



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 9 SEPTEMBER 2026.
Subject	DEVELOPING A CARTERTON AREA REGENERATION FRAMEWORK
Wards affected	Alvescot & Filkins, Bampton & Clanfield, Brize Norton & Shilton, Carterton North East, Carterton North West, Carterton South.
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Summary/Purpose	The report updates the Executive on the development of a regeneration framework for the Carterton area sitting alongside and complementing the new West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043. Specifically, it includes draft strategic priorities aligned to the new Local Plan and initial feedback on these from stakeholder engagement undertaken during the summer. A new partnership governance structure is proposed in the report as a means of bringing a wide range of organisations and sectors together. This includes a new Place Board that would oversee the development and delivery of the framework. The report also outlines a number of early projects that are being developed to deliver the ambitions set out in the framework.
Annexes	Annex A – Overview of programme Annex B – Draft regeneration framework Annex C – Proposals for partnership governance including Terms of Reference for the proposed Place Board Annex D – Programme risk register Annex E – SIAT outputs

Recommendation(s)	That the Executive resolves to: 1. Endorse the overall content set out in the draft regeneration framework at Annex B. 2. Agree to support the establishment of a new Place Board for the Carterton Area, to be chaired initially by the Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure. 3. Note the approach to developing initial projects and the early ideas for these set out in section 5.
Corporate priorities	• Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All • 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 proposals within this report have been considered by members of the Carterton Area Strategy Working Group that the Council re-established in May 2026. They build on the outcomes from previous engagement and consultation exercises, including those carried out to support the development of the new Local Plan. As summarised in the report, the proposals have also been refined following engagement with key partners during summer 2026. Whilst there has been significant partner engagement over time, formal consultation has not taken place to date. This is not a requirement that would apply to proposals of this nature though it may be a step that the council and/or its partners wish to take in the future. Further engagement, including through a new Place Board, is planned before seeking approval to a final version of the proposals.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** Progress has been made on the council's commitment to develop a Regeneration Framework for the Carterton area to complement the new West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 (currently subject to consultation). This framework would help to unlock the town's potential, guide investment in the wider area and ensure that growth in and around Carterton is coordinated, sustainable and shaped by local priorities. The report includes initial proposals for the framework, with draft priorities that are deliberately aligned to the Local Plan objectives for the area. These proposals arise from the existing analysis of the challenges and opportunities for the area and are continuously being tested with partners and refined. The report is therefore seeking a steer on the 'work in progress' version of the priorities before a final version is brought to council for approval.
- 1.2** To generate momentum and demonstrate commitment, early projects in line with the draft priorities should be considered. The report includes several that could act as 'flagship' projects, whilst recognising the need to develop further ideas, large and small, as the programme and partnership finds its feet. Early progress on projects will demonstrate a level of vision and ambition that will raise the area's profile and position it more favourably for future funding.
- 1.3** Wider ownership of the framework is critical; this is not a programme that the council can or should deliver on its own. Therefore, the report includes specific recommendations for partnership governance, including establishing a new Place Board. This has been designed to reflect recent examples of place-based partnership bodies that are leading regeneration programmes around the country. The Board would link in to existing networks in the area and new structures that have been put in place to foster greater coordination and collaboration in planning for future growth.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** In order to realise its potential, raise its profile and maximise the benefits from future growth, the council has committed to developing a strategy for the Carterton area, making sure it has what it needs to be a great place to live, work and play. In September 2025, the Executive held one of its 'Executive on Tour' meetings in the town, followed by a workshop to explore priorities for this strategy.
- 2.2** The intention is that the strategy will sit alongside and complement the new Local Plan 2043 which identifies the Carterton Area as a key focus for future growth both within the town itself through the renewal of the Town Centre and MOD housing as well as the rural fringe through a series of planned new communities.
- 2.3** In order to develop the wider strategy, the council sought to recruit to a dedicated post but were unable to fill this. As an alternative, it appointed a short-term interim in February 2026 to provide additional capacity and generate momentum. This has allowed the council to establish a structured programme, engage with partners and develop the emerging proposals set out in this report. An overview of the programme is set out in Annex A for information.

3. DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK

3.1 As summarised above, there has already been consultation and engagement with communities and stakeholders in the Carterton area to understand their priorities. This has continued more recently, for example with a resident survey carried out by Carterton Town Council in April 2026. The engagement to date has resulted in a good picture of the challenges and the opportunities for the area.

3.2 Given this, further engagement during summer 2026 was targeted to develop proposals that respond to the challenges and opportunities that had been identified. This included

- Developing strategic priorities that respond to the challenges and opportunities identified. These were grouped under the five objectives for the area included within the new Local Plan plus a further one relating to collaboration and promoting the area.
- An initial set of projects that could be undertaken to deliver against those strategic priorities. These included a mix of existing and new ideas, those likely to be led by the council and those promoted by partner organisations.
- New partnership governance that could be set up to oversee the development and delivery of the framework.

3.3 The material shared during engagement was set out within an overall framework to reflect the range of plans, activities and interventions that will be needed to realise the vision of a bolder future for the area. This framework will encompass the projects and workstreams commissioned to deliver the strategy and set out the required governance and material to promote the area to funders and decision makers. This will ensure responsiveness as opportunities to access investment arise.

3.4 As noted above, the draft strategic priorities are set out under the five objectives for the area included in the final draft of the new Local Plan, together with an additional objective reflecting the importance of raising the profile of the area. This approach to developing priorities is important to ensure a strong alignment with the Local Plan and avoid creating a separate but similar set of objectives for the area which could lead to confusion and lack of coherence. The high-level objectives for the area are therefore:

- Supporting a strong and resilient economy
- Delivering sustainable and infrastructure-led growth
- Protecting and enhancing the environment and landscape setting
- Improving connectivity and supporting climate resilience
- Creating healthy, inclusive and connected communities
- Raising the profile of the area through strong collaboration

3.5 A number of stakeholders were engaged during June-August 2026, mostly through informal meetings and conversations to garner feedback on material and the approach. These discussions will continue as the engagement process continues in coming months. In general,

there has been a positive response, and organisations are keen to work together to deliver regeneration and shape future growth across the area. Valuable insight and suggestions were gathered and these have been used to make changes to the material.

- 3.6 The revised framework is included with this report at Annex B. The material is deliberately set out within a fresh 'look and feel', moving away from district council branding towards a collaborative programme. The content of this framework is still a draft version and will be taken to the new Place Board which, subject to endorsement of the proposals set out below, is due to meet in October. It is envisaged that a final version would come back to a future Council meeting once the Place Board has reviewed and refined the framework, including any further engagement it deems appropriate.
- 3.7 Given the framework remains work in progress, at this point the Executive is asked to **endorse** the overall content.

4. PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE

- 4.1 In order to develop the framework and move into its delivery in a collaborative manner, there needs to be a recognised and effective way for partners to work together. Proposals for new partnership governance have therefore been developed for consideration by the Executive, drawing on similar models from elsewhere. These are set out in full in Annex C, including draft terms of reference for a new Place Board. This Board would form the overarching partnership body for the area.
- 4.2 The partnership board will be formed to bring together a range of organisations from across the public, private and community/voluntary sectors and will facilitate greater stakeholder collaboration, develop joined-up strategies and increase ownership and buy-in to the vision. Whilst the Board itself will be kept relatively small to maximise effectiveness, it is likely to establish project-specific sub-groups to widen its reach and increase engagement.
- 4.3 In other places where there is funding awarded to and overseen by these Boards, the relevant local authority acts as the Accountable Body. In this case, whilst there is currently no dedicated funding in place, it will still be important for the district council (and its successor) to have a strong and clear relationship with the Place Board. The proposals outlined in Annex C set out the respective roles and show how the Executive Member (supported by the member and officer working groups) will provide the key link between the council and the new partnership governance.
- 4.4 In line with similar bodies in other areas, an independent chair will be sought for the new Place Board. It is likely this would be appointed through an open process and criteria for the chair role are being developed for the consideration of the member working group. Given this process may take up to six months to secure a suitable chair, the lead Executive member will chair the group on an interim basis.
- 4.5 It is highly likely the governance will need to evolve over time. This often happens in other places as the work moves from development to delivery. In particular, it may be that specific projects and/or the scale of the growth planned for the area require new delivery models to achieve the ambitions of the partnership. Early work on developing options for delivery is

now underway as part of the programme. This will be aligned to the Oxford Growth Commission's current work to consider the scope of a Greater Oxford Development Corporation and what models might be needed to deliver the growth areas identified in its interim report. At this stage, it should be noted that building strong partnership governance now will provide a valuable foundation for any future delivery vehicles that might be deemed necessary.

- 4.6** As part of the engagement process outlined above, these governance proposals were tested with a number of partner organisations during the summer. The proposals at Annex C reflect the valuable comments and suggestions made. The proposals also reflect the council's Framework for Partnership Working, as noted in section 9 below.
- 4.7** Some elements of the proposed partnership structures have already been developed to meet pressing needs and generate momentum. Specifically:
- A monthly infrastructure forum meeting focusing on the Carterton area has been established to support the Local Plan policies for a coordinated approach to infrastructure and growth.
 - A new developer forum has been established to bring together the developers and promoters of sites within the strategic locations for growth identified in the new Local Plan. This is fostering the collaboration that is critical to realise the ambitions of both the regeneration framework and the new Local Plan.
 - A new local business network was launched in July, enabling businesses to provide a voice and input to the regeneration programme and wider partner activity, as well as facilitating valuable networking.
- 4.8** At present, the proposals assume that the district council will resource the secretariat function for the Place Board and (potentially) project sub-groups. As set out in section 8 below, this will be subject to the appropriate level of resources being available to allocate and factor into budget setting for 2027-28. Opportunities to secure resources for programme management through external funding sources will also be explored.
- 4.9** The governance proposals have also been developed with future changes to local government structures in mind. Moving to a 3 unitary structure for the county will place greater emphasis on how local representation and collaboration can feed into the priorities and service delivery of the new unitary, and in turn the strategic authority once established. A Place Board is a robust model for providing a joined-up local view and could become the 'go to' body that can speak for the area and its priorities, providing continuity through a period of change. If successful, it could also provide a blueprint for similar arrangements elsewhere in the district. It is also hoped that a Place Board will contribute positively to new arrangements for health and care services, where national policy is clearly moving towards a greater place and neighbourhood focus.
- 4.10** Based on the summary above and detail at Annex C, the Executive is asked to agree to support the establishment of a new Place Board for the Carterton Area, to be chaired initially by the Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure.

5. INITIAL PROJECTS

5.1 As indicated within the draft framework in Annex B, there are already a number of projects that have been proposed as serving to deliver the strategic priorities for the area. Some of these are existing project ideas and proposals; others have emerged through the programme. Whilst it is likely that the council would take a lead on a number of these, the list includes projects that have been proposed by other partners and where delivery would take place with little if any involvement from the council.

5.2 Starting work on some of these projects now in parallel to developing the framework will help to build momentum and confidence among partners and the wider public, demonstrating commitment to get beyond strategy and into delivery. A number of project concepts can be developed further with little to no risk of misalignment with the final framework. Potential 'flagship' projects to raise the profile of the programme and partnership might include:

- A **town centre regeneration plan**, with a strong focus on delivery models and funding mechanisms, providing credible options for development and with a strong focus on delivery models and funding mechanisms. This would include proposals for specific sites and facilities, options for town centre greening, improved connectivity and enabling a diversification of uses to increase resilience. It would be developed in partnership with the town and county councils as well as the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) which is seeking to collaborate as it prepares plans for housing renewal on sites around the town centre.
- Establishing a **network of Carterton area champions**, drawing on successful models around the country, to be ambassadors for the place. As well gaining value from networking, the champions would help to shape the place narrative, develop material to raise the profile of the area and attract investment, and create a greater sense of ownership, identity and belonging.
- A **construction skills hub**, focusing on green and modern methods, serving the whole of the A40 corridor, building on the existing provision at Abingdon and Bicester with a more localised on-site offer that would provide pathways into good jobs for local people and address workforce shortages in the sector. Delivered in partnership with developers promoting the strategic growth sites, local education and training providers and national accreditation bodies.
- A **defence innovation and skills academy**, drawing on the assets of RAF Brize Norton in terms of its talent pool, strategic importance and supply chain. This would focus on the specific strengths of the base and look to future needs for the industry. As well as directly creating more local jobs and pathways into skilled work, it would also act as focal point for attracting more suppliers to locate and invest here. Delivered in partnership with the base, UK Defence Innovation, local FE & HE and Enterprise Oxfordshire.

- A **neighbourhood health and wellbeing hub**, located within the town centre. This would in part respond directly to the lack of capacity within the system at the moment that limits good access to primary care. It would also provide headroom for demand arising from future growth and look to make the most of recent policy shifts to locate more services within neighbourhood facilities, potentially including secondary care (e.g. community diagnostic centre). This would drive more footfall into the town and attract other complementary businesses and community uses.

- 5.3** The Town centre regeneration plan referenced above – is a critical component of the programme and a key step to achieving the ambitions for the town set out in the draft new Local Plan (in particular within policy CA2). Whilst it would incorporate work and analysis from existing sources, the project would be set up to ensure that engagement with key stakeholders is a core part of the methodology. As noted above, it would be overseen by a small group of key partners to ensure a joined-up approach, which in turn would report into the new Place Board once established. The Place Board may also like to prioritise several projects that can demonstrate early progress and commitment such as the Health and Wellbeing centre given its potential as an ‘anchor use’ within the town centre and its high impact.
- 5.4** In order to initiate projects and work up concepts, a prioritisation process will be undertaken with light touch project ‘one-pagers’ considered initially by the officer and member working groups. More developed proposals would then be taken to the Place Board, where further prioritisation will be needed in order to ensure there is sufficient focus. Projects that require officer time and/or funding by the council would still be taken through existing internal processes for consideration and approval – the Place Board would not be able to commit to projects that require funding from the council, or any other partner, without that organisation having given its approval.
- 5.5** As noted in section 8, the programme currently has no dedicated funding allocated and therefore this will preclude using any programme budgets to commission specific projects. However, a key part of the programme is to develop the ingredients that are needed to make a strong case for future funding, from both private and public sources. A shared vision and priorities for the area, with a strong story about its ambition and potential, will increase the prospect of securing the resources needed to develop and deliver projects.
- 5.6** More specifically, there is a short term window in which partners can and should work together to put proposals to the developers that are promoting sites in the strategic locations for growth around the town. Engagement to date, including through the new developer forum outlined at section 4.7 above, shows that developers are keen to engage and support projects in line with the Local Plan policies and their ambitions for the area. The partnership governance outlined above will enable a joined-up approach to that dialogue, rather than multiple partners putting forward separate ideas and dissipating impact. As an example, a Board sub-group focused on future sport and leisure provision could be an early step that fosters collaboration and drives greater overall impact.

- 5.7** Finally, whilst it is important to identify and develop specific projects, the programme will consider using a systems thinking approach to bring a more joined-up view on how to bring lasting change to the area. This approach would look beyond specific projects to the set of elements that interact in the system to generate either positive or negative overall impacts on the place. This allows partners to shape joined-up workstreams focused on outcomes such as town centre vibrancy, and create a collective sense of ownership for delivering them. This approach is likely to resonate with a new unitary and wider place-based thinking emerging in other sectors.
- 5.8** Given the need to develop further detail on the projects summarised above, at this stage the Executive is asked to note the approach and comment on the initial project ideas outlined above.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1** Rather than continuing to develop a framework for the Carterton area, the council could opt to do nothing and rely on the policies in place within the new Local Plan. A do nothing option is unlikely to result in achieving the ambition and vision the council has for the area, since it would leave a number of the challenges and opportunities facing the area unaddressed and effectively left 'to the market' to deliver. In particular, it would fail to provide the necessary focus and partnership building needed to realise the potential of the place and its people.
- 6.2** Other alternatives to the proposals set out here would be for the council to either develop and deliver the framework in a more directive way itself, or to leave the programme for partners to run, with less input and investment of its own time and energy. The former approach is not preferred since it would fail to build the wider ownership and buy-in of stakeholders required for successful regeneration. Neither is taking a more hands-off approach recommended, since this fails to harness the important place-making role that the council plays and responsibilities it has to show a leadership role in the regeneration and growth of the area. This should include paving the way for the successor unitary council to embrace the programme and its governance once it is established.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1** The Carterton area has significant untapped potential and as a key focus for growth under the Local Plan 2043 will see significant housing and economic growth over the next two decades. More needs to be done to ensure this potential is realised and that local communities can maximise the benefits of future growth. A partnership-led framework for regeneration and growth is underway, designed to complement and align with the new Local Plan. It provides the means to develop projects and workstreams in line with priorities that partners will shape and own.
- 7.2** To provide some structure to the partnership that is needed to develop and deliver this programme, governance proposals have been developed for consideration by the Executive, in parallel to testing these with partners. A new Place Board is proposed, connected to new and existing networks. This will provide the area with the basis for stronger collaboration,

through which the ambitions set out in the new Local Plan, for a more prosperous, connected, healthy and resilient place, can be achieved.

7.3 Given this, the Executive is recommended to:

1. Endorse the overall content set out in the draft regeneration framework at Annex B and provide strategic direction to inform the next version
2. Agree to support the establishment of a new Place Board for the Carterton Area, to be chaired initially by the Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure until an Independent Chair is appointed.
3. Note the approach to developing initial projects and early ideas for these set out in section 5

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** The financial implications of the Carterton Area Regeneration Programme fall into three main areas: (a) ongoing programme management, including support for the partnership governance proposed above; (b) feasibility and scoping work to develop project concepts and business cases; and (c) investment and funding required to deliver projects including securing capital for regeneration. At present there is only budget provision for the first of these, which is why the programme includes a workstream to explore resources and funding opportunities. The first two categories ((a) and (b)) will be revenue expenditure, though there may be opportunities to capitalise some of the costs at a later stage once projects are live. The last category will be largely capital and project development should seek to keep any ongoing public sector revenue requirements to an absolute minimum.
- 8.2** Taking each of these in turn, there is provision within the 2026-27 budget for the current programme management requirements. As noted in section 4, establishing a new Place Board will require a secretariat and wider support for it to be effective. For the remainder of 2026-27, this would be absorbed within existing capacity within the Place Directorate. Consideration of the longer term programme management requirements, including the potential to establish similar structures to support other areas within the district, will feed into the 2027-28 budget setting process during autumn 2026.
- 8.3** For the development and delivery of initial projects, a range of potential sources will need to be considered. These could include:
- Existing budgets within the council and partner organisations
 - Developer contributions
 - Business cases for national or regional funding streams, including those within Ministry of Defence, Integrated Care Board etc.
 - Bidding for new funds as these are available at national or regional level
 - Support via the Oxford Growth Commission which has identified this area as one of its Opportunity Areas for growth
- 8.4** As well as exploring in-year opportunities, as part of the budget setting process for 2027-28, proposals will be submitted for funding project scoping and development work. This will also seek match funding from one or other of the above sources. A total allocation

(including match) in the range of £300-400k would provide the means to work up a small number of flagship project concepts to the next stage during 2027-28. The prospect of securing funding and investment for project delivery (and thereby delivering the programme objectives) will be significantly enhanced through producing strong project proposals and businesses cases. Sound proposals will be vital given that delivery of some or all of the outlined initial projects is likely to require £10m plus of investment.

- 8.5** In addition to the programme requirements, it should be noted that the scope for additional resources is also being explored through proposed Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) with the various developers that are expected to bring forward planning applications for the strategic locations for growth identified in the Local Plan 2043 in the near future.
- 8.6** In summary, at this stage, the financial implications of the approval sought from the Executive (to establish a Place Board) can be managed within existing budgets and factored into budget setting for next year; the subsequent development and delivery of specific projects would each be subject to separate consideration through the appropriate process. However, as noted within the programme risk register, the ongoing development of the regeneration framework for the area will raise expectations of the council as the lead partner which will no doubt outstrip the available resources. It is therefore important to continue working on resource plans for the programme, including seeking opportunities to secure public and private investment in the emerging suite of projects and workstreams. It will also be important to position this work appropriately to secure future commitment from the new unitary and, in time, the additional resources that a strategic authority would bring to the area.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** The proposals for governance set out in the report relate to an informal partnership rather than creating a body with any formal status at this stage. The terms of reference are clear that the new Place Board would have no ability to commit the council to any decisions, expenditure or policies. The council's existing Framework for Partnership Working therefore provides the basis for considering how and whether it should help establish and then engage with the proposed Place Board for the area. The proposals in this report are considered to be compliant with the Framework. In particular, they embody principles of good governance and accountability, including the need for members of the Place Board to be bound by the Nolan principles.
- 9.2** Whilst this report does not seek approval for any specific projects, any that are developed and then led by the council would need to be approved and procured through the standard process.
- 9.3** The regeneration framework being developed to guide growth in the Carterton Area is not a statutory document and will therefore stand separate to (though aligned with) the statutory Local Plan. If the framework leads to the need for a formal plan to support the Local Plan objectives, this could be developed as a Supplementary Plan within the new policy framework for Local Plans. In this case, it would be subject to the appropriate processes including formal consultation and examination.

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 10.1** The latest programme level risk register is included here as Annex D. This has been reviewed by the officer and member working groups and will continue to evolve as the programme develops.
- 10.2** The main risks that relate to the proposals summarised in this report (with a focus on the specific approval sought) are:
- a) The risk that establishing new partnership governance does not secure engagement and support from key stakeholders, resulting in reputational damage and a reduced ability to produce a joined-up vision and shared priorities for the area. This is being mitigated by early engagement and working with existing and established networks and groups wherever possible.
 - b) The risk of a significant gap between the expectations that are raised by the programme and the resources available to deliver any agreed priorities or projects. This is being mitigated by carefully managing expectations and through developing a resource plan and being 'bid ready', as outlined in section 8 above.
 - c) The risk that growth in the area is planned and delivered site by site, rather than through collaboration and coordination of infrastructure requirements, resulting in a piecemeal approach and failure to maximise the benefits of growth for local people. This is being mitigated through clear policies in the new Local Plan, the establishment of a developer forum and infrastructure forum as well as consideration of the need for additional resources through proposed Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) with the various strategic site promoters.
- 10.3** In terms of the risks associated with not approving these proposals, these are summarised in section 6.1 above.

11. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 11.1** An initial high level programme assessment has been carried out as part of the Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool (see below). A more thorough assessment will be possible once the programme has been developed further and once specific projects are commissioned.

12. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1** At this stage, it is not considered that there are any implications directly arising from the specific approval sought in this report (i.e. supporting the establishment of a Place Board). However, the wider proposals that the Executive is asked to note and endorse as work in progress will clearly have a range of potential implications if and when approved. Therefore, a Sustainability Impact Assessment has been undertaken, the outputs from which are included in Annex E. At this stage it has only been possible to provide a high level assessment given that the programme is still in development and specific projects have yet to be commissioned. The assessment will therefore be reviewed periodically as the programme and specific projects are developed.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

- None

13.2 These documents will be available for inspection online at www.westoxon.gov.uk or by contacting democratic services democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting.

(END)