growth, with potential capacity constraints resulting in a medium-term adverse effect.
9	**Accessibility to services and facilities** The Local Plan may result in localised adverse effects where development is located in areas with limited access to existing services and facilities, particularly in rural locations where sustainable transport options are constrained.

Cumulative effects

N40. The Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA) is the process of identifying and evaluating the effects that arise when the total significant effects of the Local Plan and assessed alongside known existing underlying trends and other PPPs.

N41. Cumulative effects are different from effects that occur alone. Alone, the Plan may not result in residual adverse effects for a particular topic, for example the effects of urban

sprawl on landscape character, but when considered cumulatively, may result in significant effects that require mitigation or monitoring.

N42. Cumulative effects of the plan are presented in chapter 16 of the main report.

7 Conclusions

Summary of findings

N43. Overall, the West Oxfordshire Local Plan is expected to deliver a broad range of positive sustainability outcomes. The Plan provides a framework for meeting the district's identified housing, employment and infrastructure needs whilst supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation, promoting nature recovery, enhancing green infrastructure, protecting the historic and natural environment, encouraging sustainable transport, and improving health and wellbeing. Collectively, the Plan is expected to contribute towards the creation of sustainable, resilient and inclusive communities across West Oxfordshire.

N44. The assessment has also identified a number of likely adverse effects associated with accommodating growth over the Plan period. These include the permanent loss of greenfield and agricultural land, potential effects on biodiversity, landscape character and the historic environment, increased pressure on water resources and wastewater infrastructure, and additional traffic and associated emissions in some locations. The Local Plan incorporates a range of mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or offset these effects where possible; however, some residual adverse effects are likely to remain.

Consultation and next steps

N45. The Regulation 19 SA Report will be published alongside the Publication Version of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.

N46. A minimum of a six-week period of consultation will be undertaken by WODC to offer statutory consultees, stakeholders, organisations and individuals an opportunity to submit representations regarding the Plan, as well as supporting evidence including this SA Report.

N47. Following this round of consultation, all comments will be analysed by the Plan makers as part of the ongoing plan making process. Further stages of SA will be prepared if and when necessary.

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Annex D

Regulation 19

Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043

Addendum

13 July 2026

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this addendum document is to set out a number of proposed changes to the version of the Regulation 19 Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 that was published on 30 June prior to consideration at the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 8 July.

1.2 The proposed changes are a result of issues identified by Officers themselves in further proof-reading the plan since the papers were initially published as well as questions and comments submitted by Members of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in advance of the meeting held on the 8 July and a number of the recommendations subsequently made by the committee.

1.3 The proposed changes are set out in tabular form overleaf. For ease of reference, the changes are set out in plan order and the table explains what change is proposed to which aspect of the draft Plan and why.

1.4 Subject to the approval of Members, the proposed changes will be included in the final draft Plan and published for consultation.

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
N/a	Insert Foreword	Explanation of the significance of the Local Plan from the Council Leader and Executive Member
Page 14	Insert Heading for Local Plan Vision	To ensure all key elements of the Local Plan are properly referenced.
Page 15	Objective 2, Bullet 4 Ensuring that timely investment is made in the infrastructure ~~-~~and local services needed to support development and that it is managed and maintained effectively over the long-term.	Emphasise importance of local services in supporting development.
Page 24	Update Figure 6.1 - Key Diagram with clearer symbology for settlements and also to show originally defined extent of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) corridor.	To ensure Key Diagram is clear and accessible and reflects the previously defined extent of the MRT corridor.
Page 25	Policy SP3 – Key Development Principles, viii. Development must have regard to safeguarded mineral and soil resources and should take account of the economic and other benefits ~~including~~ of best and most versatile agricultural land.	Policy wording revised to ensure consistency with National Policy
Page 28	Policy SP4 vi. Where harm to the National Landscape is identified ~~and exceptionally~~ but considered to be outweighed by exceptional benefits in the overall planning balance, demonstrate that all reasonable steps have been taken to avoid and mitigate harm and, as a last resort, provide appropriate and proportionate compensatory measures for any residual harm.	Policy wording refined.
Page 29	6.30 Furthermore, transport evidence prepared in support of the Plan indicates that, even with the planned A40 improvements in place, forecast growth across West Oxfordshire is likely to result in increased travel demand, longer journey times and greater congestion on parts of the corridor over the plan period. Whilst continued investment in highways, public transport and active travel infrastructure will remain important, the evidence suggests that a more transformational ~~long term~~ solution is likely to be required to provide the step-change in connectivity and capacity necessary to support sustainable growth.	Transformational solutions are required in the short, medium and long term

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
Page 29	6.31 Previous work has focused on the potential for a Carterton–Witney–Oxford rail connection (CWORC) as one possible means of addressing these challenges. However, consultation feedback on earlier stages of the Plan highlighted the importance of maintaining flexibility and avoiding a premature commitment to a specific transport technology before sufficient evidence is available. In response, the Council proposes a broader Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) approach that recognises the potential for a range of solutions to be considered. A Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system is a high-frequency, high-capacity public transport network, typically operating on dedicated corridors or priority lanes to offer reliable and efficient services 6.32 At the time of preparing this Plan, Oxfordshire County Council ~~is commissioning~~has commissioned further options appraisal work to assess the relative merits of different MRT technologies and identify the most appropriate solution for the corridor. Depending on the outcome of this work, the preferred option could comprise heavy rail, light rail, tram-train, guided transit, bus rapid transit or other emerging technologies capable of providing high-capacity, high-frequency and attractive alternatives to private car travel.	To include the definition of Mass Rapid Transit within the supporting text and to update the position on the options appraisal work
Page 31	Amend Figure 6.3 – Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Corridor to show full extent of corridor as previously defined.	To show full extent of MRT corridor as previously defined.
Page 36	7.19 West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district with a network of market towns and villages that continue to experience significant housing pressures, including affordability challenges. ~~Whilst a~~Accommodating growth at the scale required will be extremely challenging and will require significant investment in infrastructure and services as well as careful consideration of the potential impact on the district's natural and historic environment. Nevertheless ~~the Council considers that it is appropriate and achievable for~~ the Local Plan seeks to meet West Oxfordshire's identified housing need in full.	To more clearly recognise the significant challenge presented by the Government's Standard Method for assessing local housing need.
Page 44	7.55 Diversification of income streams for farm businesses and estates has become increasingly important. Agricultural premises can also host a variety of additional employment-supporting functions beyond those solely related to farming activities, including light industrial activities in workshops, (self) storage, and cafes and food preparation.	Refined text for additional clarity.
Page 45	Policy CP3	Corrected cross reference to relevant DM policies.

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
	1. Supporting a modern and flexible economy Development in the following key sectors will be supported subject to compliance with Policies DM27 – DM312~~2~~;	
Page 48	Para 7.72 The Council considers that, wherever practicable, infrastructure and community assets that serve a wider public function should be adopted and managed by an appropriate public body such as a Town or Parish Council, statutory undertaker, community organisation or other suitable body that provides clear accountability and long-term stewardship in the public interest. This approach will help to ensure consistent standards of maintenance, equitable access, and greater certainty for future occupiers.	To provide details of appropriate public bodies.
Page 61	Update Section title Policy CP8 – Sustainable and Integrated Transport	Update header text to be consistent with policy title.
Page 62	Para 7.119 Much of the proposed growth within the Plan is located within already constrained transport corridors. The A40 and A4095 experience~~s~~ significant congestion at peak times, affecting journey times, economic productivity and quality of life. The A40 will remain an important corridor for travel to work movements both within and beyond the district. Measures have been identified to improve public transport connectivity through the corridor including enhanced bus services, park and ride provision and the Science Transit proposals which provide opportunities for improved public transport priority and connectivity with Oxford.	Paragraph updated to acknowledge congestion issues on A4095 as well as A40
Page 63	Policy CP8 Where relevant and practical, development should: e. Provide safe, direct and attractive active travel connections within sites and to surrounding areas.	Policy wording amended to ensure that development safeguards public transport

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
	f. Safeguard and m~~M~~aximise access to high-quality public transport, including through layout and density. g. Support a modal shift towards low-carbon travel.	
Page 73	Para 8.1.6 However, growing demand is placing increasing pressure on existing facilities. There is a recognised need for investment in sports infrastructure, including, but not limited to, improved football facilities, additional pitch provision and modern all-weather 3G facilities to support current and future demand from ~~organisations such as~~ local football clubs and other sports clubs and organisations. ~~, which has significant ambitions for future growth and expansion, as well as the wider community.~~ Demand for education and healthcare infrastructure is also expected to increase as the area continues to grow.	Paragraph updated to reflect wider sports needs in Carterton
Page 76	Amend Figure 8.2 – Carterton Strategic Development Framework to show full extent of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Corridor as previously defined.	To show full extent of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Corridor as previously defined.
Page 80	Policy CA2 Insert Map of Carterton Town Centre	Map to show the area to which policy CA2 relates
Page 89	Policy CA4 Insert Map of Carterton ARO	Map to show the area to which policy CA4 relates
Page 93	Para 8.1.85 8.1.85 There are a number of important, existing uses in this rural fringe location including the Kilkenny Lane Country Park, the Kilkenny Lane allotments and Carterton Football Club, which has significant ambitions for future growth and expansion. Any development will therefore be expected to respect and where possible and appropriate, integrate and enhance accessibility to these facilities.	Text updated to reflect position of Carterton Football Club
Page 97	8.1.99 The IDP identifies the ~~demonstrates that there are no known~~ infrastructure ~~constraints~~ that is expected to be required ~~would prevent the delivery of~~ to support the	Text amended for increased clarity

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
	delivery of the Strategic Locations for Growth during the plan period, subject to appropriate phasing and investment.	
Page 97	8.1.100 The Council will continue to work collaboratively with infrastructure providers, delivery agencies, neighbouring authorities, landowners, developers and local communities to refine, coordinate, fund and secure the infrastructure necessary to support planned growth. 8.1.101 Development proposals within the Strategic Locations for Growth will be expected to contribute appropriately towards the funding and delivery of infrastructure requirements having regard to their scale, impacts and viability considerations.	Updated text to emphasise importance of funding infrastructure
Page 105	Policy WIT1 **4. Protecting and enhancing the River Windrush and natural environment** a. Protecting and enhancing the River Windrush corridor as a key landscape, biodiversity, recreational and green infrastructure asset; b. Delivering an integrated network of green and blue infrastructure that connects communities with the wider countryside and supports biodiversity recovery, recreation, food production and health and wellbeing;	To emphasise the importance of the Green Infrastructure network in supporting food production.
Page 112	Update figure reference for Windrush Valley and Project Areas Map	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 118	Update figure reference for Welch Way ARO	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 125	Update paragraph numbering.	To ensure paragraph numbering is accurate

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
Page 127	Update figure reference for Geographic extent of Chipping Norton Area Strategy	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 132	Update figure reference for Chipping Norton Strategic Framework	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 137	Insert map for Chipping Norton Town Centre	To show the area to which policy CN2 relates
Page 142	Update figure reference for Chipping Norton motte and bailey castle, and fishpond and Romano-British rural settlement and Iron Age remains, on the eastern edge of Chipping Norton	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 144	Insert paragraph numbering to introductory text for Policy CN3	To ensure that whole document is properly formatted and can be properly referenced
Page 147	Update figure reference for Geographical Extent of Bampton Area Strategy	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 150	Update figure reference for Bampton Area Strategy	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 150	Update map legend to include development locations	To ensure consistent formatting and accuracy of inset maps
Page 154	Insert figure to illustrate Policy BA2 - Land east of Bampton	Map to show the area to which policy BA2 relates
Page159	Update figure reference for Geographical Extent of Burford Area Strategy	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 163	Update figure reference for Burford Area Strategy	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 163	Update map and legend to refer to policy BU2 Burford Town Centre and policy BU3 / development location.	To ensure consistent formatting and accuracy of inset maps
Page 164	Remove text from first paragraph of policy; ~~A map showing the outline of the area included in the Bampton Area Strategy, outlining conservation areas, the Cotswold National Landscape and nature recovery and GI opportunities~~. Burford will continue to function as a distinctive market town, rural service centre and visitor destination, valued for its exceptional historic character, rich heritage, strong community identity and outstanding landscape setting within the Cotswolds National Landscape.	Erroneous text to be included as Alt Text for figure 8.12

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
	Development will be supported where it sustains and enhances the town's social, economic and environmental wellbeing in accordance with the following objectives.	
Page 164	Update paragraph indents for Policy BU1	To ensure consistent formatting and accessibility of document
Page 168	Insert map for Burford Town Centre	Map to show the area to which policy BU2 relates
Page 175	Update figure reference for Geographical extent of the Charlbury Area Strategy	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 178	Update figure reference for Strategic Development Framework for the Charlbury Area	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 178	***Strategic Development Framework for the Charlbury Area*** Update map and legend to refer to policies CH2 and CH3	To ensure consistent formatting and accuracy of inset maps
Page 183	Policy CH2 - 4. c. c. The site is located within ~~a Nature Improvement Area~~ an area that could be of importance for biodiversity and there are records of protected species in the vicinity. Development must therefore be informed by appropriate ecological surveys and demonstrate how impacts will be avoided, mitigated or compensated.	Revise text to ensure consistency with Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy
Page 184	1. Key Design Principles Development should: a. Be informed by a comprehensive masterplan prepared with substantive input from the local community. b. Respond positively to the edge-of-settlement Cotswold National Landscape (CNL) location, creating a sensitive transition to open countryside. c. Establish a clear sense of place with built form of the highest quality. d. Respect the residential amenities of existing properties to the north of the site e. ~~A~~ Provide a mixture of tenure and property sizes ~~should be provided~~ in line with the local need. f. ~~The~~ Ensure that the provision of affordable dwellings ~~to be~~ is integrated within development and ~~be~~ is tenure blind. g. Provide overlooking and natural surveillance of streets and open spaces.	Refined text to improve grammatical accuracy

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
	h. Incorporate and enhance the existing landscape features (such as boundary hedgerows and the existing tree belt) wherever possible including measures for their future maintenance. i. Provide ~~sion of~~ safe and suitable vehicular access and comprehensive connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists to adjoining areas and key destinations. j. Conserve and enhance the special characteristics of the Charlbury Conservation Area.	
Page185	4. Green Infrastructure (GI) and Biodiversity a. Development should be master planned around the provision of a multifunctional green infrastructure network, incorporating public open space and connected ecological corridors. b. Proposals must deliver measurable biodiversity net gain in accordance with ~~national policy requirements.~~ Policy DM2	Corrected cross reference to development management policy
Page188	Update figure reference for Geographical Extent of Eynsham Area Strategy	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 191	Insert map of Eynsham Strategic Development Framework	Map to show the area to which policy EYN1 relates
Page 194	Insert map to show West Eynsham SDA amendment	New Figure to be added depicting minor change to the boundary of the West Eynsham SDA as shown on the Policies Map of the adopted Local Plan 2031
Page 197	Update figure reference for Geographic Extent of Long Hanborough Area Strategy	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 200	Update figure reference for Strategic Framework for the Hanborough Area	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 205	Insert map to show Hanborough Station Area of Redevelopment Opportunity	Map to show the area to which policy LH2 relates
Page 207	Insert map to illustrate Policy LH3 - Land west of Hanborough Station	Map to show the area to which policy LH3 relates
Page 212	Correct paragraph numbering as follows: 8.98 Woodstock Area Strategy	Ensure paragraph and header references are correct
Page 212	Update figure reference for Geographic Extent of Woodstock Area Strategy	To ensure all figure references are accurate

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
Page 215	Update figure reference for Strategic Development Framework for the Woodstock Area	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 223	Update figure reference for Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 225	Policy WO3 - 5. Major and Cumulative Development a. Proposals for major development that could impact the significance and OUV of the WHS within its setting (including large-scale residential schemes or infrastructure such as solar farms) will be subject to the most rigorous assessment and will only be supported where exceptional circumstances are demonstrated, consistent with national policy, and where: i. The need for the development and potential alternative options have been appropriately considered, where relevant; ii. ~~ii.~~ The public benefits clearly and substantially outweigh the harm to the significance and/or OUV of the WHS; iii. ~~iii.~~ All practicable steps have been taken to avoid, minimise and mitigate harm; and iv. ~~iv.~~ Proposals include a clear strategy to deliver long-term enhancements to the WHS, including to those elements of its setting which contribute to its significance.	To ensure consistent formatting and accessibility of document
Page 226	Para 8.9.49 The volume of traffic on the A44 south of Woodstock to Oxford has been identified as among the highest on the primary route network. Continued investment in active and public transport infrastructure is required to ensure the safe and convenient movement of people, reducing reliance on the car and to reduce traffic movements and congestion along the route.	Incomplete paragraph requires updating,
Page 228	8.119 ~~9~~ Salt Cross Garden Village Area Strategy	Correct paragraph numbering
Page 236	Update figure reference for Enstone Area of Regeneration Opportunity	To ensure all figure references are accurate
Page 240	Insert figure to illustrate Policy RA3	Map to show the area to which policy RA3 relates
Page 243	Insert figure to illustrate Policy RA4	Map to show the area to which policy RA4 relates

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
Page 245	Insert figure to illustrate Policy RA5	Map to show the area to which policy RA5 relates
Page 248	Insert figure to illustrate Policy RA6	Map to show the area to which policy RA6 relates
Pages 263-265	1. No net loss of biodiversity All development must achieve no net loss of biodiversity, having regard to the existing (pre development) biodiversity value of the site, and demonstrate biodiversity enhancement to achieve gains where possible. 2. Protection of designated sites Development that would have an adverse effect on the integrity of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), will not be permitted. Development that is within 500m of Oxford Meadows SAC or within 500m of a river upstream of the SAC (e.g. River Thames, River Evenlode, River Glyne, River Dorne) must demonstrate that measures will be taken to minimise the risk of water pollution (e.g. from spills, drainage or construction dust) during construction and operation, to avoid adverse effects on the SAC. 2. Application of mitigation hierarchy a. All development will be expected to minimise ecological impacts in line with the mitigation hierarchy in reducing order of priority: i. Avoid impacts, e.g. through retention of habitats/features ii. Reduce through mitigation iii. Compensate as a last resort only (and not for impacts on a SAC). b. Development likely to result in any direct or indirect loss, deterioration or harm to the following ecological features will be refused unless there is a robust justification for a lack of reasonable alternative sites that would result in less or no harm or there are wholly exceptional reasons justifying the granting of planning permission, and a suitable compensation strategy exists. i. Local Wildlife Sites and Proposed Local Wildlife Sites ii. Local Nature Reserves iii. Priority habitats iv. Priority species v. Local Geological Sites vi. Important and/or ancient hedges and/or hedgerows vii. Ancient woodland and/or ancient and/or veteran trees; and/or viii. Rivers and streams.	Suggested additional policy wording to ensure protection of designated sites

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
	[…] 6. Ecological Mitigation and Compensation a. With the exception of impacts on SACs, where the loss of ecological features cannot be prevented or adequately mitigated, appropriate compensation measures will be sought to offset the loss by contributing to appropriate local nature recovery projects to achieve an overall gain in biodiversity. b. Measures proposed to mitigate adverse ecological impacts to meet requirements for compensation above will be given weight proportionate to their likelihood of success. Where reasonable doubt exists as to the effectiveness of any such measures, weight afforded to those measures will be significantly reduced. c. Developers must consider using the NatureSpace Priority Species Scheme where impacts covered cannot be fully mitigated or compensated onsite for the species specifically covered by the scheme.	
Page 278	Policy DM6 1 iv Implement a 50 metre development free buffer to all Ancient Woodland and veteran trees in support of the Councils Nature Recovery objectives	Revised policy wording to ensure protection of Veteran Trees
Page 280	9.110 DM7 is consistent with national policy and guidance, Sport England guidance and the objectives of the West Oxfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy, Strategic Outcomes Planning Model, Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facilities Strategy, all of which identify the importance of protecting existing facilities, addressing quantitative and qualitative deficiencies in provision, and ensuring that future growth is appropriately supported by new and enhanced recreational infrastructure.	Updated to ensure that the Plan references all relevant evidence.
Page 280	9.111 Existing sport, ~~play and open space~~recreation and play facilities represent important community assets which contribute to health, wellbeing, social inclusion and placemaking. Facilities such as playing pitches, parks, recreation grounds, children's play areas, leisure centres and informal recreational spaces often perform multiple functions, including supporting biodiversity, climate resilience and opportunities for informal recreation and social interaction. 9.112 Policy DM7 reflects the approach in national policy which is clear that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should be protected unless robust evidence demonstrates that they are surplus to requirements, replacement provision of equal or greater value is secured, or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss.	Amendments to ensure consistency of wording throughout policy

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
	9.113 Existing sport, ~~play and open space~~recreation and play will be protected against loss, dilapidation and/or deliberate degradation. Facilities should be maintained to a reasonable standard to ensure they continue to meet the needs of residents in the local settlement and surrounding communities. The deterioration of facilities can lead to reduced participation, accessibility and community benefit and may undermine wider health and wellbeing objectives.	
Page 280	9.114 In considering proposals involving the loss of existing provision, the Council will require robust and up-to-date evidence of need prepared in accordance with recognised best practice guidance, including Sport England's ~~Playing Fields Policy~~Planning for Sport Guidance and associated assessment methodologies. 9.115 Particular weight will be given to safeguarding facilities in locations where the Council's evidence identifies existing or future quantitative or qualitative deficiencies. The West Oxfordshire Strategic Outcomes Planning Model, Playing Pitch Strategy, Built Facilities Strategy and Open Space Study identify areas where current provision is under pressure or where additional demand is expected as a result of planned growth. In such circumstances, retaining and improving existing facilities will form an important part of creating sustainable communities and supporting healthy lifestyles.	Updated to ensure that the Plan references all relevant evidence and proper guidance.
Page 282	Policy DM7 1. ~~Safeguarding~~ Protecting Existing Facilities a. Existing playing pitches and sport, recreation and play facilities, including formal and informal provision, leisure centres, parks, recreation grounds and playgrounds will be safeguarded against loss or deterioration. b. Development proposals that would result in the loss or deterioration of such facilities, including associated infrastructure, will only be supported where:	Updated text to ensure consistency with Sport England terminology

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
	i. ~~An~~ The Council's up-to-date and robust assessment of need, ~~prepared in accordance with best practice guidance~~ demonstrates that the facility is surplus to current and future requirements; or ii. ~~Equivalent or i~~Improved replacement provision is secured, in terms of quantity, quality, functionality and accessibility, in a suitable and convenient location serving the same settlement or catchment; or iii. The ~~proposal delivers alternative sport or recreational provision whose~~ benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the loss of the existing facility.	
Page 297	Policy DM 10, 1, a ix. Are supported by robust, site-specific assessments of technical feasibility, grid connectivity, and land quality, including consideration of best and most versatile agricultural land where relevant. x. Are supported by a clear decommissioning Plan to include details of how development will be removed and land restored and the end of the project lifespan.	Updated to include requirement for decommissioning plan
Page 309	Policy DM 13, 1 Development proposals that individually or cumulatively lead to a material deterioration in air quality, ~~particularly in or near the following air quality sensitive areas~~, will only be permitted when they can demonstrate how air quality impacts will be mitigated. ~~a. The Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)~~ ~~b. The Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC).~~	Refined wording to strengthen policy in accordance with habitat Regulations Assessment
Pages 309-310	2. An Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA) will be required for: a. All major development proposals b. Any development likely to result in a significant increase in vehicle traffic or emissions (e.g. from heating, industrial uses). c. Any development located within or near an AQMA ~~or the Oxford Meadows SAC~~.	Suggested additional policy wording to ensure protection of designated sites

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
	d. Proposals that form part of a larger cumulative development likely to impact local or strategic air quality levels. 3. AQIAs must assess the potential impacts on local air quality during both construction and operation, taking into account cumulative effects with other planned or existing developments. They should model pollutant levels where appropriate and evaluate impacts on human health and ecological receptors. a. Where an AQIA identifies likely significant adverse impacts on air quality, appropriate and proportionate mitigation must be secured through the planning process. Measures may include, but are not limited to: i. Sustainable transport infrastructure (e.g. walking, cycling, EV charging). ii. Reduced car dependency and traffic management schemes. iii. Low-emission building design, heating systems and energy sources. iv. Landscaping and green infrastructure to support pollutant absorption. v. Off-site mitigation contributions, where on-site measures are insufficient. ~~4. All development proposals in or within 500m the Oxford Meadows SAC must demonstrate compliance with Habitat Regulations and ensure there is no adverse effect on the integrity of the protected site from air pollution, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.~~ Construction ~~Environmental Management Plans~~ Emissions 5. All major development must incorporate Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMP) that include: a. Dust suppression and control measures. b. Monitoring of particulate matter. c. Limiting construction vehicle emissions and on-site machinery impacts. d. Protocols for responding to air quality breaches during works. 6. Particular care must be taken in air quality sensitive areas (the AQMAs and within 500m of the Oxford Meadows SAC or within 500m of rivers upstream of it, as set out in Policy DM2), where enhanced construction management and controls may be required. Monitoring and Management 7. In ~~air quality sensitive areas (the~~ AQMAs ~~and within 500m of the Oxford Meadows SAC),~~ development proposals may be required to contribute to: a. Air quality monitoring during and post-construction. b. The preparation of Air Quality Management Plans (AQMPs). c. Ongoing compliance reviews and adaptive mitigation where thresholds are at risk of being exceeded.	

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
Page 312	Policy DM14 -1 iii iii. ~~Development that would result~~Not result in inactive or predominantly residential ground floor frontages ~~will not be supported~~ where planning permission is required, unless it can be demonstrated that such development would not harm the vitality, viability or function of the town centre.	Refined text to improve grammatical accuracy
Page 316	Policy DM15 1,b,i Development proposals involving the loss, change of use, or redevelopment of a community facility will only be supported where it can be robustly demonstrated that: i. The facility is no longer viable, necessary, in active use or with no likely demand for its continued operation ~~or in active use / no demand for,~~ and that all reasonable efforts have been made to retain or repurpose it for community use, demonstrated through proportionate evidence.	Refined policy wording
Page 326	Policy DM18 – Windfall Housing Development on Unallocated Sites Amend as follows: 2. Assimilating Growth in Settlements a. The following guides to cumulative growth will be applied to windfall residential development, so as not to undermine the delivery of the spatial strategy and ensure growth remains proportionate to the scale and character of settlements: i. In all settlements outside the Cotswolds National Landscape or the Oxford Green Belt: Windfall development should not increase the total number of dwellings within a settlement by more than 10% over the plan period, based on the number of dwellings built within the given settlement as of 1 April 2025 ii. In settlements falling wholly or partly within the Cotswolds National Landscape or the Oxford Green Belt: Windfall development should not increase the total number of dwellings within a settlement by more than 5% over the plan period, based on the number of dwellings built within the given settlement as of 1 April 2025.	To ensure that the 5% cap applies to settlements that fall partly within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) as well as those that fall wholly within the CNL.

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
Page 334	1. Affordable Housing Requirement Threshold a. Development proposals creating new residential floorspace in the following circumstances are required to provide affordable housing: i. Major development resulting in or capable of providing a net gain of 10 or more dwellings or involving a site of 0.5 hectares or more.	Strengthen policy wording to avoid threshold dodging
Page 354	Policy DM26, 2, d Proposals for the conversion of traditional buildings will be considered in accordance with DM278	Corrected cross reference with development management policy
Page 357	Policy DM27 1 b ix Maximises renewable energy generation, demand management and charging infrastructure on rooftops and in parking areas	Insert criteria to maximise renewable energy generation on employment sites
Page 371	Policy CA5 - Amend formatting of text indents	Ensure document is formatted in consistent and accessible manner
Page 371	Policy CA5, 4 4. Landscape A landscape-led approach should underpin the masterplanning of the site. The development should respond to the existing landform, landscape character, retaining and integrating important features such as hedgerows, trees, and field patterns where appropriate. New planting and structural landscaping should be used to create a strong green framework, provide visual containment, and soften the transition between the built form and surrounding countryside.	Wording strengthened to ensure that proposals respond to landform.
Page 372	CA5, 7 The development should provide or contribute to the timely delivery of necessary infrastructure to support the new community, the wider network of new settlements and Carterton itself	Wording strengthened in accordance with the Strategic Framework for the Carterton Area

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
Page 373	CA6, 7 The layout shall make provision for public open space, children's play space, informal recreation and, where required, sports provision, either on-site or through appropriate contributions. It should also ~~accommodate the expansion~~take account of the current and future requirements of Carterton Football Club.	Wording amended to take account of current and future requirements of Carterton Football Club.
Page 373	Policy CA6 - Amend formatting of text indents	Ensure document is formatted in consistent and accessible manner
Page 376	CA7, 1, b b. The masterplan shall demonstrate how the Strategic Location will function as a coordinated, landscape-led extension in the form of a new village to the north of Carterton within Brize Norton, having regard to the wider strategic growth area and the need to secure comprehensive infrastructure delivery.	Amended to provide clarity over the form of new development
Page 376	CA7, 2, a a. Development shall provide a residential-led scheme of approximately 2,000 ~~1,500~~ dwellings, as well as Gypsy and Traveller accommodation subject to design-led testing and detailed assessment.	Quantum of residential development updated along with requirement for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.
Page 376	CA7, 3, f f. Development shall include a mobility hub or equivalent integrated transport facility, providing convenient access to public transport, cycle parking, shared mobility, electric vehicle charging and other sustainable transport measures including Mass Rapid Transit as appropriate.	Additional text to emphasise link to MRT corridor.
Page 377	CA7, 4, b The layout, scale and design of development shall respond sensitively to the landform and landscape character of the north-eastern edge of Carterton, the setting of Brize Norton and the wider rural landscape.	Text added to emphasise importance of responding to landscape and landform.
Page 379	CA8, 2, a a. Development shall provide a residential-led scheme of approximately 2,000 ~~1,500~~ dwellings, and provision for the travelling community, subject to design-led testing and detailed assessment.	Updated quantum of development for SLG

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
Page 379	CA8 2. Housing, employment and key land uses a. Development shall provide a residential-led scheme of approximately ~~1,500~~2,000 dwellings, subject to design-led testing and detailed assessment. b. Development shall provide a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in accordance with the relevant policies of the Local Plan. c. Development shall make provision for 10 Hectares of employment land delivered in accordance with Policy CP3, with particular focus on the defence and aerospace sectors or other sectoral links to RAF Brize Norton or the wider Carterton Area. ~~b.~~d. Development shall make provision within the site for the delivery of further education linked to the above key employment sectors ~~c.~~e. The development shall include an appropriate mix of supporting uses, including local convenience, community, education, open space, recreation and other neighbourhood facilities necessary to support a sustainable new community. f. The local centre or equivalent neighbourhood hub shall be provided in a location which is accessible by walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport and which supports the creation of a walkable neighbourhood. ~~d.~~g. ~~layout shall make provision for public open space, children's play space, informal recreation and, where required, sports provision, either on-site or through appropriate contributions.~~ ~~e.~~ The layout shall make provision for public open space, children's play space, informal recreation and, where required, sports provision, either on-site or through appropriate contributions~~A local centre or equivalent neighbourhood hub shall be provided in a location which is accessible by walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport and which supports the creation of a walkable neighbourhood.~~	Development template updated to clarify quantum of residential development and to set explicit requirement for employment and education provision as well as greater clarity on provision of other key land uses.
Page 382	WIT 5 1 b. masterplan shall demonstrate how the Strategic Location will function as a coordinated, landscape-led new settlement adjoining Witney, also having regard to the relationship with Curbridge, Ducklington, the A40	
Page 382	WIT 5 3 f. Development shall safeguard land and/or make appropriate provision for any relevant strategic public transport corridor and interchange, including the potential Carterton Witney-~~Eynsham~~ Oxford MRT corridor, where required by the Council and relevant transport authority.	To strengthen reference to MRT corridor need for transport interchange

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
Page 383	WIT 5, 7. Drainage, amenity and utilities a. Development in this location shall not prejudice the future expansion of Witney sewage treatment works by establishing an appropriate buffer between development and the existing sewage treatment works ~~a.~~b. An appropriate surface water drainage strategy shall be provided, incorporating sustainable drainage systems as part of the site's green and blue infrastructure and public realm networks ~~b.~~c. Development proposals shall be supported by appropriate assessments of odour, noise, air quality and other amenity impacts, with particular regard to nearby employment uses, the sewage treatment works and the abattoir. ~~c.~~d. The layout and design of development shall incorporate any necessary mitigation to demonstrate that acceptable living conditions will be achieved for future residents.	To ensure that any potential future development in this location does not prejudice any future necessary expansion of Witney Sewage Treatment Works.
Page 385	WIT 6 Update paragraph indents	To ensure consistent formatting and accessibility of document
Page 385	Housing and land use 5. Development shall provide a residential-led scheme of approximately 700 ~~600-800~~ dwellings~~,~~ employment provision and provision to meet the needs of travelling communities, ~~-~~subject to design-led testing and detailed assessment. 6. Development shall provide a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in accordance with the relevant policies of the Local Plan. 7. Development shall make provision for 10 Hectares of employment land delivered in accordance with Policy CP3. ~~6.~~8. Development shall make provision within the site for the delivery of further education linked to the above employment provision	Development template updated to clarify quantum of residential development and to set explicit requirement for employment and education provision as well as greater clarity on provision of other key land uses.

Plan section/para number	Proposed Change	Reason
	~~7.~~9. The layout shall make provision for public open space, children's play space, informal recreation and, where required, sports provision, either on-site or through appropriate contributions.	
Page 386	**Flood risk, drainage and utilities** ~~19. Development proposals shall be informed by a heritage impact assessment and archaeological assessment.~~ ~~20. The layout, scale, design and landscape mitigation of development shall conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of nearby heritage assets and their settings, including Minster Lovell Conservation Area.~~ ~~387~~ ~~21. Archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be undertaken where required.~~	Remove archaeology and heritage requirements from flood risk section;.
Page 386	Update formatting of text indents	Ensure document is formatted in consistent and accessible manner
Page 389	WIT 7 2. The masterplan shall demonstrate how the two component parcels will function together as a coordinated northern / north-western extension to Witney and in particular the future of Dry Lane, including any proposals to limit or avoid rat running through Crawley	To ensure that development proposals have regard to impacts on sensitive parts of the local road network
Page 391	CN3 3 a. Safe and suitable vehicular access shall be provided from London Road, Banbury Road and/or other appropriate points on the local highway network, supported by a transport assessment and including measures to retain the street trees along London Road	To ensure that development proposals have regard to impacts on sensitive local green infrastructure features
Page 392	CN3 4 b shall respond sensitively to the eastern edge of Chipping Norton, the character of the London Road approach and the wider rural landscape including views towards the site from the A44 .	To ensure that development proposals have regard to impacts on sensitive views
Page 394	Insert table for residential development trajectory	To provide clarity as to when sites are expected to be delivered.
Page 441	Glossary A Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system is a high-frequency, high-capacity public transport network, typically operating on dedicated corridors or priority lanes to offer reliable and efficient services.	Updated glossary to provide definition of mass rapid transit
General	Minor potential changes/additions to text throughout to reflect the draft IDP.	To ensure the draft Local Plan fully reflects the draft IDP.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Name and date of Committee	**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – 8 JULY 2026** **COUNCIL – 22 JULY 2026**
Subject	**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26**
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Councillor Andrew Beaney, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Email: Andrew.beaney@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services Email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Ana Prelici, Senior Democratic Services Officer Email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To receive a report highlighting the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the 2025/26 civic year
Annexes	Annex A – Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations Annex B (For Full Council) – Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan
Recommendation(s)	That Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves to: 1. Note the report. 2. Agree any further recommendations related to the Committee's remit to Full Council.
Corporate priorities	• Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	N/A

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report summarises the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the 2025/26 civic year and demonstrates how the Committee has continued to provide constructive challenge to the Executive through pre-decision scrutiny, recommendations and task and finish activity.

1.2 During the year, the Committee made 75 recommendations to the Executive across ten topic areas, with 45 recommendations either fully or partially accepted. This indicates that scrutiny has been able to influence Executive decision-making in a constructive and proportionate way, with recommendations generally focused on strengthening or amending proposals rather than opposing them outright.

1.3 The report also reflects on the Committee's use of task and finish groups, including work on leisure provision, public conveniences and waste transformation. It identifies opportunities to further improve the process through earlier officer involvement, clearer scoping, formal reporting back to the Committee, and stronger tracking of outcomes from scrutiny recommendations.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Councils that operate executive arrangements are required to have at least one overview and scrutiny committee. Overview and scrutiny committees are empowered to review and scrutinise decisions taken by the Council and to investigate and make reports on any matters which affect the district or its inhabitants.

2.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committees have statutory powers under the Local Government Act 2000 to review and scrutinise Executive decisions and actions. They may "call in" decisions before implementation, delaying them to allow examination and, where appropriate, recommending that the decision-maker reconsider. They can review whether decisions are consistent with the policy framework and budget, and refer matters to Full Council if they are not.

2.3 The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Rules (Constitution Part 5C) state that: Scrutiny Committees should not be regarded primarily as an "appeals mechanism" to overturn or amend specific decisions (although they may, if they see fit, ask the Executive, the Council or another Committee to reconsider a decision); rather their function is to raise issues for consideration, to examine the intent and effectiveness of policy, to hold the Executive to account, and to represent the interests and views of the public within the Council.

2.4 Section 5C of the Council's Constitution requires the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to report annually to full Council on its workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

2.5 In November 2023, Full Council resolved to replace the three previous Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Climate and Environment, Economic and Social, Finance and Management) with a single committee. The aim of this change was to properly embed pre-decision scrutiny as part of the Executive decision-making process; ensure effective

scheduling of meetings; and to facilitate effective work planning and improve efficiency (e.g. by reducing duplication).

2.6 In April 2025, an internal review of the Committee's function including a self-assessment was carried out. As part of this, several changes were made to how the Committee carries out its functions. The main changes were to reduce the size of the committee to 15 members and to make greater use of task and finish groups.

2.7 The Council under the Executive and Leader model now has an effective Overview and Scrutiny Committee which provides pre-decision scrutiny of selected Executive decisions and contributes to the development of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework. The Committee is also empowered to consider other issues that affect the district or its people.

2.8 Decisions to be taken by Executive are (subject to urgency rules) published on the Forward Plan for a minimum of 28 days in line with the statutory provisions of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. This includes Key Officer Decisions, delegated by Executive. For completeness, Council decisions are also included on the Forward Plan.

2.9 The Committee of 15 Members, chaired by an opposition Member, provides oversight of the work of the Executive and will question Executive Members about proposals within their portfolio responsibilities.

2.10 Annex B provides the current Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. This work programme is agreed annually but reviewed at each meeting and adjusted to take account of emerging priorities and any adjustments to the Executive Forward Plan.

3. THE VALUE OF SCRUTINY AND CONSTRUCTIVE CHALLENGE

3.1 For Overview and Scrutiny to be effective, it must be able to demonstrate its ability to scrutinise the work of Executive and provide 'critical friend' analysis of proposals due to come before it.

3.2 Under the Leader and Executive Model operated by the Council, Overview and Scrutiny has a key role in providing democratic checks and balances in relation to the Executive.

4. WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

4.1 The Committee's work over the year can be looked at through the recommendations made to the council's Executive, as well as the task and finish reviews carried out.

4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee made 75 recommendations to the Executive, contained in Annex A, of which 45 were fully or partially accepted. The Committee made recommendations on ten different topics, and the general nature of these was that they proposed amendments to the Executive proposals rather than a wholesale objection to the proposals.

4.3 Additionally four recommendations were made to Oxfordshire County Council on proposed changes to fire services, setting out the Committee's concerns on behalf of full Council. This followed a Council motion being referred to the Committee.

4.4 Overall, the Committee has been performing its functions successfully, providing a 'critical friend' challenge to the Council's Executive. In particular, the number of recommendations that were made and accepted, shows that the Committee has been achieving the aim of properly embeding pre-decision scrutiny as part of the Executive decision-making process. The number of accepted recommendations also indicates that these were constructive. If a very high number of recommendations were accepted, that could be seen to indicate that the recommendations were not sufficiently challenging. Conversely, a very low number of accepted recommendations could be seen to indicate that the recommendations were not useful.

4.5 The Committee has not 'called-in' any decisions. The call-in function is essential, but should be used by committees as a last resort, this is due to the fact that calling in decisions can slow down their implementation and potentially also lead to reputational risks for the authority. The need for call-in to be used can be mitigated by effective pre-decision scrutiny, so the lack of call-in indicates that pre-decision scrutiny is operating effectively.

5. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee appointed three task and finish groups; Leisure Strategy, Public Conveniences and Waste Transformation.

5.2 LEISURE STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

5.2.1 The purpose of the Leisure Strategy Task and Finish Group was to support the development of the evaluation criteria to determine the best delivery model for leisure provision in the Council-owned facilities. This formed part of the Leisure Management Options Appraisal to provide the Council with an objective, transparent, and rigorous assessment of all the leisure management options and their appropriateness for each of the facilities currently within the Leisure Management Contract.

5.2.2 The Leisure Strategy Task and Finish Group met three times, first to agree the draft evaluation criteria and their terms of reference, secondly to receive a consultants' report on these criteria and finally to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the Leisure Management Options Appraisal.

5.2.3 The Task and Finish Group reported back to the Committee but did not make any formal recommendations to the Executive.

5.3 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES TASK AND FINISH GROUP

5.3.1 The Purpose of the Public Conveniences Task and Finish Group held a series of meetings to consider and interrogate different options for the future of public conveniences in the district.

5.3.2 The group held several meetings ahead of the Executive meeting considering the future of public conveniences and provided feedback to officers prior to the Executive's decision to invest further into the District's public conveniences. As the feedback was incorporated

into the Executive report the Group did not make any formal recommendations to the Executive.

5.4 WASTE TRANSFORMATION TASK AND FINISH GROUP

5.4.1 The purpose of the Waste Transformation Task and Finish Group was to consider any proposals for transforming waste services within the district following phase two of the Publica transition.

5.4.2 The Task and Finish Group met three times, including carrying out pre-decision scrutiny of the Waste and Environmental Services Programme. The Task and Finish Group submitted four comments to the Executive, of which three were agreed.

5.5 SUGGESTED FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS

5.6 The main suggested points for further improvement are as follows;

5.7 Lead officers for task and finish groups to be identified and involved at an earlier stage for topics to have a clearer scope prior to the Task and Finish meeting.

5.8 A clearer process for Task and Finish groups, which is set out below.

1. Topics suggested by Members at Committee.
2. Senior Management Team to review and identify topics suitable for Task and Finish Groups or determine alternative routes for addressing issues/concerns with Members.
3. Democratic Services to meet with Lead Officers and Members to agree scope, including in-scope and out-of-scope elements, and draft initial Task and Finish proposals.
4. Task and Finish Groups to be approved by Committee, with Member appointments agreed. Generally the Members appointed to Task and Finish Groups should be from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
5. Task and Finish groups to meet and carry out work.
6. Any reports and recommendations to be reported back to the Committee (drafted by Democratic Services) and formally agreed for submission to the Executive.
7. Executive to consider recommendations and provide a formal written response (agree/not agree, and any comment).
8. Executive response to recommendations reported back to Committee.

5.9 The Lead Member (Chair) of the Task and Finish groups must be on the Committee. Other non-executive members are welcome to sit on these, however due to low attendance at some task and finish group meetings, it is suggested that this only extend to members with a particular interest or expertise in the topic.

5.10 In order to achieve better transparency, the task and finish groups must produce a report summing up their work to the parent committee (whether or not there are recommendations). To achieve a higher profile for their recommendations, the

recommendations to Executive resulting from the work of these groups will be made directly from the Committee to the Executive.

5.11 To allow officers to obtain detailed information in advance, the chair has asked members pre-submit questions to Democratic Services ahead of meetings. This is particularly important for quarterly performance reporting, where the officer compiling the report may not have detailed information on other service areas eg. waste collection.

5.12 Executive Members were involved in some of the task and finish groups. This worked well, however it is important for the Task and Finish Group to also be able to meet independently so as to be able to formulate recommendations.

5.13 The length of Committee meetings has been very long in some cases, and there is a need to control these where possible and also consider whether the start time of 5:30pm is still the best option. The Council's Health and Safety Business Partner has also recommended regular breaks for member and officer comfort, and suggested these are hourly at the Chair's discretion where this does not break up the flow of the meeting.

5.14 Member briefings have been working well, and these should continue to be used as an alternative to task and finish groups where more appropriate.

5.15 Looking ahead, the Committee may wish to place greater emphasis on early work planning, clearer scoping of task and finish activity, and stronger tracking of outcomes from scrutiny recommendations. This would help ensure that scrutiny activity remains focused, evidence-led and capable of influencing decisions at the most appropriate stage.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

6.1 The report is for noting, therefore there are no alternative options arising from it.

7. CONCLUSIONS

8. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has continued to develop its role as a constructive critical friend to the Executive during 2025/26. The number and nature of recommendations made, together with the use of task and finish groups, demonstrates that scrutiny is becoming more embedded within the Council's decision-making process. The proposed improvements around earlier scoping, clearer work planning, reporting back from task and finish groups, and tracking outcomes will help strengthen this further and ensure that scrutiny activity remains focused, transparent and effective.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

11. RISK ASSESSMENT

1.1. There would be risks associated with not having an effective scrutiny function, for example risks of decisions being challenged or called in.

12. EQUALITIES IMPACT

1.2. There are no equalities impacts arising from this report.

13. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 This report is exempt from a SIAT, there are no sustainability implications.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 None.

(END)

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Annex A Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations to Executive July 2025 – March 2026

Executive response to recommendations on from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 July 2025

Recommendation	Agree (Y / N)	Comment	Responsible Executive Member
1. Reference improving public transport within the sustainable transport section of the Strategy, particularly with regard to an aging population,	N	This is a County Council duty therefore not appropriate within WODC Strategy however Executive member will raise with County Colleagues.	Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment
2. Include reference within the Strategy to the emerging local plan and parking demand linked to new housing.	N	The Strategy does reference the new Local plan already and the Live working Document (Action Plan) will be updated as this is approved.	Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment
3. Consider adding an additional recommendation to the report to continue to monitor car park conditions with an emphasis on safety.	N	This is not a strategic aim, this is a matter of course and Business as usual task.	Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment
4. Include an objective on cycle infrastructure, separate from the objective on sustainable transport.	N	This is included in the action plan and all modes of active and sustainable transport will be considered cohesively	Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment
5. Explore opportunities to improve environmental standards in car parks by using more environmentally friendly materials (e.g. permeable surfaces).	N	This is already contained within the Asset Management Strategy	Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment
6. Consider relocating the disabled bay in the corner of Burford car park in order to improve access in and out of vehicles for wheelchair users. Also consider whether there is a need for an additional disabled bay in this car park.	Y	This does not need to be included in the strategy although section 5.8 does already have a recommendation to continue to review specialist bays as business as usual.	Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment
7. Evaluate the need for parent and child bays within the Council's car parks and consider whether this need is being met.	Y	This does not need to be included in the strategy although section 5.8 does already have a recommendation to continue to review specialist bays as business as usual.	Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment
8. Rephrase recommendation 6 to clarify that the £20k sum is to be used to explore whether there are any options	Y	We will change the wording on recommendation F, from resolve to investigate	Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment

available to the Council to improvement drainage and mitigate flooding.			
9. Pause the proposals for Woodstock car park in order to evaluate whether there is existing council-owned land that could be used to better improve the local parking situation in Woodstock.	N	Information provided to the Portfolio holder on alternative land but this does not remove the issues, so the Parking Strategy recommendations remain unchanged.	Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment

2 July 2025- 11. Climate Change Strategy

Recommendation	Agree (Y / N)	Comment	Responsible Executive Member
1. Engage with large businesses in the district to encourage them reduce their carbon emissions.	Y	The Council will continue to facilitate the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP) and encourage large businesses in the district to join the partnership to maximise carbon reduction and climate resilience. Added reference to ZCOP in the Strategy.	Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery.
2. Consider how progress against the Strategy will be reported, including Key Performance Indicators.	Y	Progress against the Strategy, including the KPIs, will be reported annually, in accordance with the Council's reporting procedures. Interim targets will be established as part of the project monitoring.	Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery
3. Consider emphasising in the Strategy the importance of water and its conservation in the context of climate adaptation.	Y	Reference to water efficiency have been added.	Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery
4. Make reference to hydrogen power within the strategy and explore the emerging opportunities that this may present.	Y	Reference to multiple energy vectors added under Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP).	Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recover
5. Amend the foreword of the Strategy to clarify that the 2050 net zero target is for the district, and not for the Council's direct emissions.	Y	Foreword has been amended and reordered to clarify upfront that the Strategy relates to districtwide emissions.	Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery
6. Ensure the Strategy clearly distinguishes between areas where the Council has direct influence, and where its role is to	Y	Actions in the Strategy will be colour-coded to clarify which actions the Council has a direct influence over and which actions	Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery

support, encourage and enable action by others.		involve the Council supporting and enabling others.	

3 September 2025 on the Youth Development Officer Update

Recommendation	Agreed Y / N?	Comment	Responsible Executive Member (name, title)
1. That the Youth Development Officer engages with private schools within the district area, as they have done with state schools.	Y	The Youth Development Officer will engage with private schools in the area to better understand what opportunities might exist and how they are engaging already with their wider community.	Councillor Rachel Crouch, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities
2. That the Youth Development Officer engages with sports clubs wishing to broaden their youth activities, seeking ways to reach young people who have historically faced barriers to engagement.	Y	The Youth Development Officer will engage with sports clubs and offer assistance to those clubs wishing to broaden their offer to reach your people facing barriers to engagement.	Councillor Rachel Crouch, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities
3. That consideration is given to what more the Council could do to encourage volunteering, for example through local employers (including the Council itself).	Y	The Council could encourage other businesses to be pro-active in encouraging staff to have time to volunteer – as is Council policy. The council could consider a comms campaign to promote the value of volunteering both externally and internally to encourage staff to make better use of their volunteering time. The Council could invite Oxfordshire Council for Voluntary Action to come and talk to Councillors/senior staff about what the state of volunteering in Oxfordshire and provide advice about what steps could help.	Councillor Rachel Crouch, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities
4. That the Council seeks to secure the continuation of local youth development activities into the future beyond local government reorganisation.	Y	The Council will consider a legacy position for funding programmes to cover a period of 3 years from 2026/27 onwards. Further details will be brought forward.	Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council

Executive response to recommendations on from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 September 2025 on Oxfordshire Local Area Energy Planning (item 10 on the 10 September 2025 Executive agenda)

Recommendation	Agreed Y / N?	Comment	Responsible Executive Member
1. That the Council continues to work with partners, and considers work done by the Co-Operative Party, to explore and develop innovative models that will maximise the community benefits from renewable energy assets.	Y	The LAEP project team will continue to liaise with partners, like the Low Carbon Hub, to explore energy models and how community benefits can be maximised from renewable energy assets.	Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery
2. That the Council seeks to lobby the government for legislative changes to enable local communities to benefit from renewable energy schemes.	Y	The LAEP team will continue to lobby the government on legislation to require community stewardship and benefits from renewable energy schemes.	Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery
3. That the Council's emerging local plan policies are aligned with the aims of the LAEP, for example by: • Ensuring that there are site allocations of sufficient size to incorporate on-site renewable energy schemes, where appropriate. • Encouraging community ownership and/or management of shared land in new developments to unlock the potential for local residents to benefit from renewable energy schemes in future.	Y	The Local Plan will seek to support the objectives of the LAEP as it is considered to be a key influencer for the Local Plan, particularly in terms of energy infrastructure planning. LAEP data will continue to shape the plan-making process. Local Plan policies will be designed to ensure that renewable energy is an integral part of new development, along with net zero build standards, and that this supports improvements in building fabric, low carbon heating and renewable energy for existing development, The Local Plan will continue to support community led projects for renewable energy development whether standalone schemes or within new developments.	Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery; Councillor Hugo Prosser, Executive Member for Planning

Executive response to recommendations on Local Plan Spatial Options from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 October 2025

Recommendation	Agreed Y / N?	Comment	Responsible Executive Member
General Recommendations and Comments on Approach			
1. That the Council undertakes a Community Governance Review to consider the implications of planned (and recent) development for town and parish boundaries, in particular around Witney and Carterton.	N	It is recognised that this is an important issue, particularly in terms of how money for infrastructure is collected and spent and distributed to communities. Council on 21 May 2025 considered the issue of community governance reviews and agreed that the Council will not develop a policy for community governance reviews at the current time in view of local government reorganisation	Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council
2. That when communicating with Town and Parish Councils, the Council makes it clear that the 7 week time period for response can be flexible, so long as they inform the Council in advance that they will be unable to meet this deadline.	Y	It is standard practice for the Planning Policy Team to allow some additional time for responses to be made from Town and Parish Councils provided notification is given that a late response will be forthcoming and a clear indication provided as to when this will be received by.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning
3. Strengthen the mention of phasing, particularly around aligning infrastructure delivery with development.	Y	This is a key issue and it is agreed that the narrative at Section 6 of the Preferred Spatial Options consultation document can be usefully strengthened in relation to infrastructure delivery and phasing of development.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning
4. Amend the design of the site allocation outlines to make it clear that they are not definitive site boundaries e.g. showing a heat map of where development is expected to be concentrated within the boundaries.	N	The spatial options are purposefully shown as broad indicative locations rather than specific site boundaries. It is suggested that rather than amending the mapping of these options, the text of the document be amended to make it clear that they are broad locations only.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning
5. Improve the usability of the web-based consultation platform to encourage more engagement. Consider a pdf annotation function or similar to allow page-by-page comments to be made.	Y	Officers are currently testing the consultation platform to ensure that any concerns regarding usability identified at the last stage of consultation are addressed, and so that we can facilitate accessible and effective online engagement with stakeholders.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning

6. Consider targeting specific demographics (e.g. young people) when undertaking the reg. 19 consultation.	Y	Officers agree with the importance of targeting hard to reach groups including younger people and are in discussion with the Council's Youth Development Officer to consider how we can better engage young people in the Plan making process. Officers will seek to improve youth engagement by undertaking targeted engagement with identified groups at the most appropriate time.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning
Specific Proposed Amendments to Annex B - Local Plan Preferred Spatial Options Consultation Paper			
7. Amend the introduction to clarify what the Council's remit is, and what is beyond its scope, emphasising the Council's obligation to abide by national policy within the National Planning Policy Framework.	Y	It is agreed that the introductory text could usefully be amended to clarify the scope and remit of the Local Plan and how it is being prepared in the context of national policy.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning
8. Strengthen the wording of some of the questions to ensure responses are rich and not single word answers. In particular, amend questions where possible to avoid "yes" or "no" answers, and use open questions e.g. "how", "what", "consider" "do you believe x to be suitable", etc.	Y	It is agreed that revisions should be made to the proposed consultation questions to ensure that they are more open / less binary and it is clearer in terms of the issues the Council would welcome views on. It is acknowledged that this will help to elicit more detailed responses from stakeholders, to provide us with more useful constructive representations to the Local Plan consultation.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning
9. Consider including wording to explain that the final selection of sites would take into account comments, but that the Council is still required to allocate a certain number of houses.	Y	It is agreed that this is an important point to cover and as such, it is proposed that the text on 'Next Steps' at Section 9 be amended to explain how consultation responses will be considered and how they will feed into the site selection process and further evidence gathering and analysis for the Local Plan.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning
10. Question 2 – add a table to explain how tiers and allocations correspond with one another.	Y	It is agreed that this would provide useful additional clarification. As such, it is proposed that a new explanatory table be incorporated into the consultation document most likely within Section 5 on the revised Spatial Strategy.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning
11. Question 15 – Carterton Country Park should be Kilkenny Lane Country Park	Y	It is agreed that the text should be amended to ensure it is factually accurate in referring to Kilkenny Country Park.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning

12. Transfer some of the wording from question 40 into the pre-amble for question 27, taking into consideration sensitivity about car parking.	Y	It is acknowledged that the sensitivities around reducing car parking in Witney should be recognised when discussing the proposed refresh and update of the existing Woodford Way site allocation. It is proposed that the text in this section of the document be updated accordingly.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning
13. Question 40 – make it clear that the police station is not being lost, but that consolidation of two buildings is taking place instead.	Y	It is acknowledged that this issue could be usefully clarified. As such, it is proposed that the text of the document in relation to Area W – Welch Way, be amended to clarify that the proposals here relate to mixed use regeneration with community uses to be retained as part of the overall mix of uses.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning
14. Insert omitted parts of the spatial strategy that relate to growth along key strategic corridors, sustainable travel and infrastructure alignment and protecting environmental and landscape assets.	Y	It is acknowledged that the consultation document should include all aspects of the previous Spatial Strategy (Core Policy 3) consulted on in June with clarity provided over which aspects of the strategy are now proposed to be updated and views sought accordingly.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning
Annex D – Local Development Scheme			
15. Encourage Town and Parish Councils who have plans to put forward a neighbourhood plan to engage with the Council and not wait for the reg. 19 consultation.	Y	Whilst not requiring a change to the spatial options consultation paper itself, as a matter of course, the Council's Planning Policy Team provide advice to those wishing to develop neighbourhood plans, including in relation to timing and the inter-relationship with the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning
16. Include reference to the issue of Local Government Reorganisation in the LDS given it covers the 3-year period October 2025 – October 2028.	Y	It is agreed that this would be a useful insertion given the intended timescale covered by the LDS.	Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning

Additional Proposed Amendments

Document Section	Suggested Amendment	Reason

Area E – North of Carterton Paragraph 7.116 Area F – Land North-East of Carterton	Amend text at paragraph 7.116 as follows: 7.116 There is an opportunity ~~for reconfiguration of land uses, particularly around Carterton Football Club~~ to deliver a comprehensive development opportunity in the area within a strengthened landscape framework, with improved highway access and with improved walking and cycling routes to neighbouring areas. Subject to viability and the provision of other essential mitigation, development in this location also offers the potential to facilitate an expansion/redevelopment of the existing Carterton Football Club which has well-developed ambitions to create a new sports hub in this location. Key sensitivities relate to ecology, landscape, minerals resources and proximity to Shilton Conservation Area in the western part of the area. Insert new paragraph in relation to Area F – Land North-East of Carterton as follows: As with Area E, subject to viability and the provision of other essential mitigation, strategic-scale development in this location offers the potential to support the provision of improved sports and leisure facilities for Carterton and the surrounding area.	To better highlight and explain the potential for the redevelopment of Carterton Football Club and delivery of Sports Hub in association with proposed strategic growth on the northern fringe of the town.
Foreword	Insert new second paragraph into foreword as follows: Although the structure of local government in Oxfordshire is set to change, it's important to emphasise that the Local Plan we are developing now will not be lost or set aside. Once adopted, it will carry forward into the new arrangements and continue to guide future planning decisions. This means that the views you share now will have a lasting impact, helping to shape how the new authority manages growth and protects our communities.	To highlight the importance of producing a new up to date Local plan, even in the context of and uncertainty surrounding Local Government Reorganisation.
Key Diagram	Amend Key Diagram to ensure that all planned development locations are accurately depicted.	For increased clarity and accuracy.
Section 6 – Meeting Identified Development Needs	Insert new additional heading and paragraph at the end of Section 6 as follows: **Carterton Area Strategy** The preparation of this Local Plan is closely aligned with West Oxfordshire District Council's wider work on the Carterton Area	

	Strategy. Carterton is one of the district's most significant towns and will play a central role in meeting future housing, employment and infrastructure needs. The Carterton Area Strategy will sit alongside the Local Plan, providing a focused framework for unlocking the town's potential and guiding investment in the surrounding villages. Together, these plans will ensure that growth in and around Carterton is coordinated, sustainable and shaped by local priorities - from revitalising the town centre to improving transport links, green spaces and community facilities. By engaging in this Local Plan consultation, you are also helping to shape the future direction of the Carterton Area Strategy, ensuring that the voices of residents, businesses and local organisations are reflected in both documents and carried forward into the district's long-term vision for the comprehensive development and regeneration of the Carterton area. This will be particularly important in helping to determine the content of the Regulation 19 draft Local Plan in spring next year.	
Section 7 – Strategic Spatial Options	Insert new paragraph after existing paragraph 7.2 and before existing paragraph 7.3 as follows: In the remainder of this document, reference is made to the concept of a 'standalone community'. This term is used to describe self-contained new communities that are designed to have a sufficient critical mass to support a range of services and facilities to meet day-to-day needs, while also being well connected to the nearest larger settlement for access to higher-order services and facilities. The intention is to create balanced, sustainable places that combine local self-sufficiency with strong physical and functional links to the wider district.	To provide greater clarity as to what is meant by the term 'standalone community' in the context of a number of the strategic site options identified.

Executive response to recommendations on from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 November 2025 on Local Government Reorganisation

Recommendation	Agreed Y / N?	Comment	Responsible Executive Member
10. Strengthen the focus on addressing the specific challenges faced in rural areas (e.g. mental health, agriculture) within the Two Unitary Authority proposal.	Y	I would like to thank Overview and Scrutiny for their thoughtful, thorough and constructive contribution. They have raised really positive points on how we can further strengthen the two	Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council

11. Strengthen the mentions of the equality aspects (e.g. Housing, Social Care, SEND) within the Two Unitary Authority proposal.	Y	unitary proposal before we submit it to government. Officers have taken notes on the comments raised and I have asked the document is updated to reflect their feedback before it is submitted. Town and Parish Councils are the bedrock of our communities. A fundamental aspect of the two unitary proposal is creating councils that are locally responsive and will work closely with our local councils in future to meet the needs of our communities. We will engage with our town and parish councils over the coming years to support them during the transition period to whatever new structure the government decides.	Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council
12. Continue to engage with Town and Parish Councils to clarify the role they will have in the context of LGR and reflect this within the model and strengthen the mention of this within the Two Unitary Authority proposals.	Y		Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council

Proposed recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 December 2025 on the Waste and Environmental Services Programme

Recommendation	Agreed Y / N?	Comment	Responsible Executive Member (name, title)	Lead Officer (name, title)
That the Executive note the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Waste and Environmental Services Programme, as detailed below.	1. Y 2. Y 3. N 4. Y	1. No comment required 2. An exercise is underway to identify the delivery options, the experience of WODC with Teckal companies (Ubico & Publica) is a key part of this. 3. The business model is not predicated on whether LGPS is paid or not. This gives WODC the ability to influence the decision later in the Programme. 4. The document is available as an exempt document.	Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment	Si Pocock-Cluley, Environment and Waste Transformation Lead

Comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.

The Overview and Scrutiny Waste Transformation Task and Finish Group met on 9 December 2025 to carry out pre-decision Scrutiny of the Waste and Environmental Services Programme (WESP) report. They discussed the report and recommended that the following comments be submitted to the Executive.

1. The task and finish group welcomed the programme and commended the innovation that was being presented. They also stated that the Council being involved with the programme from the start would be an advantage.
2. The task and finish group stated that through the set-up of the programme, the Council should highlight its experience with Publica and Ubico – other Teckal companies. This mean that the Council brings expertise in operating these sorts of companies, which would be a benefit to other partner councils and the programme overall.
3. While it was appreciated that existing staff would be transferred across through TUPE and therefore have the terms of their pensions protected, the task and finish group raised concerns about the business model around not providing the Local Government Pension Scheme.
4. That the full, exempt business model should be made available as an exempt supplement to the Executive pack.

Executive response to recommendations on from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – February 2026

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 February 2026 considered reports it had requested from officers titled "West Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Plan" and "Supporting Mental Health Initiatives". The Committee agreed to submit the following recommendations to the Executive.

Recommendation	Agreed Y / N?	Comment	Responsible Executive Member
1. That the Council sets out a clear policy and timeline for ceasing the use of glysophate.	Y	The target in the Council's Nature Recovery Plan is to phase out use of glyphosate completely. It has been reduced, as agreed at Executive on 23rd April 2025 West Oxfordshire District Council - Agenda for Executive on Wednesday, 23rd April, 2025, 2.00 pm Following this, it was agreed with both Environmental Services and Waste Transformation Lead and Ubico to stop using glyphosate at the WODC offices in Woodgreen. Alternative methods are being trialled at Woodgreen with a view to using this elsewhere (only 1 growing season so far and it was a drought year). There needs to be an agreement on a	Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery

		timeline to phase out glyphosate use entirely.	
2. That the Council's nature recovery reporting is focused on a more limited number of work streams, with clear Key Performance Indicators.	Y	It would be relatively simple to add an Annex to the committee report next year to provide a summary of action towards the KPIs in the Nature Recovery Plan. This would be based on an existing project tracker that the team use to monitor progress (highlighting progress using red-amber-green colour coding). The report itself could then be simplified to focus on key areas of work and/or success stories. *Headlines from the Local Plan Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report (produced by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre, TVERC) could be added to the report next year to provide additional context relating to regional trends.*	
3. That the Council allocates resources to replicate the Community Health Insight Profile (CHIP) undertaken in Central Witney in other parts of the district.	Y	Funding of £60k is provided by OCC Public Health to undertake CHIP work. The format has 3 parts – 1. Commission new research 2. Appoint a Community Health Dev Officer and 3. Distribute grant funding of around £25k. Other councils have done them independently (South Ox for Didcot). Areas are selected based on areas of greatest need based on the National Indices of Multiple Deprivation data. Whilst there would be value in this an alternative could be to link additional resources, should they be available, to the current Marmot Place health research taking place to enable interventions to be delivered based on the data emerging from those 4 rural locations – Chipping Norton, Charlbury, Long Hanborough and Freeland. Officers could also offer to provide more of a	Councillor Rachel Crouch, Executive Member for Stronger Healthier Communities

		deep dive into the workings of the CHIP. A further report will be brought forward for consideration once the outcomes of the Marmot Place Health Research are known.	
4. That the Council increases the funding for the mental health projects from £10k to £20k.		Across the service funding is being directed at interventions which are known to positively support mental wellbeing – and this is linked to the data. The additional £10k provided to accompany the MH Champion role has not yet been allocated although Cllr Crouch has some options and ideas around funding hire of spaces and transport. No-one would argue that funds for MH is a positive step but more clarity of purpose might be helpful. One option to consider could be the question of space which seems to be an acute issue especially in Witney – Keystone Hubs / CAMHS both urgently looking for space. A further £10k will be allocated from the new initiatives funding once need has been identified.	Councillor Rachel Crouch, Executive Member for Stronger Healthier Communities
5. That the Council reviews the reception arrangements at Woodgreen.		Following the refurbishment of areas of the Woodgreen Offices as part of the overall Agile project, the reception area was moved and was re-established as a customer point rather than being the Council's primary reception area which is now in the Welch Way Office in the Town Centre, due to it being a more convenient location for the majority of residents due to access to public transport and car parking. Officers are looking at how this function is resourced more effectively, the ICT arrangements and seating arrangements for visitors,	Councillor Andy Graham, Leader

		many of which have appointments with the registrars.	

Executive response to recommendations on from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 March 2026 on Woodford Way

Recommendation	Agreed Y / N?	Comment	Responsible Executive Member (name, title)
1. That officers bring up to date parking data forward to the Committee, including ANPR data over a representative two-week period, with the next report.	N	Officers have detailed data for the Marriotts Walk multi-storey car park and can include this in the next report. There is no ANPR data for the other Car parks in Witney, however Officers are currently looking at the feasibility and costs associated with introducing the relevant equipment to do this.	Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Care
2. That the Council undertakes a two-week trial partial closure of the number of spaces proposed to be lost at Woodford Way under the proposals to better understand the impact on parking across Witney.	N	As this would only provide data for an isolated period, so not being representative of usage throughout the year, the disruption to residents would outweigh the benefit of undertaking this trial.	
3. That officers work up an "option 4" design which preserves more car parking at the south of the site.	N	Work continues on the design for the site to create an optimum scheme that ensures the best use of the space available.	
4. That a separate full report on displaced parking and the impact on wider area be brought to the Committee.	N	There will not be a separate report but the next update report to the Committee will include the displacement of cars and the impact of this.	
5. That additional parent and toddler parking spaces be incorporated into plans for the site.	Y	The inclusion of Parent and toddler parking spaces can be explored in the final design. It is important to note that at this point in time there aren't any parent and toddler parking spaces in the Woodford Way Car Park.	

6. That the Council updates the timings for parking in the Marriotts Walk multistorey car park to an all-day provision prior to commencement of the development.	Y	The Council is actively working on increasing the time periods for parking bays on the upper desks of the Marriotts Walk multistorey car park to provide an all-day provision prior to commencement of the development.	

7. That officers bring a further update report to the Committee prior to the planning application for the site.	Y	A report will be brought to Committee prior to a formal planning application being submitted for the site.	

Executive response to recommendations on from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 March 2026 on the Community Safety Partnership

Recommendation	Agreed Y / N?	Comment	Responsible Executive Member (name, title)
1. That officers assess which priority projects would be affected by the budget reduction from the Police and Crime Commissioner, and the Executive consider whether any of these priority projects can be funded by the Council's own discretionary resources.	Y in part	OCC met with all CSP's and funded services on 15th April to discuss the end of year outturn and agree an approach to applying the 40% reduction in OPCC funds in Year 3 of the grant agreement. Work has been done to negotiate reductions for projects where possible on a case by case basis – thus avoiding a blanket reduction in all areas. However some activity is recommended not to receive any funding in 2027/28. These elements are: Nightsafe Manager role (countywide) hosted by TVP (circa £56k); Violence Against Women and Girls role (countywide) hosted by TVP (formerly Public health) (circa £56k); and the Chelsea's Choice theatre performances in schools about child sexual exploitation (circa £20k).	Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Care
2. That officers' assessment of the impacts of the cuts to funding on priority projects details the impact in terms of the loss of officer roles rather than just cash values.	Y	It has been a tough balance to strike. The NightSafe managers main focus is on Oxford City where most activity and issues remain. Residents from across the county congregate	

		on the city – so it cannot be said that the role only works with City residents but this may be a perception. The VAWG role is starting to explore activities to support residents directly in West Oxfordshire and we certainly hope to see this develop over the coming year. It's early days to be able to say how significant the impact of the loss of this role would be to WODC residents. Chelsea's Choice workshops are being offered to schools in West Oxfordshire currently with some take up and we hope that over the course of this year we can see schools make good use of the free opportunities.	
3. That the Council writes to Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner to request that they reinstate funding being cut from the CSP.	Y	The funding comes to the top tier authority. A CSP is required to sponsor each proposal for funding. CSP managers review all proposals before submitting them to the OPCC for approval. West Oxfordshire CSP is currently benefitting from a number of countywide roles and services rather than receiving funds directly for WODC only projects. The Council will draft a letter to the PCC requesting they reinstate the funding levels.	

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
1 JULY 2026 – 31 OCTOBER 2026

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 Activities

The Committee may undertake its functions through the following types of activities:

- Holding the Executive to account as a critical friend
- Pre-decision scrutiny of Executive decisions before they are taken
- Considering any "call-in" of an Executive decision that has been made but not yet implemented
- Contributing to policy development
- Undertaking task and finish reviews to explore particular issues in depth
- Scrutiny of the Council's annual budget proposals
- Performance review and monitoring
- Being a convener and engaging with external organisations
- Scrutiny of the Council's crime and disorder functions

Work Plan

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?

Principles of good scrutiny

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny has developed four principles of good scrutiny which are reflected in statutory guidance:

- Provide constructive "critical friend" challenge
- Amplify the voices and concerns of the public
- Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role
- Drive improvement in public services

Current and planned working groups

Title	Purpose	Membership	Status	Target completion date
Mental Health	To be scoped	To be appointed by Committee	To be scoped	To be decided
Private Estate Management	To be scoped	To be appointed by Committee	To be scoped	To be decided
TBC	To be scoped	To be appointed by Committee	To be scoped	To be decided

Item	Executive Member	Lead Officer	Report commissioned by
8 July 2026			
Approval of Regulation 19 Draft Submission Local Plan for Public Consultation	Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure - Cllr Liz Leffman	Andrew Thomson, Planning Policy Manager Andrew.Thomson@westoxon.gov.uk	Executive Council
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2025/26	Councillor Andrew Beaney, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Ana Prelici, Senior Democratic Services Officer Ana.Prelici@westoxon.gov.uk	Council
2 September 2026			
Leisure Update	Executive Member for Arts, Culture and Sports - Cllr Tim Sumner	Rachel Biles, Leisure Strategy Manager rachel.biles@westoxon.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2026/27 Quarterly Finance Review Q1	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Georgina Dyer, Head of Finance georgina.dyer@westoxon.gov.uk	Executive
2026/27 Quarterly Service Review Q1	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Gemma Moreing, Business Information and Performance Lead gemma.moreing@publicagroup.uk	Executive
Youth Development Work	Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities - Cllr Sandra	Heather McCulloch, Community Wellbeing Manager	Overview and Scrutiny Committee

	Coleman	heather.mcculloch@westoxon.gov.uk	
Woodford Way Update	Executive Member for Housing and Community Safety - Cllr Geoff Saul	Phil Martin, Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service phil.martin@westoxon.gov.uk	Executive
14 October 2026			
Local Government Reorganisation Update	Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham	Phil Martin, Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service phil.martin@westoxon.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
4 November 2026			
Community Grants - determination of 3 year SLA final awards	Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities - Cllr Sandra Coleman	Heather McCulloch, Community Wellbeing Manager heather.mcculloch@westoxon.gov.uk	Executive
2 December 2026			
2026/27 Quarterly Finance Review Q2	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Georgina Dyer, Head of Finance georgina.dyer@westoxon.gov.uk	Executive
2026/27 Quarterly Service Review Q2	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Gemma Moreing, Business Information and Performance Lead gemma.moreing@publicagroup.uk	Executive

Local Plan Annual Monitoring 2025/26	Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure - Cllr Liz Leffman	Andrew Thomson, Planning Policy Manager Andrew.Thomson@westoxon.gov.uk	Executive
6 January 2027			
Council Tax Support 2027/28	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Mandy Fathers, Head of Environmental Protection, Revenues and Benefits mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk	Executive Council
3 February 2027			
Nature Recovery Plan Progress Update	Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery - Cllr Andrew Prosser	Melanie Dodd, Senior Biodiversity Officer melanie.dodd@westoxon.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Budget 2027/28 and Medium Term Financial Strategy	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Georgina Dyer, Head of Finance georgina.dyer@westoxon.gov.uk	Executive Council
3 March 2027			
2026/27 Quarterly Service Review Q3	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Gemma Moreing, Business Information and Performance Lead gemma.moreing@publicagroup.uk	Executive

2026/27 Quarterly Finance Review Q3	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Georgina Dyer, Head of Finance georgina.dyer@westoxon.gov.uk	Executive
Community Safety Partnership Annual Update	Executive Member for Housing and Community Safety - Cllr Geoff Saul	Heather McCulloch, Community Wellbeing Manager heather.mcculloch@westoxon.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
14 April 2027			
Private Estate Management in New Developments	Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure - Cllr Liz Leffman	Chris Hargraves, Head of Planning chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Recycling	Executive Member for Environment - Cllr Alistair Wray	Si Pocock-Cluley, Environmental Services and Waste Transformation Lead si.pocock-cluley@westoxon.gov.u	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
To be Scheduled			

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Name and date of Committee	**COUNCIL – 22 JULY 2026**
Subject	**PLANNING COMMITTEE REFORM UNDER THE PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE ACT 2025**
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Liz Leffman - Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure Email: liz.leffman@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Andrea McCaskie - Director for Governance and Regulatory Services Email: Andrea.McCaskie@ewestoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Phil Shaw - Transition Lead Email: phil.shaw@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To provide Members with a detailed overview of forthcoming changes to the functioning of Planning Committees in England which will come into effect on 31st October 2026 through The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026.
Annexes	Annex A – Planning Committees and the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions: Guidance for local planning authorities in England
Recommendation(s)	That Council resolves to: 1. Note the content of the report; and 2. Request that the Constitution Working Group further consider the implications of the new Regulations and how they need to be reflected in any changes to the Council's Constitution, prior to the Regulations coming into effect on 31st October 2026.
Corporate priorities	• Putting Residents First • Working Together for West Oxfordshire

Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The Government has consulted a number of times on the need for additional delegation and the arrangements that they are intending to make in introducing a national scheme of delegation. The Council has engaged with that consultation exercise, the outcome of which has now been published online and reflected in new statutory guidance which is attached to this report at Annex A.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 From 31 October 2026, new Regulations will introduce a national scheme of delegation for planning functions together with a maximum size for local authority planning committees. These changes represent the most significant reform to local planning decision-making in many years and will require the Council to amend its Constitution and associated governance arrangements.

1.2 The Government's objective is to provide greater consistency, certainty and efficiency in planning decision-making by ensuring that planning committees focus on proposals of genuine strategic or local significance, with the majority of planning decisions being determined by Officers.

1.3 Under the new Regulations:

- **Schedule 1 functions** must be delegated to Officers;
- **Schedule 2 functions** will be presumed to be delegated to Officers unless both the nominated Officer and nominated Member agree that the application should be referred to a planning committee and that it satisfies at least one of the statutory referral criteria; and
- **Own-interest applications** may be referred to committee where the nominated Officer and nominated Member consider this appropriate in accordance with the Regulations.

1.4 The Regulations also remove many existing local discretionary arrangements currently contained within the Council's Constitution. For example, the ability for ward Members to request that applications be determined by committee, or for applications to be referred to committee because they have attracted a specified number of objections, will no longer be possible.

1.5 The Council will therefore be required to review and amend its Constitution to ensure it complies with the new statutory framework. Failure to do so could place the lawfulness of planning decisions at risk.

1.6 Whilst the Government has consulted extensively on these proposals, the Regulations have now been made and will come into force in only a few months' time. This report therefore provides Members with an overview of the new national arrangements and identifies the principal constitutional and governance issues that will need to be addressed ahead of implementation.

1.7 Given the significance of these changes and the range of constitutional, procedural and governance matters that require consideration, it is recommended that the Constitutional Working Group be asked to undertake a detailed review and report back to Council with recommendations on the amendments required to implement the new regime in West Oxfordshire by 31 October 2026.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 introduced measures to reform planning committees in England. This includes a national scheme of delegation for planning functions and a cap on the size of planning committees, the details of which are set out in The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026. These come into force on 31 October 2026.

2.2 Ahead of the Regulations coming into effect, the Government has published statutory guidance which is attached to this report at Annex A. Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, local planning authorities must have regard to the guidance in operating or making arrangements required under the Regulations.

2.3 The proposals represent a major change to the extent to which Members will have involvement in determining planning applications. The rationale is that there will be greater consistency and certainty for developers, the process will be faster/cheaper and less inclined to "rogue decisions" motivated by non-planning matters.

2.4 The main provisions of the Regulations and associated statutory guidance are summarised in Section 3 below.

3. NATIONAL SCHEME OF DELEGATION

3.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 gives the Secretary of State the power to set out which functions of a local planning authority should be delegated to Officers for a decision and which should go to committee.

3.2 The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 puts this into effect as follows:

- Schedule 1 decisions must be delegated to Officers

- Schedule 2 decisions will be presumed to be delegated to Officers unless the nominated Officer and nominated Member agree that the application should be referred to the committee and that it meets at least one of the relevant criteria.

Schedule 1 Functions

3.3 The statutory guidance attached at Annex A lists all Schedule 1 functions which must be delegated to Officers (unless it is an 'own interest' application). In summary, this includes householder development, minor commercial development, minor residential development, discharge of conditions, prior approval for permitted development rights and various other functions including smaller reserved matters applications.

3.4 However, paragraph 19 of the Guidance sets out that applications which would otherwise fall under Schedule 1, will fall within Schedule 2 where:

- A local authority considers that the application for planning permission is connected to a Schedule 2 application for listed building consent or for the variation or discharge of a condition on a listed building consent.
- The application is retrospective and as such made under section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Schedule 2 Functions

3.5 Schedule 2 applications are those where there is a presumption that the decisions will be delegated to Officers unless the nominated Officer and nominated Member agree that the application should be referred to a planning committee or sub-committee for determination and that it meets at least one of the criteria in regulation 5(3).

3.6 The nominated Officer is the Chief Planning Officer or equivalent and the nominated member is the Chair of the planning committee.

3.7 The relevant criteria (at least one of which must be met) are:

A. where the application raises an economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area.

B. where the application raises a significant planning matter having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations.

3.8 Applications for development which do not raise a significant planning matter can only be referred to the committee under criterion A if they raise a significant economic, social or environmental issue for the local area. It is for the nominated Officer and Member to assess whether the development proposal raises any such issue.

3.9 In relation to criterion A, what constitutes 'significant' will vary but the Guidance suggests that examples could include:

- an application for outline planning permission for a large multi-phase residential development allocated in the local plan.
- an application for planning permission for change of use of a community shop in a rural area.
- an application for planning permission or listed building consent for changes to a notable listed building in a town centre.

3.10 In relation to criterion B, the Guidance suggests that the following circumstances are unlikely to raise a significant planning matter:

- where the application for development broadly complies with a detailed site allocation and other relevant policies set out in a local or neighbourhood plan and national decision-making policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Significant planning matters may arise if new material considerations are raised by the application.

- where a specific planning matter (e.g. highways or flood risk) was initially raised by a statutory consultee as a concern, but the development proposal has been modified to make it acceptable in the view of the statutory consultee (unless the nominated officer has compelling reasons to consider otherwise).

3.11 The functions which fall within Schedule 2 of the Regulations set out in full in the Statutory Guidance attached at Annex A but include for example, applications for planning permission which are not householder, minor commercial or minor residential applications, applications for planning permission which would otherwise fall into Schedule 1 but are connected to a Schedule 2 application for listed building consent or for the variation or discharge of a condition on a listed building consent or where it is related to a large outline planning permission, applications for reserved matters approvals.

3.12 Members should note that it is not a requirement of the national scheme of delegation that nominated Officers and nominated Members consider all Schedule 2 applications or all 'own-interest' applications for potential referral to committee. Whilst the regulations provide for the option for Schedule 2 applications to be considered by committee against the 'gateway test' they do not require all schedule 2 applications to be considered.

3.13 The Council can therefore through its own constitution, decide which Schedule 2 or 'own-interest' applications need to be considered for referral.

3.14 It should also be noted that whilst nominated Officers and nominated Members should make every effort to reach agreement on which cases should be referred to committee, where agreement is not possible, the case must be determined by Officers.

'Own-interest' applications

3.15 An 'own-interest' application is described as an application made by the LPA or officer or member or where an officer or member has an interest. These applications can be referred to a planning committee if the nominated Officer and nominated Member of the planning committee agree, without the need for consideration of the criteria set out in regulation 5. Where no such referral has been made, they must be determined by an Officer.

3.16 Where the application is made by, or relates to, the nominated Officer or nominated Member themselves, they must not be involved in deciding whether it should be referred to committee. Additionally, local authority planning applications must not be determined by any committee, sub-committee or officer responsible for managing the land or building that is the subject of the application.

Other types of application (reserved matters, Section 106 and special control applications)

3.17 A distinction is made between those reserved matters approval applications which relate to large outline planning permissions and those which do not, with the former being placed in Schedule 2 and the latter in Schedule 1.

3.18 For the purpose of the Regulations, a large outline planning permission is an outline planning permission which grants permission for development involving the provision of at least 500 dwellings or a building or buildings where the floorspace to be created by the development is 50,000 square metres or more.

3.19 A reserved matters application for such development must meet the criteria set out under regulation 5 for a committee to consider it. Any referral should be based only on matters directly relevant to the reserved matters application under consideration, not on issues already established through the outline permission.

3.20 The regulations do not make specific provision for the approval of new Section 106 agreements, as these are usually negotiated as part of the planning application process or entered into unilaterally by the landowner. Where standalone Section 106 agreements arise, it is for the local planning authority to decide whether they should be determined by officers or referred to committee.

3.21 However, where an application is made to modify or discharge an existing Section 106 obligation, the decision should follow the same decision-making route (officer or committee) as the original related planning application.

3.22 Applications for listed building consent, advertisement consent and consent under tree preservation orders are included in Schedule 2. In most cases, these types of application will not raise issues which would merit committee scrutiny. The presumption, therefore, is that decisions should be delegated to officers and only exceptionally referred to committee.

3.23 Whether such an application meets the criteria in regulation 5(3) will depend on the particular circumstances but an example could include where there are proposals for a change of use and works to a prominent listed building which makes an important contribution to a town centre.

Transparency and Reporting

3.24 The statutory Guidance suggests that, as a minimum, the local planning authority should keep a record of the cases the nominated officer and nominated member have considered for referral to committee, the outcome of their consideration and the reasons for their decision. This should be reported to the planning committee on a regular basis and also made available online.

4. SIZE OF COMMITTEES

4.1 The Regulations require the number of members on a planning committee or sub-committee to be no more than 13. This is a maximum figure to accommodate local planning authorities where members are from multiple political parties.

4.2 Local planning authorities are however encouraged to consider whether a smaller number of members would be more appropriate in their area to support effective decision making.

4.3 Consideration will therefore need to be given to the new Strategic Planning Committee, which currently has 24 Members, and whether there will be a continuing need for a parent and sub-committee structure.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The introduction of a national scheme of delegation represents one of the most significant changes to local planning decision-making for many years. Whilst the Government's intention is to provide greater consistency, certainty and efficiency through increased Officer delegation, the practical effect will be a substantial reduction in the range of planning applications that can be determined by elected Members through the planning committee process.

5.2 Officers recognise the potential benefits identified by Government, including greater consistency in decision-making, improved certainty for applicants and the opportunity to focus committee time on the most significant planning proposals. Equally, however, the new arrangements represent a fundamental shift away from the long-established locally determined schemes of delegation towards a more technical, officer-led decision-making process, comparable in many respects to the Building Regulations regime.

5.3 The Regulations also raise a number of significant constitutional, procedural and governance issues which require careful consideration before they come into force on 31 October 2026. These include, amongst other matters, the designation of the nominated Officer and nominated Member (and appropriate deputies), the local process for considering potential Schedule 2 referrals, the future role and structure of the Council's planning committees, arrangements for transparency and reporting, and the support and protections available to Officers who will become solely responsible for determining a much wider range of often contentious planning applications.

5.4 There is also a need to consider whether any planning functions falling outside Schedules 1 and 2 should continue to be determined by committee under the Council's Constitution.

5.5 Whilst the Council raised concerns during the Government's consultation process, the Regulations will take effect within a relatively short timeframe. It is therefore essential that the Council prepares for implementation to ensure that its Constitution and decision-making arrangements comply with the new statutory requirements and minimise the risk of legal challenge.

5.6 It is therefore recommended that the Constitutional Working Group be asked to undertake a detailed review of the issues arising from the new national scheme of delegation, including those identified within this report and any additional matters raised by Members, and report back to Council in September 2026 with recommendations for the necessary constitutional amendments and local operating arrangements.

5.7 This will provide the Council with the opportunity to implement the new regime in a manner which remains compliant with the Regulations whilst, so far as the new statutory framework allows, maintaining transparency, accountability and the effective operation of the Planning Service.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

6.1 In theory, the Council could continue its current practices and effectively disregard the new regulations which come into force on 31st October 2026. However, the Government has set out that failure to adopt the new arrangements could put any decision made through retaining non-compliant processes at risk of judicial review.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Failure to introduce the new arrangements could lead the Council open to legal challenge with its attendant costs.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 See above.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 (Under equality legislation, the Council has a legal duty to pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in relation to:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief

9.2 The Council also has a duty to foster good relations, and to consider the impact of its decisions on human rights. The law requires that this duty to pay 'due regard' is demonstrated in the decision making process. However these upcoming changes are mandated by Government and they have undertaken their own assessment of the introduction of the new national scheme of delegation

10. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

11. These upcoming changes are mandated by Government and they have undertaken their own assessment.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

GOV•UK

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Statutory guidance

Planning Committees and the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions: Guidance for local planning authorities in England

Published 1 June 2026

Applies to England

Contents

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National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions
Size of committees

OGL

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Introduction

1. This guidance supports local planning authorities in England in implementing the provisions in sections 319ZZC to 319ZZF of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/part/XV/crossheading/england-discharge-of-functions-of-local-planning-authority) (introduced through section 54 of the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025) and the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 (the Regulations). These sections relate to the national scheme of delegation of planning functions and the size of planning committees.

2. Sections 319ZZC to 319ZZE of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 apply to all local planning authorities except development corporations, Homes and Communities Agency, National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority. They also apply to mineral planning authorities where they exist (excluding those which are National Park Authorities).

3. As required by section 319ZZE(4) and (5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, local planning authorities must have regard to this guidance in operating or making arrangements required under the Regulations.

4. For the avoidance of doubt, where local planning authorities do not comply with the Regulations from the date they come into force (31 October 2026) and their planning committees make decisions on applications which must be delegated officers, those decisions may be subject to judicial review by anyone aggrieved by the decision. This may lead to the quashing of the decision.

National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions

5. The government's aim behind the national scheme of delegation is to ensure that there is greater clarity and consistency about the role of planning committees in planning decision making. Committees should focus on the key proposals that matter to an area, enabling other, often more minor and technical, decisions to be made by planning officers.

6. Section 319ZZC of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 gives the Secretary of State the power to set out which functions of a local planning authority should be delegated to planning officers for a decision and which should instead go to a planning committee or sub-committee.

7. The Secretary of State has exercised this power through the Regulations. These Regulations set out the following general approach to decision making:

- where applications fall under Schedule 1 decisions must be delegated to officers under regulation 4
- where applications fall under Schedule 2, there is a presumption under regulation 5 that decisions are delegated to officers unless the nominated officer and nominated member agree the application should be referred to a planning committee or sub-committee for determination and that it meets at least one of the criteria in regulation 5(3)

8. There is further specific provision under regulation 6 for own-interest applications i.e. an application made (whether or not jointly with any other person) by the authority or an officer or member of the authority or an application where the authority or any of its members or officers has an interest, to support transparency and propriety. These applications can be referred to a planning committee or sub-committee for determination if the nominated officer and nominated member of the planning committee agree. Where a planning function is not listed in either Schedule 1 or 2, it is for the local planning authority to decide whether it should be delegated to an officer or referred to a committee or sub-committee for a decision (as part of its local constitution).

9. Under the national scheme of delegation, current practices set out in local authority constitutions, such as the power for ward councillors to require cases to be called in for committee consideration or having trigger points for referral to committee if a certain number of objections is reached, will not be possible. Local authorities will need to amend their constitutions to align with the national scheme of delegation. Failure to do so may make decisions on whether to delegate applications to officers or refer them to committees for determination liable to judicial review.

Consideration for referral to committee

10. For the purposes of considering referral of applications to committee:

a. the nominated officer should be the Chief Planning Officer or equivalent officer who has extensive professional planning experience. However, local planning authorities will also need to ensure they have other senior planning officers who can provide cover if needed to avoid any unnecessary delays in the referral process (or where there is an own interest application and the Chief Planning Officer or equivalent officer has an interest it).

b. the nominated member should be the chair of the planning committee or, where such a role does not exist, the vice chair or equivalent member. As in the case of nominated officers, the authority will need to ensure there are arrangements in place for other members to cover should the nominated member not be available (or where there is an own interest application and the nominated member has an interest in it).

11. Where local planning authorities have more than one planning committee, they may nominate different officers or members for each committee.

12. It is for individual local planning authorities to put in place their own arrangements for how the consideration of cases for referral to committee will operate in practice.

13. It is not a requirement of the national scheme of delegation that nominated officers and nominated members consider all Schedule 2 applications or all own-interest applications for potential referral to committee. Local planning authorities may, through their constitutions, decide which Schedule 2 or own-interest applications need to be considered for referral. The regulations provide for the option for Schedule 2 applications to be considered for committee against the gateway test but do not require all schedule 2 applications to be considered – they will otherwise be delegated to officer.

14. Where local planning authorities anticipate that there may be a significant number of Schedule 2 or own-interest applications which may need to be considered for referral to committee they may wish to put in place a triage system to ensure that the nominated officer and nominated member of the committee are not overwhelmed and to avoid any unnecessary delays in planning decision making.

15. Nominated officers and nominated members should make every effort to reach agreement on which cases should be referred to committee. However, where agreement is not possible, the case must be determined by officers in accordance with regulation 5(2) or regulation 6(3).

16. Further best practice advice is available from the Planning Advisory Service on the referral of applications to committee.

Schedule 1 functions

17. Schedule 1 of the Regulations sets out all the functions which must be delegated to officers for a decision (unless it is an own-interest application). These include a number of categories of applications for planning permission for:

- householder development (as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015)
- minor commercial development (as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015)
- minor residential development which is defined in the Regulations as:
  - development that includes only dwellings and development for the purposes incidental to the enjoyment of dwellings, comprises at least one but not more than nine dwellings, and is to be carried out on a site having an area smaller than 0.5 hectares
  - development of a building containing flats, or development within the curtilage of such a building, for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the flats or any of them but excludes development in respect of a building containing flats, or development within the curtilage of such a building, that involves either or both of a change of use or change to the number of flats
  - an application for any consent, agreement or approval required by or under a planning permission, development order or local development order for development within paragraph (a) or (b)

18. It also contains a range of other planning consents:

- to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached) in respect of which the previous planning permission was a Schedule 1 planning permission (applications under section 73(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)
- reserved matters approval in respect of an outline planning permission other than a large outline phase permission (i.e. one which grants permission for development involving the provision of at least 500 dwellings or a building or buildings where the floorspace to be created by the development is 50,000 square metres or more) (applications under Article 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015)
- discharge of conditions (applications under Article 27(1) of Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015)

- prior approval for permitted development rights (applications under Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015)
- permission in principle (as referred to in section 58A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)
- where a local planning authority considers a planning obligation is connected to a Schedule 1 application, requests to agree to modify or discharge a planning obligation (under section 106A(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)
- where local planning authority considers a planning obligation is connected to a Schedule 1 application, modification or discharge of a planning obligation (applications under section 106A(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)
- non-material changes to planning permission or permission in principle (applications under section 96A(4) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)
- certificates of lawfulness of existing use or development (under section 191(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)
- certificates of lawfulness of proposed used or development (under section 192(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)
- certificates of lawfulness for proposed works to listed buildings (under section 26H of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990)
- biodiversity gain plan (duty to approve under paragraph 14 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)
- certificates of appropriate alternative development (applications under section 17 of the Land Compensation Act 1961)

19. However, applications which would otherwise fall under Schedule 1, will fall within Schedule 2 where:

- a local authority considers that the application for planning permission is connected to a Schedule 2 application for listed building consent or for the variation or discharge of a condition on a listed building consent
- the application is made under section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Schedule 2 functions

20. The functions which fall within Schedule 2 of the Regulations are:

- applications for planning permission which are not householder, minor commercial or minor residential applications
- applications for planning permission which would otherwise fall into Schedule 1 but are connected to a Schedule 2 application for listed building consent or for the variation or discharge of a condition on a listed building consent
- applications to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached in respect of which the previous planning permission was a Schedule 2 planning permission (under section 73(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)
- applications for development which has already been carried out (under section 73A(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)
- where it is related to a large outline planning permission, applications for reserved matters approvals (under Article 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015)
- where a local planning authority considers a planning obligation is connected to a Schedule 2 application, requests to agree to modify or discharge a planning obligation (under section 106A(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)
- where a local planning authority considers a planning obligation is connected to a Schedule 2 application, application for modification or discharge of a planning obligation (under section 106A(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)
- applications for listed building consent (under section 10 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990)
- applications for the variation or discharge of conditions of listed building consent (under section 19 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990)
- applications for advertisement consent (under regulation 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007)
- applications for consent under tree preservation orders (under regulation 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012)
- applications to which paragraph 19 above apply

21. The overriding presumption is that the applications listed in Schedule 2 will be delegated to officers. An application can be referred to a committee or sub-committee only where:

a. at least one of the criteria in regulation 5(3) is met **or** it is an own-interest application (regulation 6); **and**

b. the nominated officer and nominated member of the planning committee agree to the referral

Criteria which must be met before a case can be considered for referral under regulation 5

22. In determining whether a referral under regulation 5 is made, the presumption should be that decisions are delegated to officers and only exceptionally be referred to committee. At a minimum, at least one of the following statutory criteria must be met for a referral to committee to be considered to meet that threshold:

A. where the application raises an economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area

B. where the application raises a significant planning matter having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations

23. Applications for development which do not raise a significant planning matter can only be referred to the committee under criterion A if they raise a significant economic, social or environmental issue for the local area. It is for the nominated officer and member to assess whether the development proposal raises any such issue, providing an opportunity for local democratic oversight where necessary. What constitutes ‘significant’ will vary depending on the local area but examples could include:

- an application for outline planning permission for a large multi-phase residential development allocated in the local plan
- an application for planning permission for change of use of a community shop in a rural area
- an application for planning permission or listed building consent for changes to a notable listed building in a town centre

24. For the purpose of criterion B, the following circumstances are unlikely to raise a significant planning matter:

- where the application for development broadly complies with a detailed site allocation and other relevant policies set out in a local or neighbourhood plan and national decision making policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Significant planning matters may arise if new material considerations are raised by the application
- where a specific planning matter (e.g. highways or flood risk) was initially raised by a statutory consultee as a concern, but the development proposal has been modified to make it acceptable in the view of the statutory consultee (unless the nominated officer has compelling reasons to consider otherwise)

Own-interest applications

25. Applications which are made (whether or not jointly with any other person) by the authority or an officer or member of the authority or it is an application where, in the view of the nominated officer and nominated member, the authority or any of its members or officers has an interest, are own-interest applications dealt with under regulation 6. We recognise that there may be cases where, in the interests of transparency and public accountability, it may be appropriate for some such applications whether they are in Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 to be referred to a planning committee or sub-committee. Where the nominated officer and nominated member agree, they can be referred to the committee without the need for consideration of the criteria set out in regulation 5(3). Where no such referral has been made, they must be determined by an officer.

26. Under regulation 10 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, where a local planning authority is determining its own application for planning permission, it must not be determined by a committee, sub-committee or officer responsible for the management of the building or land to which the application relates. In addition to this restriction, where a planning application is made by a nominated officer or nominated member of the authority or they have an interest in it , in the interests of propriety, they should not be involved in the decision on whether to refer it to committee or not.

Treatment of reserved matters applications

27. We recognise that outline planning permission can be granted for largescale multi-phase development which can take place over many years. As such each related reserved matters application can represent substantial development in its own right and cover more issues of substance, for example, the provision of on site community infrastructure , which may, in exceptional circumstances, merit committee scrutiny. For this reason, we have distinguished between those reserved matters approval applications which relate to large outline planning permissions and those which do not, with the former being placed in Schedule 2 and the latter in Schedule 1.

28. A large outline planning permission for the purpose of these regulations is an outline planning permission which grants permission for development involving the provision of at least 500 dwellings or a building or buildings where the floorspace to be created by the development is 50,000 square

metres or more. A reserved matters application for such development must meet the criteria set out under regulation 5(3) for a committee to consider it.

29. When considering reserved matters approval applications which fall into Schedule 2 against the criteria in regulation 5(3), nominated officers and nominated members should only have regard to matters which are directly relevant to the reserved matters application before them.

Treatment of section 106 decisions

30. Specific provision has not been made for section 106 agreements themselves in the regulations. This is because, most of the time, appropriate section 106 planning obligations will be considered as part of the application process. In other cases, they can be entered into unilaterally by the landowner so there is no real ‘function’ for the local planning authority. We recognise that there may occasionally be section 106 planning obligations which are agreed outside of the context of a planning application but we consider that, in these cases, the decision on whether it should be delegated to officers or referred to committee should be left to the discretion of the local authority.

31. Where a local planning authority considers a section 106 agreement is connected to an application falling into either Schedule 1 or Schedule 2, and agreement is being sought to amend or discharge the planning obligation (under section 106A(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990), the function of agreeing to amend or discharge the obligation should fall into the same schedule as the related application. This same approach applies to applications to modify or discharge an obligation under section 106A(3).

Treatment of special control applications

32. Applications for listed building consent, advertisement consent and consent under tree preservation orders are included in Schedule 2. In most cases, these types of application will not raise issues which would merit committee scrutiny. The presumption, therefore, is that decisions should be delegated to officers and only exceptionally referred to committee.

33. Whether such an application meets the criteria in regulation 5(3) will depend on the particular circumstances but an example could include where there are proposals for a change of use and works to a prominent listed building which makes an important contribution to a town centre.

Transparency and reporting

34. As a minimum, the local planning authority should keep a record of the cases the nominated officer and nominated member have considered for referral to committee, the outcome of their consideration and the reasons for their decision. They should report this to the planning committee on a regular basis and make it available on their website.

Size of committees

35. Regulation 7 provides for the number of members on a planning committee or sub-committee to be no more than 13. This is a maximum figure to accommodate local planning authorities where members are from multiple political parties. Local planning authorities should consider whether a smaller number of members would be more appropriate in their area to support effective decision making.

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