

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. <u>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.</u> 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: <u>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.</u>	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: <u>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.</u>	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: <u>Carterton Area Strategy</u> <u>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.</u>	
Section 7 – Strategic Spatial Options	Insert new paragraph after existing paragraph 7.2 and before existing paragraph 7.3 as follows: <u>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.</u>	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.