

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041
‘Your Place, Your Plan’
Focussed Consultation: Ideas and Objectives



Consultation Summary Report

February 2024

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Introduction	3
2. Consultation overview	4
3. Draft Local Plan Objectives	6
4. The Pattern of Development	49
5. Sites, Ideas and Opportunities	62
6. Other General Feedback	63
7. Stakeholder Events	64
8. Next steps	64

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Schedule of submissions (sites, ideas and opportunities)

Appendix 2 – Table Notes from Town and Parish Council Event – 10 October 2023

Appendix 3 – Table Notes from Town and Parish Council Event – 18 October 2023

Appendix 4 – Table Notes from District Council Member Workshop – 26 October 2023

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is preparing a new Local Plan which will help shape the future of West Oxfordshire to 2041.
- 1.2 Having an up-to-date plan in place is vital because it provides a vision and framework to guide decisions on how, where and when development can come forward and how we can protect and enhance our surroundings for current and future generations.
- 1.3 Preparing a Local Plan falls into two main stages:
 - **Plan preparation** (known as the Regulation 18 stage) when the Council carries out informal engagement on the potential scope and content of the plan and explores different options to help identify a preferred approach.
 - **Publication** (known as the Regulation 19 stage) when the Council carries out formal consultation on the final draft version of the plan which it considers to be 'sound' and intends to submit for examination.
- 1.4 The Council is currently at the Regulation 18 plan-preparation stage and has held two separate public consultations to date.
- 1.5 In August 2022, an initial [scoping consultation](#) took place, seeking general views on the potential areas of focus for the new Local Plan.
- 1.6 Subsequently, in August 2023 a further consultation [‘Your Place, Your Plan’](#) took place seeking views on draft local plan objectives, the potential pattern of development and potential sites, ideas and opportunities.
- 1.7 The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed overview of the second consultation including how and when it took place and the main messages arising from the responses received.

2. Consultation Overview

2.1 The 'Your Place, Your Plan' consultation took place over an 8-week period from 30 August – 25 October 2023.

2.2 Views were sought on 3 particular elements:

- **Draft local plan objectives** – a series of draft objectives to guide the future evolution of the plan in terms of its overall approach and anticipated policy content.
- **The future pattern of development in West Oxfordshire** – different scenarios for how and where we might look to focus future growth in the period up to 2041.
- **Call for sites, ideas and opportunities** – an open invitation for stakeholders to put forward thoughts on how land in the district might be used in the future such as new housing, employment, infrastructure, community use, green space, nature recovery and renewable energy.

2.3 The consultation comprised a mixture of online material via the Council's [digital engagement platform](#) and a number of 'in-person' events as detailed below.

Public Exhibitions

- Carterton Public Exhibition – 26 September 2023
- Woodstock Public Exhibition – 3 October 2023
- Witney Public Exhibition – 16 October 2023
- Chipping Norton Public Exhibition – 23 October 2023

Town and Parish Council Workshops

- 'Uplands' Town and Parish Council Event – 10 October 2023
- 'Lowlands' Town and Parish Council Event – 18 October 2023

Other Events

- Chipping Norton Stakeholder Event – 12 October 2023
- District Council Member Workshop – 26 October 2023

2.4 In terms of submitted responses, the consultation generated a total of almost 2,000 comments from around 450 individuals and organisations, broadly grouped as follows:

- General public
- Landowners, developers and agents
- Local interest groups
- Statutory consultees
- Other local authorities
- Town and Parish Councils

2.5 Sections 3 – 7 of this report provide a detailed summary of the main issues raised in the following order:

- Section 3 - Draft local plan objectives
- Section 4 - Pattern of development
- Section 5 - Sites, ideas and opportunities
- Section 6 - Other general comments
- Section 7 – Stakeholder events

3. Draft Local Plan Objectives

3.1 As part of the consultation, views were sought on 30 draft local plan objectives, set out under six themes:

- Tackling the climate and ecological emergency.
- Healthy, safe, strong and inclusive communities.
- An enhanced natural and built environment.
- Attractive, accessible and thriving places.
- Meeting the housing needs of all.
- A vibrant, resilient and diverse local economy.

3.2 These themes were well-supported through the previous consultation in 2022 and were considered to provide a good basis to start exploring the key objectives of the new local plan.

3.3 For each draft objective, the consultation explained why it had been identified and what potential policies might be put in place to help deliver it.

General Feedback on Draft Plan Objectives

3.4 Many respondents supported the draft objectives in principle. Particular issues that respondents felt should be robustly addressed through the new local plan included:

- Sustainable development
- Building to high environmental standards
- Climate change
- Reducing environmental impact
- Minimising speculative development
- Ensuring good access to services, facilities and amenities
- Walking and cycling
- Improving public transport, particularly in more rural areas
- Providing high quality new homes to meet various needs
- Timely and consistent delivery of new homes
- The provision of supporting infrastructure (health, education, transport, utilities, green space, community etc.)
- Boosting the economy and supporting local businesses, including the creation of new job opportunities
- Supporting the rural economy
- Preservation of the rural character of the District including the Cotswolds National Landscape
- The need for new development to be carefully balanced with protecting the intrinsic value of the countryside

- High-quality design
- Making the most efficient use of land including previously developed (brownfield) land

3.5 It was notable that a number of respondents, whilst supporting the general sentiment of the draft objectives, felt that they were too numerous, involved an element of repetition/overlap and in some cases potentially conflict with each other and/or lack precision.

3.6 This suggests that there would be merit in 'streamlining' the draft objectives, potentially reducing them in number and ensuring that each one is internally consistent and sufficiently clear in terms of what it is seeking to achieve and the policies and proposals that flow from it.

3.7 Set out below is the more specific feedback received on the six themes and draft objectives.

Tackling the climate and ecological emergency

3.8 Many respondents advocated for climate change mitigation as part of new developments along with promoting ecological conservation. Strong support was expressed for carbon reduction, energy-efficient buildings, renewable energy integration and biodiversity enhancements.

3.9 There were calls for some flexibility in policies to adapt to rapid advancements and the importance of sustainable transport solutions, emphasizing the significance of balancing environmental goals with housing and economic growth.

3.10 Support was expressed for development that is both sustainable and inclusive, ensuring developments are accessible via public transport, facilitate active travel, and provide amenities within walking or cycling distance. Additionally, comments highlight the need for environmentally friendly building methods and technologies that contribute to net-zero emissions and resilient infrastructure.

3.11 Several comments indicate the importance of supporting the rural economy and tourism sector. Respondents suggest that policies should enable growth in these areas, considering their contribution to local economies, employment, and cultural value.

3.12 Some concerns were expressed about introducing overly stringent environmental policies that may impede development, especially when dealing with existing buildings or areas with heritage value. The need for viable, feasible standards consistent with national regulations to prevent negative economic impacts was also stressed.

Objective 1 – To minimise the impact we are having on our changing climate by reducing carbon emissions across all sources, with a particular focus on transport, housing, industry and energy.

What we said

- 3.13 Reducing the impact we are having on climate change by cutting carbon emissions is a core component of national and local policy and is critical if we are to help tackle the ongoing climate and ecological emergency.
- 3.14 Potential policies might include sustainable construction, renewable energy provision and retrofitting and ensuring that the location and design of new development promotes more active and healthy travel.

What you said

- 3.15 There was strong consensus on the importance of addressing climate change and reducing carbon emissions, emphasizing the role of local planning in mitigating impacts. The focus should be on policies that would reduce emissions through various forms of development, especially in transport, housing, industry, and energy.
- 3.16 Substantial support was expressed for achieving net zero carbon in new builds, enhancing energy performance, and utilizing renewable energy, while also considering the effect of these policies on viability and delivery of other objectives such as affordable housing.
- 3.17 The importance of adopting a holistic approach, considering the role of building regulations and national standards, and engaging in cross-boundary cooperation for strategic planning was highlighted.
- 3.18 Support was expressed for housing developments that take into account carbon emissions and accessibility to services including the need for strategic, sustainable locations to encourage use of public transport and create 20-minute neighbourhoods. The importance of aligning housing development with jobs and infrastructure, while not compromising on other needs like rural development viability was also highlighted.
- 3.19 Multiple comments from the development industry emphasise that enhancements in building regulations are driving energy efficiency, suggesting that local plans should not overstep or contradict these regulations. The Future Homes Standard is mentioned as a significant step in energy efficiency for new buildings. There was a particular call for clarity and consistency in policy definitions and requirements that reflect national standards to ensure viability and effectiveness.

- 3.20 Strong support expressed for the promotion of sustainable transport methods as part of the strategy to reduce carbon emissions. Improving public transport infrastructure, establishing 20-minute neighbourhoods and promoting active travel including walking and cycling are seen as crucial steps. There is a desire for development strategies that balance public transport options with feasibility, cost, and the transition to electric or alternative fuel vehicles.
- 3.21 Many comments highlight the urgency of addressing the ecological emergency alongside climate goals. They endorse biodiversity initiatives such as net gains for nature and the integration of environmental considerations in policy making to ensure the viability of developments does not threaten ecological goals. Emphasis should be placed on protecting rural environments and water resources, suggesting a need for policies that encourage nature recovery and avoid deterioration.

Objective 2 - To facilitate the roll out of clean, renewable energy at a range of different scales in suitable, appropriate locations across the District.

What we said

- 3.22 Shifting away from the use of fossil fuels and towards more renewable and low carbon energy solutions is a key aim of national and local policy and one of the Council's corporate priorities.
- 3.23 Potential local plan policies might include the allocation of sites for renewable/low-carbon energy use (or general criteria to guide such proposals) community-led initiatives, energy requirements for new buildings and support for retrofitting energy solutions in existing properties.

What you said

- 3.24 A common theme across comments is the support expressed for renewable energy use and the associated challenges related to grid capacity. An emphasis is placed on not considering these issues in isolation and the need for flexibility in policy to adapt to emerging technologies. Accompanying these discussions are considerations for viability and the deliverability of the overall plan, particularly relating to new build developments.
- 3.25 Several comments address the need for rollout of clean, renewable energy at various scales in appropriate areas. There is a call for criteria-based approaches and local engagement in the planning process to ensure developments are well-situated and take into account environmental, social, and economic factors.

- 3.26 Explicit concerns exist about the economic viability and practical feasibility of policies related to renewable energy. Respondents felt that new policies must balance various factors and be feasible considering the economic realities, highlighting the importance of flexible policy wording to account for these concerns.
- 3.27 There is a collective concern about renewable energy projects having a negative impact on the countryside, biodiversity, and local ecosystems. The importance of considering biodiversity, protecting landscapes, and avoiding large-scale developments that could harm scenic and natural value is stressed.
- 3.28 A focus on increasing energy efficiency and retrofitting of low and zero carbon energy solutions in existing buildings and infrastructure is highlighted. The integration of renewable energy into new and existing constructions, while avoiding damage to heritage and natural landscapes, is considered key.
- 3.29 Comments indicate a desire for community-led and supported initiatives in the planning and implementation of renewable energy projects. The inclusion of local knowledge and preferences in planning is seen as vital for the success and acceptance of energy projects within the district.
- 3.30 There is a repeated call for solar panels on new builds, particularly on commercial properties and public buildings. Retrofitting schools with solar panels is also mentioned, along with the careful placement of solar parks to avoid negative impacts on productive agricultural land and the landscape.

Objective 3 - To respond and effectively adapt to the consequences of climate change that are already happening, building resilience and wherever possible, reversing harmful impacts, including nature's decline.

What we said

- 3.31 Planning has a key role to play in responding and adapting to the effects of climate change that are already happening such as increased temperatures and flood risk. It can also help to reverse some of those impacts including through the recovery of nature.
- 3.32 Potential policy topics related to this include flood risk, the design of new development, green infrastructure provision and biodiversity net gain (BNG).

What you said

- 3.33 Particular emphasis given to the importance of responding to climate change by building resilience and adapting to its impacts; this includes managing flood risk, promoting sustainable building design that prevents overheating and increases ventilation, and promoting water efficiency measures.

- 3.34 Nature-based solutions such as urban cooling, habitat restoration, carbon sequestration, and natural flood defence were frequently cited along with the necessity of considering viability and deliverability of related policies.
- 3.35 Many comments support policies focused on nature recovery, including biodiversity net gain initiatives and enhancing habitat connectivity. There's an emphasis on the value of integrating these elements into new developments, using green infrastructure and protecting existing natural features. Additionally, the importance of developing holistic policies that consider ecological and biodiversity impacts is highlighted.
- 3.36 Sustainable building designs that meet the challenges posed by climate change, such as energy efficiency, proper insulation, and renewable energy sources, are encouraged. A consistent note across comments is the importance of aligning with national building regulations and standards with any additional local requirements needing to be backed by strong feasibility and viability evidence.
- 3.37 A few responses are sceptical of the public sector's ability to manage renewable energy effectively, doubting the cost-effectiveness and resources available to local councils for such endeavors. There are also some doubts raised about the Government's commitment to renewable energy policies and the practicality of certain technologies in the UK climate.

Objective 4 - To make the most efficient use of land, buildings and natural capital and ensure that waste is minimised whilst being seen as a valuable resource.

What we said

- 3.38 Making the most efficient use of our assets and reducing waste is a key component of sustainable development and of particular relevance to Oxfordshire as the county seeks to 'decouple' growth from the consumption of finite resources.
- 3.39 Potential policies in this area include those relating to natural capital, the density of development, re-use of previously developed (brownfield) land and the use of 'circular economy' principles.

What you said

- 3.40 Comments express broad support for the efficient use of land, including maximizing the potential of brownfield sites before considering greenfield development. Constraints such as respecting local character, considering site-specific constraints, and balancing development densities are also mentioned.

- 3.41 The importance of a 'sequential approach' and the inevitability of having to allocate some greenfield sites due to the insufficiency of brownfield sites to meet housing needs are emphasized.
- 3.42 The complexity and cost of brownfield redevelopment are also noted, particularly in the context of affordable housing delivery and local plan trajectories.
- 3.43 Natural capital and waste minimisation are recurrent issues, with some comments advocating for natural capital-based approaches and circular economy principles in new development.
- 3.44 Many comments highlight housing density concerns, advocating for developments with suitable densities to optimize land use while also providing green infrastructure or amenities.
- 3.45 Some felt that development should align with NPPF criteria and consider retrofitting, low-rise flats for better use of urban spaces, and a focus on smaller homes to cater to pressing housing needs. Intertwined with these ideas are suggestions for a design-led approach to ensure that development is context-specific and manages growth capacity adequately.
- 3.46 Some comments support the adoption of a natural capital-led approach to development. They highlight the need for improvement in biodiversity and suggest that developments, especially on greenfield sites, can contribute to natural capital through biodiversity net gains.
- 3.47 Incorporating natural capital considerations into planning decisions and actively enhancing the environment through development are proposed. However, caution is advised against undermining biodiversity conservation and oversimplification of natural capital assessments, calling for a balanced approach that recognizes the intrinsic value of nature beyond economic metrics.

Healthy, Safe, Strong and Inclusive Communities

- 3.48 Numerous comments stress the importance of fostering healthy, safe, strong, and inclusive communities through new developments that provide convenient access to services, facilities, and recreational opportunities. The need to support physical and mental well-being by offering various amenities, such as green infrastructure, public open spaces, and opportunities for active lifestyles, is highlighted as a way to enhance the quality of life for residents and reduce social isolation.
- 3.49 Several respondents advocate for the development of sustainable transportation options, including rail and bus services, as well as the promotion of walking and cycling. Emphasis is placed on the connection between transport and development location to facilitate easy access to employment and day-to-day services while minimizing dependence on cars.
- 3.50 Support is indicated for new developments that can improve employment prospects, underpin economic vitality, and align with local industry strategies. Providing diverse employment opportunities and supporting training and skills development are seen as critical for the aspiration and success of communities.
- 3.51 The historic and cultural environment is noted for its contribution to individual and community well-being. The inclusion, diversity, and educational value of heritage sites and their role in promoting knowledge and understanding are recognized.
- 3.52 Infrastructure is a recurring topic, with many respondents calling for the strategic planning and timely delivery of infrastructure and community services. This encompasses health and educational facilities, public open spaces, utilities, and the role of new residential development in supporting local services.

Objective 5 - To help achieve thriving communities where people can lead healthy, happy and sustainable lives, going about their daily activities in well-designed, safe, crime-free, inclusive and accessible environments.

What we said

- 3.53 Planning has a key role to play in promoting the health of our local communities and tackling inequalities and deprivation through the promotion of healthier lifestyles and improved accessibility and inclusivity.
- 3.54 Potential policies to address this include the adoption of local healthy place shaping principles, the concept of 'living local', design quality standards and the use of health impact assessments.

What you said

- 3.55 Many comments support the vision of creating healthy, happy, and sustainable communities. They emphasise the need for high-quality design in new developments, green spaces, and easy access to amenities and local services. A common suggestion is for these spaces to be within a 20-minute walking distance, aligning with the '20-minute neighbourhood' concept.
- 3.56 Comments widely support fostering environments conducive to active travel and physical activity. This includes the integration of cycling and pedestrian routes, access to public transport, and the provision of sports and outdoor recreational facilities. Several comments also stressed the importance of connecting new developments with existing routes and enhancing green infrastructure.
- 3.57 A recurrent theme in the comments is the need for high design quality and adherence to local standards in new developments. Mention of local design codes suggests a desire for developments to reflect local context and diversity, with some pointing out the need for these design codes to be flexible enough to cater to varying local characteristics.
- 3.58 Several comments highlight the contributions that new residential developments should make towards creating and funding local infrastructure, green spaces, and leisure facilities. Notably, there are suggestions regarding the use of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds and the necessity for these contributions to meet regulatory tests.
- 3.59 Numerous comments stress the importance of locating new developments near facilities and amenities to promote sustainable communities. This includes ensuring that schools, shops, and healthcare services are easily reachable, minimizing car dependence, and linking these with reliable public transport.
- 3.60 There is a call from some respondents for new developments to undergo Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) to ensure that they contribute to health outcomes. Yet, a counterpoint is raised suggesting that separate HIAs for developments that align with the local plan may not be necessary, particularly if a plan-wide HIA has been completed.
- 3.61 A view that arts, entertainment, and culture play a crucial role in fostering community well-being and social interaction is expressed. Emphasis is placed on the need for planning policies to recognize and support arts and cultural organizations as part of the strategy for building healthy and happy communities.

- 3.62 Comments highlight the importance of early planning and protecting spaces for sports pitches and natural green areas, including the need for access standards to natural spaces and local recreational facilities.

Objective 6 - To create environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles through promoting physical activity for people of all ages and abilities, including maximising safe and convenient opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport and the provision of sport, recreation and play facilities and high quality green space.

What we said

- 3.63 Promoting and enabling opportunities for increased physical activity is a vital component of promoting good mental and physical health and also reducing car dependence.
- 3.64 Potential policies include those relating to standards of provision for leisure facilities and green space, the adoption of active design principles and the use of local design codes.

What you said

- 3.65 Many comments advocate for healthy, sustainable communities, with emphasis on quality design and provision in new developments that contribute to physical activity, meeting spaces, and relaxation.
- 3.66 There is support for incorporating local standards informed by national guidance for leisure, open space, and green infrastructure, acknowledging the relationship between new housing and community well-being.
- 3.67 Contributions through Section 106, CIL, and proactive policy measures are seen as means to fund and deliver such facilities, ensuring they are accessible and meet local needs.
- 3.68 The considerations for health impact assessments and local design codes addressing diversity in West Oxfordshire are highlighted, suggesting these should be practical, not onerous, and reflect local context.
- 3.69 References were made to design quality expectations for new neighbourhoods and the importance of good design for promoting sustainable and active travel modes. This extends to a recognition of the value in integrating heritage appreciation and local distinctiveness in design, with a call for a flexible policy approach that allows for site-specific innovation and character.

- 3.70 Recognition of West Oxfordshire's diversity in terms of design codes is a repeated point, suggesting that any codes should be sensitive to the variety of local contexts to avoid hindering development schemes.
- 3.71 Several comments discuss Health Impact Assessments, with strong sentiment that plan-wide assessments should suffice for developments in accordance with the Local Plan. Additional HIAs for applications are seen by some as redundant unless for large, unallocated sites with unforeseen impacts. A preference for embedding HIAs into validation requirements for planning applications is expressed, allowing for easier updates as metrics and toolkits evolve.
- 3.72 Emphasizing the benefits of high-quality green spaces for health and community engagement, these comments underline the need for contributions toward sustainable and biodiverse environments. The protection and enhancement of natural landscapes, particularly within the Cotswolds National Landscape, are touched upon as critical for leisure and recreation, suggesting policy support to increase access and improve the ecological value of green spaces.
- 3.73 Some comments highlight the role of arts, culture, and social activities in supporting community well-being, suggesting that policies should explicitly recognize and integrate these elements. The potential for arts and culture to contribute to vibrant, socially interactive, and inclusive communities is noted, but there is a concern about the lack of clear prioritization for the sector in the current plan.
- 3.74 Endorsements for adopting Active Design principles in new developments to create healthy and active communities suggest an overarching support for incorporating initiatives that promote physical activity.

Objective 7 - To deliver integrated and inclusive environments that promote good mental health and wellbeing for those living, working and visiting West Oxfordshire and help tackle mental health issues.

What we said

- 3.75 Mental health issues are increasingly common and can have significant, long-lasting impacts. The local plan has an important role in helping to address issues such as isolation and loneliness through the creation of well-designed, accessible places, service provision and inclusive design.
- 3.76 Potential policies include those relating to the provision of high-quality, accessible spaces and social infrastructure, improved access to services and design measures to address issues such as crime and the fear of crime and the needs of different people (e.g. dementia-friendly spaces and buildings).

What you said

- 3.77 Several comments emphasize the importance of planning and development policies in promoting good mental health and well-being. Comments suggest that creating inclusive and integrated environments, providing high-quality public spaces, and ensuring access to green spaces are crucial. The role of design codes, financial contributions, and detailed design assessments are highlighted to ensure developments contribute positively to mental health.
- 3.78 Comments point to the need for accessible community infrastructure that can be achieved through developer contributions. The integration of safe, well-lit, and functional spaces is mentioned alongside the need for improved access to services and cultural activities.
- 3.79 There is mention of the importance of having connected neighborhoods with day-to-day facilities to foster social connections and inclusivity. The development and growth should focus on these aspects to support the vitality and viability of communities and combat loneliness.
- 3.80 A need for design criteria focusing on safety, addressing crime, and anti-social behavior is discussed to ensure residents feel secure. This would involve assessing such criteria in detail at the design stage and establishing principles at the outline planning application stage.
- 3.81 The comments place an emphasis on creating and linking homes to quality green spaces. There is a call for policy measures to uphold green space standards, which are seen as essential for mental and physical well-being.
- 3.82 Comments suggest that policies should support the growth of rural settlements to maintain local amenities and services. The importance of affordable housing and providing access to safe green spaces to enhance community resilience is stressed.
- 3.83 Comments express a strong need for policies that support and protect community and cultural facilities, such as pubs, which are vital for social interaction and combating loneliness. Community support for such venues is evident, and their contribution to social fabric is deemed immense.

Objective 8 - To create a healthier food environment, with the opportunity for people to make better food choices, including growing and consuming healthy food locally.

What we said

- 3.84 Poor diet is a major risk factor for ill health and premature death and West Oxfordshire performs less well than other areas, with a higher proportion of overweight adults compared to the county average. Improving the consumption and production of healthier food is a countywide priority.
- 3.85 Potential policies include community growing spaces and edible planting, the provision of multi-purpose hubs, protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land and support for sustainable farming enterprises.

What you said

- 3.86 Comments reflect strong support for the Council's objectives to foster healthier food environments and provide opportunities for local food growing. Suggestions include incorporating orchards, allotments, and community gardens in new developments, promoting regenerative farming practices, and ensuring local food production is considered in planning policies. Conservation of high-quality agricultural land and additional support for local farmers are also highlighted.
- 3.87 Several comments emphasize the potential community and health benefits of integrating spaces for local food production into new developments. The idea of community orchards, allotments, and farmer markets not only supports local food consumption but also strengthens community bonds, fosters mental health, and can offer educational and employment opportunities.
- 3.88 While there is general support for better food choices and local food production, some comments raise concerns about the challenges in enforcing these policies. The practicality of implementing initiatives like foraging, community orchards, and protection of agricultural land against development pressure, as well as balancing them with other policy requirements, are questioned.
- 3.89 A few comments connect the objective of a healthier food environment with broader environmental and educational initiatives. Suggestions include creating educational opportunities around local food production, incentivizing biodiversity-friendly farming, and working with schools to link local agriculture with nutritional education.

- 3.90 Comments reflect a strong endorsement for initiatives promoting local, sustainable agriculture, including agro-ecological and regenerative farming. There is a consensus on the importance of these practices for soil health, climate change mitigation, and sustainable food production. Integrating tree and shrub farming with traditional agriculture (agroforestry) is also highlighted for its comprehensive benefits.
- 3.91 Several comments emphasize the need to expand green community spaces. Suggestions include community orchards, gardens, and the utilization of 'redundant' spaces. Joining these spaces into nature corridors is also mentioned for enhancing biodiversity.
- 3.92 There is a shared interest in promoting biodiversity and nature conservation through the establishment of species-rich hedgerows and fruiting trees within developments, streets, and parks.

Objective 9 - To identify and secure the timely investment in infrastructure needed for health and wellbeing and the care system, including measures for the prevention of health related problems.

What we said

- 3.93 Ensuring that our local communities benefit from proper investment in supporting infrastructure is a core component of national and local policy and a corporate priority for the District Council.
- 3.94 The Local Plan has a key role to play in making sure that future growth is properly supported by new and enhanced infrastructure so that existing services and facilities are not put under strain and that new development is able to be accommodated.
- 3.95 Potential policies include site-specific infrastructure plans and phasing strategies for larger developments and the provision of multi-functional, shared, adaptable infrastructure (e.g. community hubs).

What you said

- 3.96 Several comments emphasise the importance of investing in infrastructure to support health and wellbeing. They articulate support for delivering these improvements through new residential developments, Section 106 contributions, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments, and alignment with Local Plans. Community engagement and collaboration with service providers like the NHS are considered critical to facilitate appropriate provisions.

- 3.97 Comments stress the necessity of timely and appropriate infrastructure development to support new and existing communities. This includes the creation of site-specific Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDP), the importance of robust viability work to support policy decisions, and the potential for schools and communal spaces to share resources for adaptability.
- 3.98 The comments reflect a concern for adequate infrastructure planning and community services in relation to new housing developments. There is a specific emphasis on ensuring that all developments, not just large ones, are considered in infrastructure plans.
- 3.99 Comments mention the need for local sewage treatment plants to handle additional waste and for new developments to include necessary services such as GP surgeries, pharmacies, and dental practices. They advocate for conditions such as Grampian conditions to preclude occupancy until infrastructure is completed and for endowments to manage provisions sustainably.
- 3.100 Many comments mention the need for local community engagement in developing policies for health and wellbeing infrastructure. However, they also recognize that local aspirations may sometimes differ from national-level policy provisions. The balance between local desires and overarching national objectives requires careful consideration and dialogue among stakeholders.
- 3.101 Some comments express concern over the economic impact of new developments on local communities, including infrastructure funding. They highlight the issues of affordability for local people, the regulatory framework to ensure viability and the potential of new developments to assist in funding essential infrastructure without undermining plan deliverability.
- 3.101 Respondents point to the need for detailed, site-specific viability analyses to support the planning process, ensuring that contributions from development are realistic and enforceable.
- 3.102 There is also a call for infrastructure, such as school facilities and community hubs, to be multi-functional, shared, and adaptable. This would help to future-proof investments by allowing for easy adaptation and evolution, reducing the need for costly modifications and addressing embedded carbon concerns.

An enhanced natural and built environment

- 3.103 Comments emphasise a strong alignment between environmental preservation and enhancements and the local plan. The importance of protecting rural landscapes, existing green spaces, Green Belt areas, and designated heritage assets is noted. Stress is laid on the integration of nature into urban planning through connected green spaces. Conservation of biodiversity and natural environments is seen as intrinsic to the health and wellbeing of West Oxfordshire's communities.
- 3.104 Respondents express support for proactive, locally driven approaches to conserving and enhancing biodiversity. They suggest embedding nature recovery plans, adopting local guidelines, and recognizing the benefits of ecosystem services. Some criticism is directed at the inadequacy of current strategies or lack of implementing such nature-conscious policies. Adherence to existing national policies or initiatives, such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, is recommended.
- 3.105 Comments reflect the tug-of-war between economic development needs and the environmental aspirations of preserving and enhancing biodiversity. While some appreciate the economic success that can come from utilising natural environments, they also stress that it should not compromise sustainable development. Acknowledgment of and flexibility in policy are sought to ensure developments contribute positively to biodiversity and environmental goals.
- 3.106 The need for broader community education regarding biodiversity's importance and the danger of its decline is highlighted. There is a call to raise public awareness and to ensure residents understand the policies' tangible benefits. The participation of local councils in nature recovery efforts and the necessity for them to reflect and enhance local biodiversity within their strategies is stressed.

Objective 10 - To conserve and enhance the intrinsic character and beauty of West Oxfordshire's countryside, at both a strategic level (e.g. the Cotswolds) and a local level, recognising its contribution to people's quality of life and the area's social and economic wellbeing.

What we said

- 3.107 National policy and initial feedback on the local plan so far emphasise the need for the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside to be recognised, protected and wherever possible enhanced. This is a particularly important issue for West Oxfordshire which has distinctive and varied countryside, contributing to the district's character including the Cotswolds National Landscape.

3.108 Potential policies include locally specific measures to conserve character and beauty of the countryside and landscape, rural design quality, Green Belt and support for landscape-scale initiatives.

What you said

- 3.109 The majority of comments underscore the importance of preserving and enhancing the natural and historic landscape of West Oxfordshire, recognizing its intrinsic beauty and contributions to people's quality of life and the area's social and economic wellbeing. Comments suggest balancing landscape conservation with the need for housing development, highlighting opportunities for developments to include biodiversity net gain, strategic green infrastructure networks, and careful rural designs to positively enhance the character of an area.
- 3.110 Comments call for strategic planning decisions that weigh the need for new housing against landscape preservation. The overarching consensus is that new developments should focus on areas with the least environmental impact, suggesting that a proper balance between conservation efforts and development needs is crucial.
- 3.111 Several comments emphasise the need for new developments to maintain or improve rural design quality and local character. It is suggested that development should be compatible with existing landscape qualities, using high-quality materials, and that further clarity on rural design requirements and definitions is needed.
- 3.112 Some comments highlight the role that agricultural management plays in conserving and enhancing the countryside's beauty. They stress the importance of enhancing biodiversity as a priority, protecting high-quality agricultural land, and addressing river pollution to maintain ecological health.
- 3.113 Comments express concerns regarding the development within designated landscapes such as the Cotswolds National Landscape, Green Belt, and other protected areas. The consensus is that any development in these sensitive areas should be exceptional and meet specifically identified local needs.
- 3.114 There is a consensus on the need to update existing environmental assessments and strategies to safeguard natural habitats. Support for landscape-scale recovery and protecting natural beauty is also emphasized, as well as the importance of integrating new recovery strategies with local plans.
- 3.115 There is resistance to the installation of solar farms on agricultural land due to perceived inefficiencies and a preference for encouraging alternative uses of land, such as orchards or new crop funding.

- 3.116 A suggestion indicates the need to incorporate Catchment Partnerships as part of initiatives that should be supported and referenced in the planning documents.

Objective 11 - To conserve and enhance biodiversity, supporting resilient habitats for species and robust and valued environments for people, where natural capital and the benefits of ecosystem services are recognised, valued and invested in over the long term and measurable net gains in biodiversity are achieved locally.

What we said

- 3.117 The long-term decline in biodiversity and links to climate change are well documented and understood. The Local Plan has a key role to play in helping nature to recover.
- 3.118 Potential policies include adoption of a natural capital based approach, biodiversity net gain requirements, nature recovery networks and green infrastructure.

What you said

- 3.119 There is a consensus on the importance of ensuring biodiversity net gain through development projects, with discussions centering on meeting or exceeding the 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirement.
- 3.120 A common suggestion is to require a higher percentage of BNG, with some advocating for a minimum of 20%. Flexibility in achieving BNG, such as on-site or off-site solutions, and the viability and the maintenance of biodiversity enhancements are also concerns. The enforcement and clarity of BNG policies are underlined, with calls for the consistent application of BNG and adherence to emerging legislation.
- 3.120 Several respondents emphasize the importance of aligning local policies with national planning policies, such as the NPPF, environmental legislation, and the Environment Act. There is a recurring recommendation to incorporate national guidelines and frameworks to ensure a unified and effective approach to biodiversity conservation and enhancement.
- 3.121 There is a strong advocacy for protecting certain landscapes including the Green Belt, Cotswolds National Landscape, heritage assets, and areas at higher risk of flooding. There should be special consideration and protection measures to preserve these valuable landscapes and prevent development activities that may endanger them.

- 3.122 Comments emphasise the need for local nature recovery strategies and the enhancement of environments to support biodiversity. The importance of BNG contributing to nature recovery, protecting river valleys, parklands, and other significant habitats is highlighted. There's also an interest in integrating nature recovery into Neighbourhood Plans.
- 3.123 A few comments touch upon the conflict between nature conservation and the need for agricultural land for food production. Maintaining the balance between environmental objectives and agricultural requirements is seen as vital, especially considering the value of high-quality agricultural land.
- 3.124 Ideas around urban greening and the inclusion of green infrastructure in development projects are mentioned, suggesting a focus on integrating biodiverse spaces within residential and urban areas for the benefit of residents and local ecosystems.

Objective 12 - To achieve a healthy water environment, where better water management and multiple benefits for people and wildlife are provided, through the use of an integrated water management approach that brings together sustainable water supply, usage and recycling, wastewater disposal, improvement of water quality and flood risk management.

What we said

- 3.125 Water is a vital and finite resource that needs to be protected and managed in an integrated, effective way. Flood risk and water quality are particularly important considerations for West Oxfordshire.
- 3.126 Potential policies include a catchment-based approach to the management of water, design standards, flood risk mitigation, sustainable drainage, water efficiency and supporting infrastructure.

What you said

- 3.127 Respondents emphasise the need for improved water management and infrastructure to support development, including sustainable water supply, efficient wastewater disposal, flood risk management, and maintaining water quality. They call for engagement with water companies, adoption of design standards such as Building with Nature, use of catchment-based approaches to manage water, support for natural flood management, and ensuring water infrastructure can handle new developments. High water efficiency standards are encouraged, noting potential impacts on viability and the necessity for a balance with council priorities.

- 3.128 Multiple comments indicate a need for detailed and robust water cycle studies or reports to inform the local plan and policies. There is a desire for precise, measurable policies relevant to West Oxfordshire to avoid duplicating national policy.
- 3.129 Comments focus on the importance of addressing flood risk through sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and highlight the need to consider flood-related issues such as attenuation of surface water, stormwater storage, gravity systems for foul drainage, and avoiding areas of higher flood risk. There are also suggestions for proactive policies aligned with national frameworks and the incorporation of maintenance arrangements for SuDS.
- 3.130 Concerns are expressed regarding water quality and the impact of development on environmental health. Respondents note the statutory duties to protect and improve water quality and require details for policy options relevant to water quality, as well as support for catchment partnerships working on issues such as water pollution.
- 3.131 Some comments highlight the need for local planning authorities to work closely with regulatory bodies like Thames Water to address infrastructure needs and plan for capacity increases. A proactive engagement with water companies and other stakeholders is necessary to ensure the successful integration of water management aspects in planning processes.
- 3.132 Comments include suggestions for planning authorities to establish requirements for water efficiency, call for policies to reflect the variability in flood risk management solutions, and note the benefits of Grampian conditions to secure infrastructure upgrades. A need for clarity in policy and attention to legal and practical implications of water and wastewater capacities is mentioned.
- 3.133 Some respondents question the practical enforcement of environmental regulations in development and construction, expressing doubt about whether the Council will hold developers accountable for non-compliance.

Objective 13 - Protect and enhance the quality of environmental assets by avoiding harmful impacts of all forms of pollution, especially on local amenity, health, landscape character and biodiversity.

What we said

- 3.134 Not only does the natural environment need to be protected from pollution, its quality needs to be improved. Because new development has the potential to affect the quality of land, soil, air and water, the local plan has a key role to play with air quality, water quality, lighting and noise being of particular relevance to West Oxfordshire.

3.135 Potential policies include measures to minimise pollution and risk, use of air quality and noise assessments, potential identification of dark skies and partnership working to deliver improvements in the quality of local environmental assets.

What you said

3.136 Many comments express support for policies aimed at protecting and enhancing environmental quality by avoiding or minimising the impacts of all forms of pollution. This includes detailed considerations for policy requirements on environmental risks assessments, mitigation measures such as detailed noise assessments, and the importance of policies that clarify the level of technical detail expected in proposals for new developments.

3.137 Several comments highlight the significance of maintaining dark skies and tranquillity as important aspects of environmental health, with suggestions for sensor-based or minimal lighting policies, and the potential identification and protection of dark sky areas to benefit both human well-being and wildlife.

3.138 Comments suggest that further details and clarifications are needed regarding specific policy proposals related to development and pollution control. These details are necessary to guide developers and ensure the effective implementation of measures to protect the environment.

3.139 There is concern over water pollution and the need for policies to address water quality in river systems. Comments mention the need to improve and manage sewage systems, prevent misconnections, and enhance overall water quality to protect ecosystems.

3.140 Comments indicate the need for consideration of lighting in urban design to address issues like light pollution affecting wildlife and human health, as well as the potential benefits of increased natural light within buildings to mitigate problems like Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

3.141 There is a concern about various forms of pollution including noise, light, air, and water contamination. The need for strict measures and enforcement to control pollution and protect natural habitats is stressed, highlighting the importance of design consideration and monitoring in both new and existing infrastructure.

3.142 Comments highlight a degree of scepticism on the implementation of policies and regulations in practice. There is a call for consistent enforcement and policing of developers to ensure compliance with water usage and pollution prevention.

3.143 Concern is raised about worsening air quality due to traffic management changes, and there is a demand for effective pollution monitoring and results publication in areas affected by traffic rerouting.

Objective 14 - Conserve and enhance the character and significance of the historic and cultural environment, recognising and promoting the wider contribution to people's quality of life and social and economic wellbeing and enabling sensitive adaptation in light of climate change.

What we said

- 3.144 West Oxfordshire has a rich and varied historic environment that contributes to the area's distinctive character and to its culture, economy and the quality of life of residents and visitors. The Local Plan has a key role to play in setting a positive approach to conservation and enjoyment, with a focus on enhancement, and considering the natural and historic environment, as well as climate change, in an integrated way throughout the plan.
- 3.145 Potential policies include the historic environment, use of heritage impact assessments and conservation management plans, adoption of whole building approaches and the Blenheim Palace World Heritage site.

What you said

- 3.146 Many comments express broad support for enhancing the character and significance of the historic and cultural environment, emphasizing its contribution to quality of life, social, and economic wellbeing. They acknowledge the need for the local Plan to be consistent with national policy and not to replicate it.
- 3.147 A number of respondents call for more detailed information on proposed policies, such as Design Coding for historic places, ensuring context and character-led development, and Heritage Impact Assessments. There is a call for policies that address archaeology and the integration of fabric measures and renewable energy solutions for climate change adaptation.
- 3.148 Comments highlight the importance of new development contributing positively to the historic and cultural environment. This includes suggestions for improving pedestrian and cycle linkages, enabling sensitive adaptation to climate change, and supporting economic development while respecting historic significance.
- 3.149 There is recognition that while conservation is crucial, there must be a balance that allows the built environment to evolve to meet modern needs, especially regarding decarbonisation, energy efficiency, and the need to retrofit listed buildings to accommodate renewable energy sources.
- 3.150 Certain comments underline the necessity for policies that recognize the role of the historic and cultural environment in rural tourism and local business support, benefits of estate contributions, and the economic advantages of leveraging historic and natural beauty for diverse job creation.

- 3.151 Respondents stress the importance of not only protecting heritage assets but also their settings, calling for policies and appraisal processes that ensure development is sensitive to the character and significance of conservation areas and the wider historic environment.
- 3.152 A few comments specifically mention the importance of not only focusing on built heritage but also considering archaeological aspects in policy development, indicating a need for comprehensive heritage preservation that includes below-ground heritage.
- 3.153 The comments suggest there is a need for policies to support measures tackling heritage at risk, indicating an awareness of the challenges facing historic assets that may be vulnerable.

Attractive, Accessible and Thriving Places

- 3.154 Comments emphasize the importance of creating developments that are not only sustainable but also accessible. These developments should provide access to services and public transport to reduce reliance on private vehicles. Sustainable design and the efficient use of land are key aspects highlighted.
- 3.155 There is a recurring theme of supporting community-led plans including neighbourhood plans, suggesting that involving the community in the planning process improves social well-being and ensures developments meet local needs.
- 3.156 Comments stress the importance of revitalizing town centres, maintaining or increasing core services, and supporting the viability of smaller settlements, indicating that investments and developments should aim to sustain and benefit these locations.
- 3.157 References to innovative architecture and climate resilience suggest a desire for modern approaches that are environmentally responsible and contribute to the attractiveness and uniqueness of the area.
- 3.158 The need for improved transport connections, including bus, shuttle, and cycling routes, is mentioned as a key component for sustainable growth and ensuring the accessibility of developments.
- 3.159 Incorporating green spaces and waterways into development is highlighted as vital for creating distinctive and attractive places, suggesting the integration of natural elements into urban design.
- 3.160 Comments advocate for the exploration of various spatial options to adopt the most sustainable and sensible approach to development, ensuring that different needs and characteristics are addressed.

3.161 The significance of arts and cultural activities in creating attractive and thriving places, indicating a consideration for social aspects in development is highlighted.

Objective 15 - To provide a framework within which West Oxfordshire's resident communities and businesses are able to thrive across a network of attractive, safe and inclusive, vibrant and well-connected market towns and villages.

What we said

3.162 Planning policies should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. There should be an emphasis on promoting social interaction and our surroundings should be safe and accessible.

3.163 Potential policies include the pattern of development (spatial strategy) adoption of 20-minute neighbourhood principles, improved access to services, design and digital connectivity.

What you said

3.164 Comments consistently highlight the importance of integrating sustainable and active travel options such as pedestrian and cycle paths, public transport and traffic-calming measures.

3.165 Many comments point to the need for high-quality public spaces, local shops, community halls, and green spaces in new developments to foster vibrant, inclusive, and integrated neighbourhoods, also highlighting the role of infrastructure in supporting development.

3.166 There is a theme around the importance of new developments in supporting and sustaining local services and facilities, including shops, meeting places, and cultural environments, with some emphasis on the need to create a framework for businesses to thrive.

3.167 Comments reflect the desire to conserve and enhance the character and distinctiveness of local areas in light of new developments, addressing design criteria for safety, creation of attractive places, and reflection of local character.

3.168 Several respondents stress the need for improved digital connectivity to support communities, and its importance for businesses and the overall quality of life in both existing and new developments.

3.169 A recurring theme expresses support for creating communities that are safe, inclusive, vibrant, and well-connected, suggesting an inclusive approach to planning where development meets diverse needs and supports social interaction.

3.170 Comments highlight the necessity of a robust growth strategy that supports the economic and social wellbeing of communities by providing employment opportunities, local amenities, and facilities which contribute to a vibrant local economy.

Objective 16 - To ensure that all new development in West Oxfordshire is underpinned by a high quality, innovative and inclusive approach to design.

What we said

3.171 The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places being fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

3.172 Potential policies include design vision, principles and expectations, local design policies and standards, use of local design codes/guides and the preparation of Village Design Statements and Neighbourhood Plans.

What you said

3.173 Many comments emphasise the aspiration for high-quality, innovative, and inclusive design in new developments. The recurring mention of inclusivity and the need for developments to respect and enhance local character and heritage indicate a strong desire for thoughtful design practices.

3.174 Numerous comments reference the importance of local design codes and guides, indicating support for their use but also signaling a need for consistency, efficiency in delivery, and flexibility so as not to hinder development progress or innovation.

3.175 There is concern expressed in some comments that while pursuing high design standards and inclusivity, the preparation, and implementation of design guides, statements, and plans should not significantly delay the delivery of schemes due to council resourcing or policy complexity.

3.176 Several comments highlight the national frameworks for design, expressing support but also emphasizing the need for local adaptation, as well as caution that policies should not be overly prescriptive and still permit viable and innovative development.

3.177 The importance of design that is reflective of local context and heritage is stressed, with suggestions to incorporate local distinctiveness, including the use of materials like Cotswold stone, and to ensure that developments within the setting of heritage assets are designed to complement and enhance their surroundings.

3.178 Responding to the climate change and ecological emergencies, comments show support for sustainable design and construction, underlining the need to integrate ecological considerations such as tree planting and carbon-efficient building practices into new developments.

3.179 Comments suggest that green infrastructure should be integrated into good design and that there should be a strong emphasis on the importance of adequate long-term maintenance.

Objective 17 - To create a safe, welcoming and accessible environment in which West Oxfordshire's town and village centres can adapt and prosper, taking advantage of changing trends and shopping habitats to ensure they remain a destination of choice.

What we said

3.180 National policy emphasises the importance of fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces. It also emphasises the importance of creating places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being.

3.181 Potential policies include Town and Village centres, retention and enhancement of markets, re-use of previously developed land, commercial and mixed-use development, adaptation of existing space.

What you said

3.182 Multiple comments discuss the importance of enhancing and supporting the town and village centres of West Oxfordshire. There is a common understanding that growth and development should contribute to the vitality of these areas by increasing footfall to support existing services and facilities, adapt to changing consumer behaviors, and ensure they remain destinations of choice.

3.183 Numerous comments highlight the necessity of planning for safe and connected communities that foster a sense of belonging, empowerment, and mental wellbeing. The importance of developing strategies that encourage social interactions through events, clubs, and groups, and creating policies that allow for the evolution of town and village centres in line with consumer demand and the market is emphasised.

3.184 Several comments suggest residential growth as a means to support the economic vitality of the centres, through direct support of existing businesses and facilities due to an increased customer base. Moreover, there is support for putting vacant retail units to residential use, which can also incentivize the revival of town centres and support local economies.

3.185 Comments address the need for clear and specific policies, including a strategy for town and village centres, parking management, and timely investment in school infrastructure to support community growth. They also touch upon the importance of adapting to changing shopping habits and the role of town centres in supporting healthy lifestyles.

Objective 18 - To achieve equality and inclusivity within our local communities by ensuring that everyone is able to access the core services and facilities that they need to meet their daily needs.

What we said

- 3.186 The rurality of the district and sparsity of some communities will have an adverse effect on some residents if key services related to retail, banking, social activities and health are not provided locally.
- 3.187 Potential policies include the pattern of development (spatial strategy) 20-minute neighbourhoods ('living local') provision and protection of community services and facilities, supporting infrastructure and provision of multi-functional buildings and spaces.

What you said

- 3.188 Comments emphasize the importance of ensuring equality and inclusivity by facilitating access to core services and facilities within communities. They suggest that developments should be strategically placed to provide access for all, including rural areas, and recognize both physical proximity and various forms of accessibility, such as transport networks.
- 3.189 Comments reflect support for a holistic approach in development that prioritises sustainable planning. This involves integrating housing, jobs, and transport networks to create 15-minute neighborhoods and ensure developments do not neglect rural areas or the unique needs of the District.
- 3.190 Several comments point out the need to allow appropriate levels of development in rural areas to support existing services and potentially add new ones. They advocate for policies that understand the economic drivers of rural amenities and consider their viability.
- 3.191 Comments indicate a need to address the role of educational facilities within the community planning process, highlighting the importance of schools in decision-making for housing locations and the challenges of school transport.
- 3.192 Comments show support for the role of communities and volunteer organizations in maintaining and providing amenities and services, suggesting a requirement for district support and potentially subsidies or grants for volunteer-run amenities.
- 3.193 Respondents express a desire for strategies to support local shopping, recognizing the benefits of decreased car reliance and community growth but also noting the current lack of resources and need for substantial investment and imaginative planning.

Objective 19 - To empower and enable local communities to positively shape and influence the future of their area from the 'grass roots' up.

What we said

- 3.194 National and local policy emphasises the importance of supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities including through neighbourhood planning and other processes.
- 3.195 Potential policies include community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, use of local design codes, village design statements (VDS) neighbourhood plans and long-term maintenance and stewardship in new development.

What you said

- 3.196 Many comments emphasise the importance of empowering and engaging local communities in the planning process. There is a clear support for the idea that residents should have a say in shaping their local areas.
- 3.197 Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) and other planning documents such as Local Design Guides and Village Design Statements are listed as tools for involving communities, but some concerns are raised about the time it takes to prepare these documents and their potential to delay development.
- 3.198 There is a call for sufficient guidance at the district level to avoid a vacuum in decision-making while waiting for community-led documents. Furthermore, flexibility in management, maintenance, and stewardship arrangements is considered crucial.
- 3.199 Comments suggest that long-term management, maintenance, and stewardship of new developments should be flexible to account for site-specific circumstances. Flexibility is crucial for using management companies and other options that can adapt to the unique needs of each site, which is preferred by some stakeholders.
- 3.200 Strong support is voiced for providing strategic direction and support to local communities, especially in relation to Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs). The need for local plans to inform and guide communities on development needs is emphasized to ensure that NDPs are in line with the broader strategic policies and support sustainable development objectives.
- 3.201 There is an aspiration to make the planning process inclusive, ensuring that local views are considered and respected. The inclusivity theme is about avoiding mere lip service to community engagement and ensuring that the views of the local people, including those in smaller communities and villages, are genuinely taken into account when making planning decisions.

- 3.202 Some respondents express the need for local-level planning and development to support and retain vital services and facilities in their communities. They emphasize the importance of local shops, pubs, and other services, and reflect on the loss of these amenities over time.
- 3.203 There is a concern about the reduced accessibility of community resources, such as school facilities, due to governance changes, which affects local community cohesiveness and utility.
- 3.204 Respondents express the need for local communities to have a greater say and involvement in shaping their own areas. They highlight the importance of acknowledging local knowledge and allowing communities to influence decisions.

Meeting the Housing Needs of All

- 3.205 Comments reflect concerns over housing affordability exacerbated by a lack of supply. Some consider there to be an identified need for a significant increase in housing to match job growth and economic projections.
- 3.206 Failure to provide ample housing can lead to increased in-commuting and affordability issues, as well as a strain on local resources. Multiple comments suggest the need for a diverse mix of affordable homes to meet various demographic needs.
- 3.207 The comments highlight the relationship between housing and the local economy, suggesting that adequate housing is essential for economic growth and prosperity. The need for heritage-led regeneration and connecting housing strategies to job creation is also mentioned.
- 3.208 Comments address the need for strategic planning in housing, taking into account job market trends and economic assessments to forecast housing needs. Concerns are raised about meeting medium-to-long term housing needs, and ensuring the plan remains flexible to accommodate future growth.
- 3.209 Several comments emphasise the importance of providing housing that meets the specific needs of local demographics such as younger people, older people, and people with disabilities. This includes ensuring a diversity of house sizes and types and recognizing the need to adhere to local plans.
- 3.210 Other comments focus on the balance between protecting the environment, specifically within National Landscapes, and providing for housing needs.

Objective 20 - To enable the delivery of a continual supply of high quality, well-designed and sustainable new homes to meet identified housing needs in the period 2021 – 2041.

What we said

- 3.211 National policy emphasises the importance of significantly boosting the supply of new homes and the current Local Plan has not kept pace with the required trajectory, with delays experienced at the larger strategic allocations.
- 3.212 Potential policies include an overall housing requirement, timing/phasing of delivery, agreed distribution of homes, site allocations, design quality expectations and sustainable construction standards.

What you said

- 3.213 Respondents are concerned with the ability of the Local Plan to ensure a continuous and sufficient supply of high-quality, well-designed, and sustainable housing.
- 3.214 Many developers argue for a housing requirement that goes beyond the standard method and aligns with the anticipated economic growth of Oxfordshire. They advocate for planning that considers the likely need for more homes to support regional economic ambitions and the shortfall from Oxford City, with a housing requirement reflective of growth strategies and economic potential. Many suggest that the focus should be on small to medium-sized site allocations to address shortfalls quickly.
- 3.215 Some respondents felt that the plan should include strategies to keep up with housing demand while balancing environmental constraints, considering brownfield first, and taking a cautious approach to the number of houses due to uncontrollable market forces.
- 3.216 Respondents highlight the importance of balancing housing growth with the preservation of green spaces, focusing on brownfield development before greenfield, and ensuring that new housing does not detrimentally affect the Cotswolds National Landscape and other environmentally sensitive areas. They stress that housing strategies must consider local needs and avoid over-reliance on strategic, larger sites that may not align with sustainability goals.
- 3.217 Respondents highlight the need for affordable housing options that cater to local needs, which includes providing social housing, homes aimed at first-time buyers, and smaller homes for aging populations. There is an emphasis on ensuring affordability and integrating new residents within existing communities, with suggestions for redevelopment, splitting larger homes into smaller units, and a focus on planning for housing types suitable for the local demographic.

- 3.218 There is significant concern regarding the sufficiency of local infrastructure—like roads, schools, and hospitals—along with services such as sewage treatment and transportation, especially in relation to new housing developments.
- 3.219 Comments call for proactive engagement between the council, developers, and infrastructure providers like Thames Water to ensure that developments are supported by necessary upgrades and services. The timing and capacity for delivering infrastructure are key considerations, with a need for careful planning to support sustainable growth and avoid overburdening the current network.

Objective 21 - To ensure that new homes in West Oxfordshire are genuinely affordable over the short and longer-term to a broad range of people, including those who are not able to afford market priced housing to buy or rent.

What we said

- 3.220 National policy requires us to consider the housing needs of different groups including those who require affordable housing. In 2021, West Oxfordshire’s housing affordability ratio suggested that full-time employees can expect to spend around 11.4 times their annual earnings on buying a home - higher than the national average of 9.1
- 3.221 Potential policies include affordable housing provision in new development, rural exception sites, housing mix, custom and self-build housing and construction standards in new build development.

What you said

- 3.222 Many comments emphasize the importance of delivering affordable housing to address affordability issues and support diverse communities in West Oxfordshire. Comments highlight that affordability ratios are high and stress the need for the Council to establish the scale of affordable housing needs.
- 3.223 There are suggestions for housing policy to include a certain proportion of affordable homes in market developments, the importance of affordable housing allocation in planning, and the possibility of 'uplifting' overall housing requirements.
- 3.224 Concerns are raised about the delays in delivering affordable housing and how this impacts local communities. There are calls for housing that is affordable in perpetuity and affordable for a broad range of people, with suggestions to involve registered providers and to prioritize social rented housing. Additionally, there is commentary on the distinction between market affordability and the delivery of affordable homes.

- 3.225 There is an emphasis on the need for housing to be priced within reach for local residents, first-time buyers, and various demographics. Respondents highlight affordability as a significant factor for community wellbeing and cohesion, and some suggest that official definitions of 'affordable housing' need to be carefully considered to ensure they align with local income levels and market conditions.
- 3.226 Several comments advocate for smaller-scale housing developments, which are seen as more swiftly deliverable, and emphasize the role of small or medium-sized developers and landowners in delivering high-quality, energy-efficient housing.
- 3.227 References are made to the ability of these types of developments to adapt to changing needs and contribute to the diversity of housing supply, thereby increasing affordability through a more rapid response to market demands. They also discuss the benefits of sustainable building practices, the support of local services, and the avoidance of infrastructure overloads.
- 3.228 Some comments discuss the viability of affordable housing policies, emphasizing the need for an evidence-based and realistic approach. The need to ensure that policies do not undermine the deliverability of the plan and the importance of plan viability testing is particularly noted. Some comments suggest that fiscal strategies, such as lower Council Tax for sustainable homes, adjusting mortgage lending criteria to factor in low running costs of sustainable homes, and lobbying the government for changes in central policy, may improve affordability.
- 3.229 There are calls for the Council to identify specific sites for self and custom build projects rather than integrating them within larger housing developments, and to work with landowners to facilitate these types of builds. The comments suggest that self and custom build housing can offer both market and affordable housing solutions, potentially including specific site allocations, and emphasize the importance of a flexible approach to planning that accommodates self-built homes.

Objective 22 - To make sure everyone is able to access the home that they need.

What we said

- 3.230 National policy requires us to consider and plan for the housing needs of different groups of society. More locally, the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision looks to improve health and well-being and reduce inequality including the provision of homes to meet all people's needs.
- 3.231 Potential policies include housing mix, custom and self-build housing, adaptability of properties, provision of specialist housing, rental provision and provision for travelling communities.

What you said

- 3.232 Comments express a consensus about supporting the council's objective of providing suitable, high-quality homes that cater to the regional demographics including the need for market and affordable housing, accessibility, adaptability, and provisions for older persons. A significant focus on ensuring a variety of housing options to address affordability issues and supporting the development of a broad mix of housing within new developments is highlighted.
- 3.233 There is a repeated affirmation of the core objective to ensure everyone has access to the home they need. While the principle is widely supported, there are questions regarding the practicality and resources needed to ensure this objective is met, with some suggestions for policy specifics and criticisms of the current approach.
- 3.234 Comments call for clarity and action on land allocations, particularly advocating for the allocation of suitable sites for developments, the active role of the council in selecting and directing new allocations, and concern for maintaining local control. There is also a reflection on the type of developments to be prioritized, such as self-build, community-led housing, and the role of small and medium-sized sites in early plan delivery.
- 3.235 Some commentary is devoted to the integration of housing developments within the local community context, emphasising not just the provision of housing but also the importance of residents' participation in local affairs, especially in the context of travelling communities.
- 3.236 Comments highlight the necessity for proper planning to accommodate the growing number of older individuals who require a variety of housing solutions that cater to their specific needs. The references to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) emphasize the critical need for constructing suitable housing for the elderly, including adaptable and accessible homes as well as specialized accommodations with care services. The comments also discuss the socio-economic and health benefits of providing such housing, suggesting policy directions for local authorities.
- 3.237 Some concern is raised regarding the additional financial burden placed on residents of rental properties, particularly in new developments, stemming from high management fees for amenities like car parks and gardens.

Objective 23 - To ensure that the type, size and tenure of new homes coming forward helps to create a balanced and sustainable mix of opportunities and encourages community cohesion and well-being.

What we said

- 3.238 National policy emphasises the importance of creating mixed and balanced communities and more locally the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision aims to achieve flourishing, diverse and vibrant communities with new homes of the right type, size and tenure to meet the needs of our growing economy, young people, residents and future generations.
- 3.239 Potential policies include housing mix, mixed-use developments and the adoption of locally specific healthy place shaping principles.

What you said

- 3.240 Many comments emphasize the need for new developments to offer a diverse and sustainable mix of housing that fosters community cohesion and well-being. Various sizes, types, and tenures of homes are mentioned to cater to different demographics and needs. The importance of locational distribution across the district to ensure balance is highlighted, as is the need for flexibility to adapt to evolving housing requirements, especially post-COVID-19.
- 3.241 Several comments note the dynamic nature of housing mix and the importance of policies having the flexibility to respond to changing housing needs over time. Flexibility to adapt to local circumstances and market conditions is a recurring point, with suggestions to set 'indicative' mixes and guidance for developers to tailor dwelling mixes based on local evidence.
- 3.242 Comments identify the need for inclusive housing strategies that address the needs of specific groups such as younger people, older people, people with disabilities, and those in need of affordable housing. Emphasis is placed on the provision of different types of housing, specifically smaller units and adaptable homes that cater to a broad spectrum of society and local needs.
- 3.243 Several comments recognize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on how we use our homes, including increased levels of home and hybrid working. This has led to a call for increased flexibility in home design to ensure they can meet a variety of evolving needs.
- 3.244 A number of comments call for local policies on housing mixes to reflect national guidance, such as the National Design Space Standards, ensuring high-quality design and adaptability for future needs. Any deviations should be justified by local evidence to ensure appropriate standards are met.

- 3.245 There is a consensus on the need for a sufficient supply of affordable housing to meet local demands and support diverse demographics. Comments often reiterate the importance of policy flexibility to adapt to market conditions and to ensure that a variety of housing types and tenures are available.

Objective 24 - To make the most efficient use of the District's current housing stock and maximise the opportunities presented by existing and previously developed land and buildings.

What we said

- 3.246 National policy emphasises the importance of using natural resources prudently, encouraging the re-use of existing resources including the conversion of existing buildings and making as much use as possible of previously developed or 'brownfield' land.
- 3.247 Potential policies include the re-use of / alterations to existing residential and non-residential buildings, development densities, efficient use of resources and re-use of previously developed land and buildings.

What you said

- 3.248 Many comments stress the importance of making efficient use of existing housing stock and previously developed land (brownfield sites). While there is strong support for prioritising the redevelopment of such sites, there are concerns about the challenges this may bring, including complexity, cost, and viability issues, especially related to the delivery of affordable housing. There is a recognition that brownfield development alone cannot meet housing needs, thus necessitating a balance with greenfield development.
- 3.249 Several comments express uncertainty about the degree to which planning policies can affect existing land uses and the significance of these policies in improving existing housing stock, particularly in areas such as energy efficiency. The limitations of planning policies, which are generally focused on new developments, lead to scepticism about their impact on current properties.
- 3.250 Comments raise concerns about the economic viability of redeveloping brownfield sites. The redevelopment is considered more complex, expensive, and time-consuming than greenfield development, impacting the potential delivery of affordable housing and other planning obligations. Insufficient availability of such land to meet housing needs is noted, suggesting the need for a mixed strategy including greenfield sites.

- 3.251 The limitation and sometimes non-existence of previously developed land in rural areas is a concern for some respondents, who suggest policy wording to support the reuse of redundant agricultural sites and buildings. There is some caution against policies that might hinder housing development due to over-emphasis on using existing land, thus affecting rural sustainability.
- 3.252 Some contributors discuss the need for an approach that incorporates both greenfield and brownfield development. They highlight that while brownfield sites have potential, they may not offer the same opportunities for sustainable and environmentally friendly development as greenfield sites, which can include more innovative design and renewable energy solutions.
- 3.253 Comments indicate a preference for retaining, reusing, and adapting historic buildings to augment housing stock and commercial spaces, thus preserving embodied carbon, historical heritage, and contributing to climate change mitigation.
- 3.254 Contributors emphasise the importance of managing the existing housing stock to prevent under-utilization, suggesting improvements to accommodate greater occupancy, such as for HMOs, and policies to limit the conversion of permanent housing into short-term lets.

A Vibrant, Resilient and Diverse Local Economy

- 3.255 Comments emphasise the importance of fostering an economy in West Oxfordshire that is dynamic and robust, with the recognition of the need for job growth and the support of housing and sustainable travel to accommodate this. Emphasis is also given to the benefits of leveraging RAF Brize Norton and the region's reputation for innovation, as well as improving connectivity with local and neighbouring business parks and employment areas.
- 3.256 Several comments focus on strategic planning needs for employment and housing. This includes identifying and assessing current and future employment sites, ensuring flexibility to adapt to changing work patterns and economic needs, and integrating housing development with economic growth to provide both direct and indirect employment opportunities.
- 3.257 Comments suggest the importance of improved connectivity and accessibility for supporting the local economy. This encompasses both physical transport means, such as proximity to Oxford city centre by rail and bus services, as well as embracing remote and hybrid work models through adaptable homes with working spaces.

3.258 There is an acknowledgment of the necessity to develop workforce skills, especially in areas where there is a shortfall of highly skilled candidates. The importance of policies that encourage apprenticeships and that create training and employment opportunities local to both large and smaller developments is highlighted.

Objective 25 - To provide the framework within which the West Oxfordshire economy can thrive and diversify, building on its inherent strengths and capitalising on future growth potential to increase economic productivity, well-being and resilience.

What we said

3.259 Significant weight must be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity and the approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.

3.260 Potential policies include an overall economic vision and strategy.

What you said

3.261 There is a consensus on the need to support jobs and economic investment within the Local Plan. Commentators suggest aligning policies with the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy and the Strategic Economic Plan, recognising service industry and diverse rural economies, and considering employment growth alongside housing and infrastructure needs.

3.262 Multiple comments emphasise the importance of diversifying the economy to enhance economic productivity, wellbeing, and resilience, suggesting frameworks to build on inherent strengths and capitalize on growth potential.

3.263 Several comments highlight tourism as a key industry that should be protected and enhanced. There are calls for policies supporting tourism development, heritage-led regeneration, and addressing heritage at risk, while ensuring retention of the rural and historic character of the District.

3.264 Comments express the need for local economic initiatives, support for local businesses including non-knowledge-based employment like skilled trades, public transport improvements, retention of banking services, and partnerships between local authorities and employers.

3.265 The need to align job creation with housing growth scenarios is stressed, ensuring that economic growth strategies are supported by adequate housing and infrastructure planning.

Objective 26 - To enable the delivery of a balanced portfolio of high quality employment land to provide flexibility, meet identified needs and cater for a broad range of user requirements over the plan period.

What we said

- 3.266 National policy requires us in preparing the Local Plan, to have a clear economic vision and strategy and a good understanding of anticipated needs over the plan period so that criteria can be set or sites identified to meet those needs. National policy also highlights the importance of supporting the rural economy.
- 3.267 Potential policies include the pattern of development (spatial strategy) provision of new business land, adaptation and expansion of existing premises, mixed-use development and the provision of supporting infrastructure.

What you said

- 3.268 A number of commenters express strong support for the objective to deliver a balanced portfolio of high-quality employment land. They emphasize the need for flexibility, meeting identified needs, and catering to a diverse range of user requirements. There is consensus on ensuring that employment land is adaptable and can respond to demand from both enduring and new commercial sectors.
- 3.269 Comments highlight an alignment with the vision of economic growth that co-locates new homes and jobs. The comments propose that employment land should be allocated in important locations, and sustainable development practices should be followed to maximize efficiency and reduce commuting.
- 3.270 Several respondents emphasise the need for improvements in infrastructure, including public transport and reduction of congestion, to accommodate economic growth. The lack of available employment land, particularly around key areas including Witney, is highlighted, with calls for the identification of new sites to better serve increased demand and strategic corridors.
- 3.271 Some respondents point out the need for diverse and inclusive economic opportunities that are not only focused on knowledge-based or graduate-level jobs. There is mention of the importance of apprenticeships and accessible employment options, as well as support for local business expansion and tourism as a means to strengthen the local economy.
- 3.272 There are opinions suggesting the need for strategic planning in terms of development patterns and mixed-use developments, including the location of jobs close to homes and the co-location of facilities.

- 3.273 A few comments reinforce the significance of heritage impact assessments, proposing that they should be considered for employment land allocations as they are for housing allocations. Additionally, there are suggestions for incorporating green initiatives like mandatory energy generation and rainwater collection for commercial buildings.
- 3.274 Some respondents advocate for using high-density development approaches such as high-rise buildings to limit land take and maximize the efficiency of space usage, including suggestions for placing parking underneath buildings and re-purposing town centres, partially for housing.
- 3.275 Comments include recommendations to support specific sectors such as science and business parks expansion, tourism, and rural enterprises, acknowledging their roles in supporting the local economy and providing employment.

Objective 27 - To support West Oxfordshire's existing and future economic assets by providing the right infrastructure, land and premises, enabling them to improve, expand and adapt as appropriate and ensuring they are not lost to other uses where they have an important economic, social and environmental role to play.

What we said

- 3.276 As well as influencing the delivery of new business and employment land opportunities, the Local Plan has a role to play in supporting the District's existing economic assets both in our urban and rural areas.
- 3.277 Potential policies include the adaptation and expansion of existing premises, redevelopment of existing business premises to other uses and the provision of supporting infrastructure.

What you said

- 3.278 Many comments emphasise the importance of supporting existing and future economic assets in West Oxfordshire by providing infrastructure, land, and premises. They advocate for these assets to be improved, expanded, and adapted, stressing not to lose them to other uses.
- 3.279 The significance of infrastructure development in planning and executing local projects is recurrently highlighted as critical for economic growth.
- 3.280 Several respondents are concerned about the lack of adequate public services such as transport and communal spaces. They express a need for young and elderly populations to have better access to recreational and essential services, and suggest that accommodating flexible workspaces, including conference rooms for hire, could benefit local businesses and communities.

- 3.281 There is a clear push for policies to help local businesses grow, including facilitating a diverse range of employment opportunities and supporting the trend of remote work. Comments acknowledge the shift to work from home due to COVID-19 and suggest the importance of Internet-based business facilities and the adaptation of premises for mixed-use development, such as live-work spaces.
- 3.282 Comments underline the necessity for local plans to include the adaptation and expansion of businesses, preventing a default conversion to housing and seeking to ensure the availability of quality business premises. Respondents also mention supporting infrastructure as a critical aspect.
- 3.283 Some comments call for sustainable development by considering the current state and future requirements of water drainage and sewage treatment infrastructure. The environmental aspects and the need for sustainable economic development are recognized as essential factors in planning.
- 3.284 A couple of comments focus on the situation of unused shops and holiday homes, proposing that these could be repurposed for residential use or redesigned to support internet-based businesses, reflecting a shift in the traditional use of properties.
- 3.285 Sport is suggested as an overlooked employment sector that is estimated to employ more people and generate higher economic and health benefits compared to traditional industries in the region.

Objective 28 - To provide flexibility to be able to respond to future trends and technological changes to support working practices such as increases in remote, hybrid and co-working.

What we said

- 3.286 National policy emphasises the need for planning policies to be flexible enough to accommodate unforeseen needs, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.
- 3.287 Potential policies include the use of innovation plans in new developments, flexible working spaces, re-purposable space, provision of supporting infrastructure and the conversion and re-use of existing buildings.

What you said

- 3.288 Comments underline the importance of adapting to future trends, particularly with the incorporation of flexible workspaces, to accommodate remote, hybrid, and co-working practices. There is a consensus that strategic planning should ensure that developments are adaptable to changes, with broadband infrastructure being a key component.
- 3.289 Several respondents advocate for maintaining a balance between traditional employment spaces, like offices and workshops, and the growing demand for remote working capabilities in homes. It is important to ensure home working does not dominate to the detriment of traditional workspaces.
- 3.290 Comments express a desire for the development of supporting infrastructure with a strong emphasis on high-quality broadband connectivity. This infrastructure is regarded as crucial for supporting new working trends and businesses.
- 3.291 Comments emphasise recognition of the hybrid roles homes play and the need for sufficient flexibility to meet changing needs. There is mention of site-specific opportunities to deliver working spaces in line with this recognition.
- 3.292 The concept of the 15-minute neighbourhood is supported, tying in the importance of sustainable settlements where services are accessible and homeworking is feasible. Yet, there is a need to strike a balance with traditional working environments.
- 3.293 Comments suggest that facilitating live-work spaces can reduce the need for commuting, aligning with the support for hybrid working and home office setups.

Objective 29 - To ensure that all residents of West Oxfordshire are able to benefit from improved education, training and skills opportunities to enhance their economic and social well-being to strengthen the local economy and benefit small and start-up businesses.

What we said

- 3.294 The Oxfordshire Strategic Vision stipulates that by 2050, the County will have improved educational attainment and a skills system aligned to the needs of business and communities, helping to provide the conditions in which all Oxfordshire's people can benefit and thrive.
- 3.295 Potential policies include the pattern of development (spatial strategy) 20-minute neighbourhoods, provision of supporting infrastructure, the use of community employment plans and safer routes to schools.

What you said

- 3.296 Comments consistently stress the importance of enhancing education, training, and skills opportunities coinciding with new developments. Emphasis is on ensuring these opportunities contribute to economic and social well-being, enhance the local economy, and are sustained through strategic planning.
- 3.297 Multiple comments support the sustainable growth and diversification of the rural economy, highlighting support for farmers, rural businesses, and the visitor economy. Development in rural areas also includes a focus on meet local business needs and encouraging sectors like heritage skills.
- 3.298 Infrastructure is seen as a critical factor for enabling educational opportunities as well as economic growth. Concerns are expressed about issues such as A40 congestion being a 'handbrake' to prosperity and the need for supportive infrastructure such as superfast broadband.
- 3.299 Comments express support for sustainability, highlighting the importance of utilizing existing buildings, focusing on green jobs and skills, and the strategic placement of land-use. There is also a call for nature recovery planning and leveraging agricultural land use for biodiversity and climate goals.
- 3.300 Several comments focus on the role of rural heritage and tourism, suggesting policies should adapt to demand and changing trends in tourism, including diversification of rural businesses and promoting rural attractions through proactive expansions like extending the Cotswolds National Landscape.

Objective 30 - To celebrate the rurality of our District, enabling the sustainable growth, expansion and diversification of the rural economy and providing support for farmers and other rural businesses including those linked to the visitor economy.

What we said

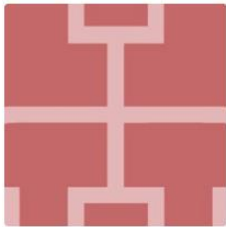
- 3.301 Through our initial consultation in 2022, strong support was expressed for sustainable tourism, supporting local farmers, potentially greater dispersal of smaller employment sites across rural areas, re-using previously developed land and buildings and the need to support rural land-based businesses, the local food economy and rural tourism.
- 3.302 Potential policies include the conversion and re-use of existing buildings, small-scale business uses in rural areas, farm/estate diversification, flexible working spaces, sustainable tourism and leisure provision and the provision of supporting infrastructure.

What you said

- 3.303 Comments emphasize the importance of utilizing local heritage, agriculture, tourism, and skills development as a means of promoting economic growth and job creation within West Oxfordshire. Strategic support for the heritage skills sector, agriculture's role in meeting biodiversity and climate goals, and the promotion of nature trails, farm shops, and community employment plans are highlighted. The creation of opportunities through training and support for local businesses is also stressed.
- 3.304 There is a call to address environmental challenges, particularly emissions from agriculture, through the promotion of nature trails and local food initiatives. The objective of expanding areas of natural beauty is mentioned to enhance ecological value and support sustainable tourism.
- 3.305 Comments suggest that local government support, such as funding for training and community projects, as well as reduced rates for small businesses, is essential to cultivate a vibrant local economy. Encouragement for farming diversification and the development of local food industries is also noted.
- 3.306 Several comments point to the importance of protecting and promoting the cultural and historical aspects of West Oxfordshire, such as through the expansion of the Cotswolds National Landscape and the recognition of the region's potential in heritage skill sectors like stone masonry and horticulture.

4. The Pattern of Development

- 4.1 The Local Plan is a 'spatial' document, dealing with the distribution of different land uses across the District (e.g. housing, green space, infrastructure).
- 4.2 As part of the consultation, views were therefore sought on the potential 'pattern of development' that could underpin the new plan.
- 4.3 8 potential scenarios were identified:
- Scenario 1 - Hierarchical approach
 - Scenario 2 - Main Service Centre Focus (Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton)
 - Scenario 3 - Witney Focus
 - Scenario 4 - Carterton Focus
 - Scenario 5 - Dispersed Growth
 - Scenario 6 - Village 'Clusters'
 - Scenario 7 - New Settlement
 - Scenario 8 - Public Transport Focus
- 4.4 These were included to stimulate some broad discussion around the respective merits of each approach. It was noted that the scenarios are not mutually exclusive and it may be that a combination of different approaches will ultimately be taken forward depending on feedback and evidence.
- 4.5 In purely quantitative terms, the scenarios which attracted the greatest degree of support from respondents included Scenarios 1, 2, 4 and 8, whilst the scenarios which attracted the least support were 3, 5, 6 and 7. This is illustrated overleaf.
- 4.6 It should be noted however that this only reflects the number of people who chose to use the voting button feature on the Council's digital engagement platform.
- 4.7 There were for example a further 138 separate emails received in relation to Scenario 8, expressing particular support for the reinstatement of a railway line from Carterton to Oxford.

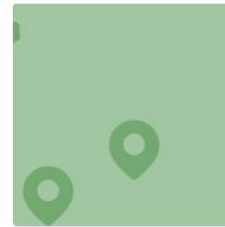


Scenario 1 - Hierarchal approach

Planning Policy West Oxfordshire District Council · 5 months ago Under Scenario 1, we...

118 25 104

SCENARIO



Scenario 2 - Main Service Centre Focus (Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton)

Planning Policy West Oxfordshire District Council · 5 months ago Scenario 2 would...

109 27 48

SCENARIO



Scenario 3 - Witney Focus

Planning Policy West Oxfordshire District Council · 5 months ago Scenario 3 would see...

42 61 57

SCENARIO



Scenario 4 - Carterton Focus

Planning Policy West Oxfordshire District Council · 5 months ago Under Scenario 4, mos...

78 29 44

SCENARIO



Scenario 5 - Dispersed Growth

Planning Policy West Oxfordshire District Council · 5 months ago Scenario 5 would...

9 140 71

SCENARIO



Scenario 6 - Village 'Clusters'

Planning Policy West Oxfordshire District Council · 5 months ago Like Scenario 5...

6 162 95

SCENARIO



Scenario 7 - New Settlement

Planning Policy West Oxfordshire District Council · 5 months ago Scenario 7 would see...

37 97 74

SCENARIO



Scenario 8 - Public Transport Focus

Planning Policy West Oxfordshire District Council · 5 months ago Under this final...

103 48 117

SCENARIO

- 4.8 Below is a summary of the responses received in response to the 8 different scenarios.

Scenario 1 – Hierarchal approach

What we said

- 4.9 Under Scenario 1, we would roll forward the strategy of the current local plan which adopts a ‘hierarchal’ approach, steering most development towards the District’s larger towns and villages, with proportionately less development taking place in smaller villages, hamlets and the open countryside.
- 4.10 Such an approach would help to reduce car use, ensure good access to services and facilities and provide good opportunities to re-use brownfield land, whilst still supporting the vitality of smaller settlements.

What you said

- 4.11 Respondents provided a wide range of feedback on Scenario 1, which advocates for a hierarchical approach to development.
- 4.12 A common theme across many responses is the concern for infrastructure and the need for it to be in place before or in conjunction with new housing development.
- 4.13 Many respondents express concerns about the strain on roads, schools, healthcare services, and sewage systems, with some specifically mentioning the inadequacy of the current infrastructure to handle additional development.
- 4.14 The preservation of the rural character of smaller villages and the avoidance of urban sprawl are also significant concerns. Respondents emphasise the need for any development in villages to be proportionate and sympathetic to their existing character.
- 4.15 The environmental impact of new developments is another recurring topic, with calls for mandatory inclusion of renewable energy sources like solar panels and sustainable water management in new housing.
- 4.16 Transport issues are frequently mentioned, with many advocating for improvements in public transport and the creation of better road networks to alleviate congestion, particularly on the A40. Many people suggest that development should be focused on areas with good public transport links.
- 4.17 Affordability and the provision of housing for first-time buyers and young families are also highlighted as important considerations.

- 4.18 Overall, while there is a strong level of support for the hierarchical approach as it builds on existing infrastructure and services, there is also a strong call for a more balanced and sustainable development strategy that addresses infrastructure needs, preserves the rural character, and includes environmental considerations.
- 4.19 There is a clear demand for development to be managed in a way that does not compromise the quality of life for existing residents or the environment.

Scenario 2 – Main Service Centre Focus (Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton)

What we said

- 4.20 This scenario would involve focusing growth more specifically at the District’s three main towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton, with less development taking place at the other larger towns and villages and continuing the current restrictive approach to development in the more rural parts of the District.
- 4.21 This approach would help to ensure good access to services and facilities, provide good opportunities for re-using brownfield land and would help to avoid the Cotswolds National Landscape where the scale and extent of development is expected to be limited.
- 4.22 It would however mean further development at Witney and Carterton (which have already accommodated significant growth in recent years) and would reduce the opportunity to provide new affordable homes in other locations.

What you said

- 4.23 Respondents have provided a range of feedback on Scenario 2 with the most common themes revolving around the need for improved infrastructure, particularly transport, to support any new housing developments.
- 4.24 Many responses emphasize the necessity of enhancing active travel opportunities and public transport to reduce car dependency and carbon emissions.
- 4.25 A significant concern is the capacity of the A40, with calls for a new river crossing and major road developments to alleviate congestion. There is also a strong view from some that without major infrastructure improvements, housing growth should be limited.
- 4.26 The need for additional services such as doctors, dentists, and schools to accompany housing growth is frequently mentioned, with some respondents noting that current facilities are already overstretched.

- 4.27 Several responses support the idea of focusing development around Carterton, Witney, and Chipping Norton, as these service centres have reasonable infrastructure and employment opportunities. However, there are also concerns about the scale of development and its integration with existing towns and villages.
- 4.28 The feedback includes a strong desire to preserve green spaces and the rural character of the area. Some respondents argue for modest development in villages to maintain sustainability and avoid forcing residents into large, impersonal developments.
- 4.29 Some views were expressed that Eynsham should not take on more development than its existing commitments, as it already has significant planned growth.
- 4.30 The potential for a Carterton-Oxford railway line is mentioned as a positive development, provided it does not lead to further overdevelopment.
- 4.31 In summary, while there is support for focused development in service centres, there is a clear demand for infrastructure improvements, particularly in transport, to precede or accompany housing growth.
- 4.32 There is also a desire to maintain the character and sustainability of smaller communities and to ensure that new developments include necessary services and do not overwhelm existing facilities.

Scenario 3 – Witney Focus

What we said

- 4.33 Scenario 3 would see most future development focused narrowly at Witney as the District's largest settlement and main service centre.
- 4.34 Witney enjoys good access to the A40 and offers a broad range of services and facilities. There are also opportunities to re-use brownfield land and development here would avoid the more sensitive Cotswolds National Landscape.
- 4.35 However, Witney has accommodated a significant amount of development in the last 20 – 30 years and there are known concerns around traffic congestion and air quality.

What you said

- 4.36 Respondents have expressed a range of concerns and suggestions regarding Scenario 3. A recurring theme is the need for infrastructure improvements before any further development takes place.
- 4.37 Many respondents are worried about the capacity of sewage facilities, the impact on local wildlife, and the loss of the area's character. There is a strong sentiment against overdevelopment and a desire to preserve the natural beauty and identity of the town.
- 4.38 The inadequacy of enforcing and monitoring Section 106 obligations is highlighted, with a call for these obligations to be fulfilled before construction begins. The potential combination of s106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is also discussed.
- 4.39 Transport is a major concern, with many comments on the inadequacy of the A40 for current traffic, let alone additional loads from new developments. The lack of alternative river crossings and the need for a multi-centre approach to avoid creating 'one big town' are also mentioned.
- 4.40 Some respondents agree with the need for a fair distribution of growth across multiple service centres. The need for improved sewage works and infrastructure before allowing new developments is strongly emphasised.
- 4.41 There are some calls for a focus on Witney due to its services and access, which could reduce transport on congested roads. However, concerns about housing being built on areas near rivers causing downstream problems and the lack of amenities for new builds are prevalent.
- 4.42 The lack of suitable educational placements for young SEN adults and the strain on local services are also highlighted. The use of brownfield sites for development is suggested as a preferable alternative to new estates.
- 4.43 In summary, respondents are calling for a halt to further development until infrastructure issues are addressed, a fair distribution of growth, and the preservation of the local environment and character.
- 4.44 There is a strong demand for improvements in transport, education, health services, and community amenities to support existing and future residents.

Scenario 4 – Carterton Focus

What we said

- 4.45 Under Scenario 4, most future development would be focused narrowly at Carterton as the District’s second largest town and service centre. The town offers a good range of services and facilities, does not suffer from significant traffic congestion and provides good opportunities for the re-use of brownfield land. It also lies away from the more sensitive Cotswolds National Landscape.
- 4.46 However, there is no direct A-road access and there are relatively few job opportunities, leading to out-commuting. The impact of noise and lighting from RAF Brize Norton has previously been raised and focusing development in one location would naturally limit the opportunity to provide new homes elsewhere in the District.

What you said

- 4.47 Respondents have expressed a wide range of opinions and concerns regarding the development of Carterton in the context of Scenario 4.
- 4.48 The overarching theme is a strong sentiment that infrastructure and public services must be significantly improved before any further expansion of housing. Many respondents are worried about the current inadequacies in healthcare, particularly the lack of doctors and the long wait times for appointments. There is also a call for more variety in shopping options and the need for a bank and better pharmacy services.
- 4.49 Transport is another major concern, with respondents highlighting the poor public transport links, the absence of a quick bus service to Oxford, and the lack of rail connections.
- 4.50 The existing roads are described as congested, and there is a demand for better road connections to the A40 and beyond.
- 4.51 The idea of a new rail line from Oxford to Carterton and Witney is often mentioned as a potential improvement.
- 4.52 The Town Centre is considered too small for the current population, and there is a desire for its expansion and revitalization. The loss of various shops and services over the years is noted, and there is a call for the development of more convenience and dining options, as well as leisure activities like a cinema.
- 4.53 There is a strong sentiment against developing on greenfield sites, especially if it would lead to the merging of Carterton with neighbouring villages, creating urban sprawl.

- 4.54 Instead, there is a preference for using brownfield sites within Carterton for development. However, some respondents point out that there are limited brownfield sites available, and those that are available are not large enough for significant development.
- 4.55 The need for more employment land is also mentioned, with some noting that there is an imbalance between homes and jobs in the town. The potential for light industry to provide employment for people leaving the forces is suggested.
- 4.56 In terms of housing, there is a call for high-density, small, affordable, and well-designed housing to improve the aesthetic and vibrancy of the town. However, there is also a concern that the town is already overburdened with housing and that more housing would exacerbate existing problems.
- 4.57 Overall, respondents are calling for a holistic approach to development that addresses current deficiencies in infrastructure and public services, improves transport, revitalises the Town Centre, and uses land responsibly.
- 4.58 There is a desire for the town to develop in a way that is sustainable and enhances the quality of life for its residents.

Scenario 5 – Dispersed Growth

What we said

- 4.59 Scenario 5 would involve a more ‘dispersed’ approach to the future pattern of development with smaller towns and villages expected to accommodate a greater proportion of future growth than has previously been the case.
- 4.60 This could facilitate housing delivery (smaller sites often being quicker to bring forward) provide a broader range of opportunities and offer a greater degree of local influence (e.g. through neighbourhood planning).
- 4.61 However, it could place pressure on the more sensitive Cotswolds National Landscape and potentially lead to greater reliance on the private car and increased carbon emissions. There is also a risk of cumulative strain being placed on local infrastructure.

What you said

- 4.62 Respondents have expressed strong concerns about the proposed development of dispersed growth in rural villages. The overwhelming sentiment is that such development would be detrimental to the character and infrastructure of the villages.

- 4.67 Many responses highlight the lack of adequate facilities and infrastructure to support additional housing, including concerns about increased traffic, inadequate public transport, and strained local services such as sewage, medical facilities, and schools.
- 4.68 Respondents are particularly worried about the impact on the environment, with increased carbon emissions and potential loss of biodiversity due to more car usage as public transport options are limited or unreliable.
- 4.69 There is also a fear that the rural landscape and the unique character of villages will be lost if they are transformed into small conurbations or towns.
- 4.70 Several responses call for a focus on fixing existing infrastructure before any new development is considered, suggesting that proper sewage facilities, alternative transport access, and well-maintained footpaths are necessary pre-requisites.
- 4.71 The idea of proportionate development is also mentioned, with suggestions that any new housing should be in keeping with the existing scale and character of the village.
- 4.72 A few responses suggest that instead of rural development, towns that already have the necessary infrastructure should be the focus for new housing, which would be less damaging to the environment and less disruptive to smaller communities.
- 4.73 There is also a call for a more level playing field in development, with some villages within the Cotswolds National Landscape being considered for less development than those outside, which is seen as unfair.
- 4.74 In summary, the responses indicate a strong preference for preserving the rural character of villages, improving infrastructure, and focusing development on urban areas where facilities and services are already in place.
- 4.75 There is a clear call for sustainable development that does not overburden local services or the environment.

Scenario 6 – Village ‘Clusters’

What we said

- 4.76 A similar approach to Scenario 5, with future growth being more dispersed than previously but instead of villages being treated separately, they would be considered collectively in ‘clusters’ based on the services and facilities they are able to cumulatively offer.

- 4.77 Such an approach would reflect national policy which recognises that development in one village may support services in a village nearby. It could also support increased community cohesion and bring forward opportunities in locations not previously considered – thus helping them to thrive.
- 4.78 However, it could also lead to concerns around the loss of settlement identity and encourage car use by allowing development in locations that are often poorly served by public transport, walking and cycling.

What you said

- 4.79 Respondents have expressed strong opposition to Scenario 6, which involves the development of village clusters. The predominant concerns revolve around the potential loss of individual village identities, increased urban sprawl, and the erosion of the rural character of West Oxfordshire.
- 4.80 Many responses also highlight the lack of infrastructure to support such growth, with frequent mentions of inadequate public transport, road congestion, and insufficient local facilities such as schools, medical centres and shops.
- 4.81 Residents are particularly concerned about the strain on existing services and the environment, including the handling of sewage and the impact on local rivers. The increase in housing without corresponding investment in infrastructure is seen as a significant issue, with many villages already experiencing growth without the necessary support systems.
- 4.82 The concept of 'village clusters' is criticized for potentially leading to alienation between villages rather than fostering community cohesion. The lack of economically viable public transport options is also a concern, as it would likely lead to increased car use and a higher carbon footprint.
- 4.83 Several responses suggest that development should focus on existing towns with the necessary infrastructure, rather than small villages that are ill-equipped to handle growth.
- 4.84 The idea of 'clustering' is seen by some as a potential backdoor for additional house building, leading to confusion and potential conflict over which Parish Council should make decisions.
- 4.85 Overall, the responses indicate a strong desire to preserve the unique identities and rural nature of West Oxfordshire's villages. There is a call for more thoughtful, sustainable development that respects the character of the area and addresses the infrastructure needs before any new housing is built.

Scenario 7 – New Settlement

What we said

- 4.86 Under this scenario, future growth would be focused primarily at a large, purpose-built new settlement somewhere in the District. The principle of such an approach is supported by national policy and has already been established in West Oxfordshire through Salt Cross Garden Village. It also provides the opportunity to deliver significant investment in infrastructure and place-making as well as reducing development pressures on other parts of the District.
- 4.87 However, development at this scale takes considerable time to come forward as larger sites tend to be more complex to assemble and deliver. There is also inevitably the potential for significant environmental, social and economic impacts.

What you said

- 4.88 Respondents have expressed a range of concerns and ideas regarding the development of a new settlement and also the expansion of existing settlements in West Oxfordshire.
- 4.89 A recurring theme is the need for adequate infrastructure to support new housing developments. Many responses highlight the lack of healthcare facilities, schools, supermarkets, and water sources to accommodate the growing population. There is also some scepticism about the delivery of promised infrastructure improvements, such as additional river crossings and road upgrades.
- 4.90 Several respondents question the need for another new settlement like Salt Cross Garden Village, pointing out the long-term nature of such projects and their impact on green spaces and food production. Others suggest that before committing to new settlements, the outcomes of Salt Cross should be evaluated.
- 4.91 The idea of a new settlement is of more interest to others, with the potential to plan infrastructure from the start. However, there is a strong call for enforcement of planning requirements to ensure developers deliver on their promises.
- 4.92 Concerns about the environmental impact of new developments are also mentioned, with respondents emphasising the need to preserve green spaces and habitats. The importance of public transport and reducing reliance on private cars is also noted.
- 4.93 Some responses call for a more strategic approach to development, suggesting that the focus should be on where new facilities can be built rather than just determining the number of houses needed. The idea of using brownfield sites and preserving the rural nature of the Cotswolds is preferred by some.

- 4.94 In summary, respondents are concerned about the impact of new housing developments on infrastructure, the environment, and the character of existing communities.
- 4.95 There are calls for careful planning, enforcement of developer commitments, and consideration of the long-term implications of new settlements. There is a desire for sustainable development that includes robust public transport and preserves green spaces, with some scepticism about the ability of the Council and developers to deliver on these goals.

Scenario 8 – Public Transport Focus

What we said

- 4.96 This final scenario would see future development focused along key public transport corridors and around public transport hubs - both existing and potential (e.g. taking account of the potential for a new railway line solution from Carterton and Witney to Oxford).
- 4.97 Such an approach would encourage modal shift away from the private car, thereby reducing carbon emissions and alleviate pressure on the A40 which is already predicted to be at capacity by 2031, with car journeys taking around 30 minutes longer than at present.
- 4.98 However, coverage of public transport across the District is variable and much of the Cotswold rail line runs through the Cotswolds National Landscape where the scale and extent of development is expected to be limited. The potential Carterton – Oxford rail line is also at the feasibility study stage only.

What you said

- 4.99 The responses to Scenario 8 reveal a complex array of opinions.
- 4.100 Many respondents support the idea of new housing being built where there is good public transport provision, but there is also a concern that the current provision is inadequate and that significant investment would be needed before new housing developments.
- 4.101 There is a clear call for infrastructure improvements, including better bus services, especially in rural areas and for cycling and walking paths. The cost of public transport and its reliability are also mentioned as factors that need to be addressed to encourage its use over private cars.

- 4.102 The most recurrent theme across the responses is the need for improved public transport infrastructure, particularly the restoration of a railway link between Carterton and Oxford via Witney and Eynsham, which is seen as a potential solution to alleviate the congestion on the A40.
- 4.103 The potential for a new railway line is met with both enthusiasm and scepticism. While some see it as a green and fast transport solution, others question the financial viability of such a project and whether it would actually lead to urban sprawl and loss of rural character.
- 4.104 Concerns are raised about the actual number of houses needed to fund it and whether developers would support the necessary level of investment.
- 4.105 Concerns about the environmental impact of new developments and the need to protect rural areas are also prominent. There is a sense of urgency for solutions that can be implemented in the short to medium term, rather than waiting decades for a perfect solution.
- 4.106 The inadequacy of current public transport provisions is a recurring concern, with many calling for immediate improvements to bus services, particularly in rural areas.
- 4.107 Many respondents are in favour of developing housing around existing and potential public transport hubs, such as railway stations, to alleviate traffic and promote sustainable travel.
- 4.108 The need for infrastructure development, including sewage, water, and healthcare, to precede or coincide with new housing is also emphasised throughout the responses received. Responses also touch on broader issues such as the affordability of housing, the role of developers in funding infrastructure, and the need for a more holistic approach.
- 4.109 Overall, while there is a consensus on the need for improved public transport and infrastructure before further housing development, opinions vary on the best approach to achieve this.
- 4.110 While there is support for the idea of a public transport-focused development strategy, there is also a clear demand for a realistic, financially viable, and immediate plan to address the existing infrastructure deficits and improve public transport services across West Oxfordshire.
- 4.111 There are also some views that the focus on Oxford-centric transport solutions neglects the needs of those travelling in other directions or using the A40 as a through route.

5. Sites, Ideas and Opportunities

- 5.1 The third aspect of the consultation was an open invitation for stakeholders to put forward their thoughts on how land in the district might be used in the future such as new housing, employment, infrastructure, community use, green space, nature recovery and renewable energy.
- 5.2 A large number of suggestions were put forward, ranging from specific sites to more general ideas and opportunities.
- 5.3 A schedule of these is attached at Appendix 1.
- 5.4 The majority of sites which were put forward relate to housing and employment uses and the relative merits of these will be assessed as part of the evidence base underpinning the new Local Plan. This will include further engagement with Town and Parish Councils.
- 5.5 The various other suggestions received will also be taken into account through the development of the plan itself and through the preparation of relevant supporting evidence including in relation to infrastructure planning.

6. Other General Feedback

6.1 As with any consultation, a number of other, more general comments were also received which are very helpful as the scope and content of the new Local Plan starts to take shape.

6.2 Key points to note are summarised below.

General Comments Received

6.3 Respondents expressed a variety of concerns and proposals regarding the development and planning policies in their area. The most recurrent themes include the need for improved infrastructure to support new housing, the preservation of green spaces and the countryside, and the prioritization of brownfield sites for development.

6.4 Many respondents emphasise the importance of infrastructure development, such as roads, public transport, healthcare, and education, before or alongside new housing projects.

6.5 There is a strong sentiment against building on greenfield sites, with a preference for using brownfield locations and retrofitting existing buildings with solar panels.

6.6 Concerns about the impact of development on the natural environment and local wildlife are also prevalent, with calls for sustainable farming methods and the protection of biodiversity.

6.7 Transport issues are a major focus, with numerous calls for the restoration of the Witney-Carterton-Oxford railway line to alleviate traffic problems on the A40 and to provide a green transport solution. The need for better public transport services and the promotion of active travel, such as walking and cycling, are also highlighted.

6.8 Several responses address the issue of housing, advocating for the construction of affordable homes tailored to the needs of local residents rather than serving as second homes or holiday rentals. There is also a call for policies that prevent the monopolization of land development by single entities, which can hinder the timely delivery of housing.

6.9 The preservation of the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site and its setting is another concern, with objections to development that could harm its significance.

6.10 In summary, respondents are advocating for a balanced approach to local planning that prioritises sustainable development, protects the environment, and ensures that infrastructure keeps pace with housing growth. They are seeking a future where green spaces are conserved, local needs are met, and the unique character of their communities is maintained.

7. Stakeholder Events

- 7.1 To complement the digital engagement which took place, a series of in-person events were run including public exhibitions and workshop-type discussions.
- 7.2 Two sessions were held with Town and Parish Councils on the 10th and 18th October respectively, with both sessions stimulating a good level of debate focused on the three main aspects of the consultation.
- 7.3 Tables were facilitated by Officers and notes taken on the main topics of discussion. The table notes for the session held on 10th October are attached at Appendix 2 and for the session on the 18th October at Appendix 3.
- 7.4 A further District Council Member workshop was held on the 26th October and stimulated an equally useful level of debate and discussion. Again, tables were facilitated by Officers and notes taken (see Appendix 4).

8. Next Steps

- 8.1 The 'Your Place, Your Plan' focused consultation attracted a very good level of response and generated valuable feedback which will now be used by Officers to start shaping the structure and content of the new Local Plan.
- 8.2 In terms of next steps, it is envisaged that a further Regulation 18 consultation will take place in June 2024.
- 8.3 The primary purpose of this further consultation will be to set out a series of preferred policy approaches drawing on the feedback received to date and supporting technical evidence.
- 8.4 Beyond this, Officers hope to be in a position to formally consult on the final draft plan in late autumn 2024 and then submit it for examination in spring 2025.

Appendix 1 – Schedule of submissions (sites, ideas and opportunities)

Agent/Landowner	Site name/address	Site Size (where specified)	Proposed use
Abbeymill Homes	Land rear of 44 Common Road, North Leigh	0.6 ha	Residential – up to 15 dwellings
Abbeymill Homes	Land east of Greenwich Lane, Leafield	Not specified	Residential
Ainscough Strategic	Land north of the Worcester Road, Chipping Norton	8.5 ha	Residential
Ainscough Strategic	Land east of Witney Road, Ducklington (The Moors)	Not specified	Residential – 120 dwellings
Arc Planning on behalf of Socially Conscious Capital	Land west of Curbridge	31 ha	Residential – 400 dwellings
Armstrong Rigg on behalf of Manor Oak Homes	Land south of New Yatt Road, North Leigh	1.6 ha	Residential – 43 dwellings
Arron Twamley Planning on behalf of Mac Mic	Land at the Downs, Standlake	29 ha	Residential – 490 dwellings
Berkeley Strategic	West Eynsham SDA	Not specified	Extension of existing West Eynsham SDA boundary to enable provision of western spine road
Bluestone Planning on behalf of landowner	Land at the corner of School Lane, Finstock	0.96 ha	Residential

Agent/Landowner	Site name/address	Site Size (where specified)	Proposed use
Bluestone Planning on behalf of Hall Group Ltd	Burford Laundry, Tannery Yard, Burford	0.31 ha	Residential
Bluestone Planning on behalf of Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance	Glebe Field, north of Ascott Road, Shipton under Wychwood	0.93 ha	Residential – 26 dwellings
Bluestone Planning on behalf of Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance	Glebe Field, south of Bampton Road, Aston	0.77 ha	Residential – 16 to 20 dwellings
Bluestone Planning on behalf of Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance	Rectory and Glebe Field, south of Enstone Road, Westcott Barton	0.40 ha	Residential – 8 to 10 dwellings
Brown and Co.	Land at West End Farm, Shilton	1.34 ha	Residential – 25 dwellings
Brown and Co.	Land west of Shilton Road, Carterton	25.27 ha	Residential
Brown and Co.	Land adjacent to Rectory Farm, Alvescot	2.77 ha	Residential – 50 dwellings
Bryan McNamara	Land south of Old Witney Road, Eynsham	Not specified	Residential
Carter Jonas on behalf of Bloombridge	Land at Kilkenny Farm, north of Carterton	40 ha	Residential – 750+ dwellings
Carter Jonas on behalf of David Wilson Homes	Land south of Witney at Ducklington	104 ha	Residential – up to 1,800 dwellings
Carter Jonas on behalf of landowner	Land south of Sheep Street, Burford	20 ha	Residential

Agent/Landowner	Site name/address	Site Size (where specified)	Proposed use
Carter Jonas on behalf of the Mawle Trustees	Land east of Witney	Not specified	Residential, community and employment
Chadwick Town Planning on behalf of Lincoln College	Land at Station Road, Kingham	2.99 ha	Residential
Cornbury Park Estate	Land north of High Street, Finstock	Not specified	Residential
Cornbury Park Estate	Land east of London Lane, Ascott under Wychwood	Not specified	Residential
David Locke Associates for Hallam Land	Land north of Holliers Crescent, Middle Barton	8.72 ha	Residential – 80 dwellings
David Locke Associates for Hallam Land	Land west of Downs Road, Witney	32.8 ha	Residential – up to 600 dwellings
David Locke Associates for Hallam Land	Land west of Witney, south of Burford Road	51.6 ha	Residential, community and employment – 700 dwellings with 4 – 8 ha of employment
David Wilson Homes – Southern	Land north of Price Way, Carterton	18.16 ha	Residential
Ken Dijkstra Planning	Land at Milking Lane, Witney	7.86 ha	Residential – 190 dwellings
Edgars Ltd on behalf of landowner	Enstone Business Park	16.5 ha	Intensification and expansion of Enstone Business Park
Edgars Ltd on behalf of R&RW Homes	Land north of Milton Road, Shipton under Wychwood	1.4 ha	Residential – 22 dwellings

Agent/Landowner	Site name/address	Site Size (where specified)	Proposed use
Framptons	Land east of Worton Road, Middle Barton	Not specified	Residential
Gladman Developments	Land at Barnard Gate	304.21 ha	Mixed-use residential
Gladman Developments	Land north of Burford Road, Witney	61 ha	Residential – up to 900 dwellings
Graham Soame Planning and Development Ltd.	Land south of Combe Road, Stonesfield	Not specified	Residential
Green and Co.	Common Farm, Common Road, North Leigh	Not specified	Residential – 8 dwellings
Hextall Twiddy on behalf of landowner	Land north of Main Road, Curbridge	0.93 ha	Residential (self-build)
Hextall Twiddy on behalf of landowner	Land west of Bridewell Close, North Leigh	3.2 ha	Residential
Hourigan Planning on behalf of Anwyl Land Ltd	Land west of Mount Owen Road, Bampton	10.27 ha	Residential – 75 dwellings approx.
Jake Collinge Planning	Land at Foxburrow Lane, Hailey	Not specified	Residential – 15 plots for self-build / custom-build housing
Jake Collinge Planning	Land south of Main Road, Curbridge	Not specified	Residential
Jonathan Hayes	Land at Upavon Way (Sunset View) Carterton	Not specified	Residential

Agent/Landowner	Site name/address	Site Size (where specified)	Proposed use
JPPC on behalf of Adalta Real	Land north of Chapel House Farm, Chipping Norton	2.3 ha	Employment comprising mixed-use commercial
Land and Mineral Management on behalf of Smiths (Gloucester)	Former Enstone Quarry, Enstone	9 ha	Employment – industrial and commercial
Lichfields on behalf of Jansons Property	West Eynsham SDA	Not specified	Extension of existing SDA boundary to include land at the Long Barn
Louise Perrin	Land north of Eynsham Road, Cassington	2.81 ha	Residential
Marrons on behalf of Bellway Homes Ltd.	Land south of Shilton	25.2 ha	Residential
Marrons on behalf of Bellway Homes Ltd.	Land to the west of Shilton Road, Carterton	5.6 ha	Residential
McLoughlin Planning for Castlethorpe Homes	Land west of Hailey Road, Hailey	1.2 ha	Residential – 25 – 30 dwellings
McLoughlin Planning for Mackenzie Miller Homes	Land south of High Street, Milton u Wychwood	10 ha	Residential – 35 dwellings
Mike Gilbert Planning on behalf of the landowners	Land rear of 27, 29 and 33 Corbett Road, Carterton	0.8 ha	Residential – 12 houses (or greater number of flats)
Nexus Planning for CEG and the Blenheim Estate	Land at Hanborough Station	33 ha	Residential – 600 dwellings

Agent/Landowner	Site name/address	Site Size (where specified)	Proposed use
Nexus Planning for Lone Star Land and Graftongate	Land east and north of Carterton	Not specified	Employment
Nexus Planning on behalf of Gleeson Land	Land east of Burford Road, Chipping Norton	5.1 ha	Residential – 104 dwellings
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Land at North Farm, Aston (Site A)	0.7 ha	Residential
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Land at North Farm, Aston (Site B)	0.96 ha	Residential
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Land at North Farm, Aston (Site C)	1.09 ha	Residential
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Land at North Farm, Aston (Site D)	17.4 ha	Residential
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Burford Wysdom Caravan Park	0.5 ha	Residential
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Land at Ticknell Piece, Charlbury	1.85 ha	Residential
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Land at Banbury Road, Chipping Norton	0.4 ha	Residential
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Rockhill Farm, Chipping Norton	1.2 ha	Residential
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Land at Green Lane, Milton u Wychwood	0.45 ha	Residential

Agent/Landowner	Site name/address	Site Size (where specified)	Proposed use
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Land north of Burford School, Burford	3.23 ha	Residential
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Land at Fairspear Road, Leafield	0.3 ha	Residential
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Land at Dark Lane, Witney	0.2 ha	Residential
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Land north of Medcroft Road, Tackley	0.27 ha	Residential
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Land south of Medcroft Road, Tackley	0.37 ha	Residential
Oxfordshire County Council Property and Estates	Land west of Rousham Road, Tackley	2.9 ha	Residential
Pegasus Group on behalf of Spitfire Homes	Land east of Wroslyn Road (and south of Pigeon House Lane) Freeland	5.3 ha	Residential – 80 dwellings
Persimmon Homes Wessex	Land south of Hailey Road, Witney	5.5 ha	Residential – 130 dwellings
Planning Prospects on behalf of landowner	Land between Banbury Road and Oxford Road, Enstone	Not specified	Residential
Planning Prospects on behalf of landowner	Land at Chapel Lane, Enstone	0.65 ha	Residential – 8 dwellings
Rectory Homes	Land north of Woodstock Road, Stonesfield	6.2 ha	Residential – 50 dwellings approx.

Agent/Landowner	Site name/address	Site Size (where specified)	Proposed use
Ridge Planning	Land west of Common Road, North Leigh	3.85 ha	Residential – 88 dwellings
Robert Wilson	Land north-west of Stanton Harcourt	Not specified	Residential
Rural Solutions on behalf of the Eynsham Park Estate	The Sawmill, West of Cuckoo Lane	2 ha	Commercial/tourism/leisure
Rural Solutions on behalf of the Eynsham Park Estate	North Leigh Football Club	6 ha	Residential and/or tourism (with football club relocated)
Rural Solutions on behalf of the Eynsham Park Estate	Land south of A4095, North Leigh	7 ha	Relocation of football club with ancillary / supporting uses
Rural Solutions on behalf of the Eynsham Park Estate	Osney Hill Farm Business Centre, south of A4095	2.25 ha	Employment – expansion of existing business centre
Rural Solutions on behalf of the Eynsham Park Estate	Land at Osney, north of A4095	37 ha	Renewable energy (solar)
Rural Solutions on behalf of the Eynsham Park Estate	Land south of Freeland	3 ha	Mixed-use including commercial or tourism/leisure with residential
Rural Solutions on behalf of the Eynsham Park Estate	Land south of Freeland	7.5 ha	Residential with strategic public open space
Rural Solutions on behalf of the Eynsham Park Estate	Land north of the A40, west of Barnard Gate	40 ha	Renewable energy (solar)
Rural Solutions on behalf of the Eynsham Park Estate	Land at Barnard Gate	0.6 ha	Residential (custom build or affordable) and/or holiday cottages
Rural Solutions on behalf of the Eynsham Park Estate	Paddock off Station Road, South Leigh	0.4 ha	Residential
Rural Solutions on behalf of the Eynsham Park Estate	Land off Station Road, South Leigh	0.6 ha	Residential

Agent/Landowner	Site name/address	Site Size (where specified)	Proposed use
Rural Solutions on behalf of the Eynsham Park Estate	Land off Chapel Road, South Leigh	1.8 ha	Residential
Rural Solutions on behalf of the Eynsham Park Estate	Land at Church End, South Leigh	0.9 ha	Residential
Ruth Bailey	Land rear of 80 Brize Norton Road, Minster Lovell	2.55 ha	Residential – 40 dwellings
Savills on behalf of Christ Church and Bloor Homes	Land north of Brize Norton and Carterton (Foxbury Farm)	275 ha	Mixed use including residential - up to 3,000 dwellings
Savills on behalf of the Church Commissioners for England	Land west of Station Road, Bampton	33.27 ha	Residential
Savills on behalf of the Church Commissioners for England	Land east of Station Road, Bampton	34.2 ha	Residential
Savills on behalf of Harper Crewe (Charlbury) Ltd	Land off Forest Road, Charlbury	Not specified	Residential – 37 dwellings
Savills on behalf of landowner	Newland Sports Ground, Witney	Not specified	Residential
Savills on behalf of Lioncourt Strategic Land	Land west of Common Road, North Leigh	11.33 ha	Residential – 70 to 150 dwellings
Savills on behalf of Mac Mic	Land at Curbridge Downs Farm, Witney	22.55 ha	Residential – up to 400 dwellings
Savills on behalf of the landowner	Land south of B4027, Wootton	5.5 ha	Residential – 40 to 50 dwellings

Agent/Landowner	Site name/address	Site Size (where specified)	Proposed use
SF Planning	Land north-west of High Street, Milton under Wychwood	Not specified	Residential
SF Planning	Land off Ticknell Piece Road, Charlbury	1.96 ha	Residential
SF Planning	Land north-east of Fairspear Road, Leafield	0.29 ha	Residential
Stantec on behalf of Lagan Homes	Land at Jefferson's Piece, Charlbury	1.8 ha	Residential – 43 dwellings
Stantec on behalf of Sharba Homes	Land south-west of Charlbury Road, Hailey	5.3 ha	Residential – 50 dwellings
Sworders on behalf of the landowner	Land south-east of Church Street, Kingham (Lockwoods Orchard)	3.5 ha	Residential – 20 dwellings
Terence o Rourke on behalf of the Blenheim Estate	Land to the north-west of the Green, Cassington	3 ha	Residential
Terence o Rourke on behalf of the Blenheim Estate	Land east of the Green, East End	6.2 ha	Residential
Terence o Rourke on behalf of the Blenheim Estate	Land north of Stonesfield Road, Combe	7.3 ha	Residential
Terence o Rourke on behalf of the Blenheim Estate	Land north of Cassington	18.8 ha	Residential
Terence o Rourke on behalf of the Blenheim Estate	Land at Alma Grove Farm, Combe	4.9 ha	Residential

Agent/Landowner	Site name/address	Site Size (where specified)	Proposed use
Terence o Rourke on behalf of the Blenheim Estate	Land south of Charity Farm, Stonesfield	1.8 ha	Residential
Terence o Rourke on behalf of the Blenheim Estate	Land north and east of Banbury Road, Woodstock	59.8 ha	Residential
Terence o Rourke on behalf of the Blenheim Estate	Land to the south-west of Charlbury	21.9 ha	Residential
Terence o Rourke on behalf of the Blenheim Estate	Land at (west of) Cassington	20.6 ha	Residential
Terence o Rourke on behalf of Pye Homes	Land east of Wroslyn Road, Freeland	5.15 ha	Residential
Turley on behalf of Bewley Homes	Land south of Aston Road, Bampton	9.3 ha	Residential – 60 dwellings
Turley on behalf of L&Q Estates	Land north of Aston Road, Bampton	20.64 ha	Residential – up to 300 dwellings
Turley on behalf of Rainier Developments	Land adjacent to East Chipping Norton SDA	22.64 ha	Residential – 450 dwellings
Turley on behalf of Victoria Land	Land south of Standlake Road, Ducklington	1.88 ha	Residential – 40 dwellings approx.
Union4 Planning on behalf of Welbeck CP	Land to the north/west of Garnes Lane, Fulbrook	0.3 ha	Residential – 4 dwellings

Agent/Landowner	Site name/address	Site Size (where specified)	Proposed use
Union4 Planning on behalf of Welbeck CP	Land to the north of the A361, Fulbrook	Not specified	Residential
Walsingham Planning on behalf of Catesby Estates	Land east of Mount Owen Road, Bampton	5.78ha	Residential – 100 dwellings
Walsingham Planning on behalf of Catesby Estates	Land west of Minster Lovell	73 ha	Mixed-use including 950 – 1,250 dwellings
Walsingham Planning on behalf of Obsidian	Land west of London Lane Ascott u Wychwood	3.7 ha	Residential
Walsingham Planning on behalf of Obsidian	Land west of Burford Road, Chipping Norton	34 ha	Residential – 200 dwellings
WWA on behalf of David Carrington	Land north of the A40 adjoining Esso service station	4.7 ha	Residential
WWA on behalf of Kinglerlee Homes	Land east of Main Road, Stanton Harcourt	1.69 ha	Residential – 20 dwellings
WWA on behalf of Oxford Diocese	Land adjoining St. Giles Church, The Downs, Standlake	9.57 ha	Residential

Other general suggestions

- Pedestrian/cycle route to allow safe cycle commuting towards Abingdon
- Converting the site of Judd's Garage on the A44 road near Duke of Marlborough pub for another small business opportunity
- Improved cycle provision between Witney and Wolvercote
- Cycle and pedestrian provision from Salt Cross Garden Village to Hanborough Station via Lower Road
- Community hydropower on the Upper Thames weirs
- Restore Thames path along the Thames
- Footpath from Bradwell Village to Burford
- Truckstop/garage/shop at Stanton Harcourt for lorry drivers
- Horticulture and regeneration north and east of Brize Norton
- Cemetery expansion – Stanton Harcourt
- Cycle Path along A4095 at North Leigh
- More footpaths around Wootton
- The larger settlements should all be fully connected by safe cycle ways
- Re-direct through traffic around Chipping Norton
- Converting the recently Wootton by Wootton School for a blend of uses either for social uses such as education skill training, office space, café etc.
- Better public access for unpowered craft to the Thames
- Pedestrian and bicycle bridge at Bablock Hythe
- Transport hub for Carterton, Brize, Curbridge and other nearby villages.
- More effective use of landfill area – Stanton Harcourt
- Greater understanding of Oxfordshire's Nature Recovery Network
- A new sewage plant in Church Hanborough
- Better sewerage infrastructure for Long Hanborough
- Relocate existing Boxing Club from Bampton to Carterton
- Non traffic light controlled access across the Thames at Newbridge
- White lining at the edge and/or centre of Buckland Road
- Exploiting Big Chalk initiative for an ambitious 'Wychwood Forest' vision

- A village car park for parents collecting from school in North Leigh
- Coach Parking and Visitor Welcome Area – Langdale Hall Witney
- All green areas could include both orchard trees and community vegetable and wild flower gardens in a part of the area that would not prevent balls games etc. Examples are the green running up from witney town centre, Eastfield road, Taphouse avenue, Burwell meadow, Deer Park, The leys, Langle Common, Next to Woodgreen school playing fields, Madley park school, Windrush valley. ALSO in Witney even smaller green spaces on places such as Thorney Leys, Burwell Drive, Burwell meadow, Windrush place.
- Recreation lake off Stanton Harcourt Road
- Link the current bypass roundabout to the south leigh bend, or even across to the A40
- Cycle path to Eynsham around land approved for gravel extraction
- Eynsham to Botley Community Path
- Improved leisure facilities at Greystones, Chipping Norton
- Elevated Train/Light Railway to link Standlake, Northmoor, Stanton, Eynsham
- Renewable heat network for Clanfield
- Off road option to connect Fawler with Finstock station
- Footpath from Bampton to Bampton Garden Plants
- Traffic prioritisation in north of Chipping Norton
- Cycle path on verge space from Stanton to Standlake
- Phone/communications tower at Stanton Harcourt Church
- Reedbed/wetland buffer zones between local sewerage works and the Evenlode river

Appendix 2 – Table Notes from Town and Parish Council Event – 10 October 2023

TABLE 1 – Summary notes

Parishes: Kingham, Swinbrook and Widford, Astall Leigh, Chilson, Charlbury

Topic 1 – Draft Local Plan Objectives

- Design code and local vernacular – should strengthen with new policies;
- Scope to look at what is/is not acceptable for listed/historic buildings and in conservation areas;
- Even within the historic core we need to move towards zero carbon;
- Should integrity of historic environment trump other considerations, especially climate change/energy efficiency measures e.g. charging points – should they be allowed? Ugly on the highway;
- What is more important – the ‘look’ of the built environment or future proofing? Agreed it is a nuanced judgement – difficult to have a blanket policy;
- WODC needs to be cleverer than current Local Plan and better define infrastructure need – provide hooks for negotiating for infrastructure from the outset – less room for developers to ‘wriggle’ out of their obligations;
- Infrastructure delivery helps to integrate new development with existing settlement – it is an opportunity. Larger scale developments have to be designed as something more than a high-density housing estate bolted on to the side of a settlement;
- Grampian conditions – make use in terms of water/waste resource investment in particular;
- Thames Water – wide discussion, not just about water quality and sewage treatment, but also working closer with them;
- Charlbury – in order to support the community we need affordable housing – can we take the objectives further and restrict large houses?
- Design code could promote smaller houses as these would better help meet housing demand and also be consistent with historic vernacular/patterns of development;
- We tend to overlook the hideous post-war development in our villages – could this be redeveloped with denser, more energy efficient properties?
- Encourage delivery of affordable rent properties;
- Issue of second homes/Airbnb although the former is less corrosive to communities especially if the owners use them regularly;
- Consider option of Council Tax on second homes to offset the negative impacts – funds go back into the community the property is located in.

Topic 2 – Pattern of Development

- Unanimous support for current Hierarchical approach;
- Benefit of hierarchical approach is the role this plays in supporting the facilities within the rural service centres e.g. Charlbury, Bampton, Burford, Woodstock. The rural service centres themselves could not sustain these services – rely on the surrounding villages to do so;
- Hierarchical approach but no development within the floodplain. NB Factor in implications of climate change;
- What are the demands we are responding to when considering patterns of development?
- Empty offices – an opportunity for town centre living;

- Discomfort with ‘new town’ approach;
- Within the 570 per annum we need to prioritise meeting WODC need not that of Oxford;
- Limited public transport means a challenge to reduce reliance on cars;
- Road system – the challenge lies in getting past Oxford rather than trying to get into Oxford;
- No to village clusters;
- No support for new housing estates with their own services – sucks the life out of village/town centres;
- Challenge – how to integrate the housing in with the existing – so as not to ‘dilute’ the character of the settlement – the hierarchical approach would be the most sympathetic option to achieve this.

Topic 3 – Call for Sites, Ideas and Opportunities

- Supporting land for agriculture/food production is a laudable objective although not at the expense of wildlife and we should not pretend that it is compatible with farming on the site;
- Seek opportunities for habitat connectivity at a local and strategic scale;
- Solar fields not supported – certainly not while new development is constructed without renewable energy and high levels of energy efficiency.

TABLE 2 – Summary notes

Parishes: Chastleton, Churchill, Bruern, Ascott, Milton

Topic 1 – Draft Local Plan Objectives

- Nothing objectionable about the objectives but what do these mean in reality?
- There are quite a lot of objectives – could these be condensed down?
- How will the various objectives be prioritised?
- Infrastructure not given a strong enough emphasis in the objectives. Where is this mentioned?
- Need vastly improved public transport across the District as a whole but particularly in the villages;
- Water environment is critically important. There is great concern regarding sewerage and also flooding;
- Grampian conditions – felt that no houses should be constructed until the necessary upgrades are carried out by Thames Water;
- Strong concerns regarding piecemeal development as this results in limited infrastructure to support the growth which cumulatively has a significant impact;
- The issues of Air BnBs in villages was raised which has a significant impact on communities in terms of housing availability and a sense of place. Too many holiday lets can destroy a community.

Topic 2 – Pattern of Development

- No general consensus regarding a preferred approach;
- A lot of negativity regarding the village cluster scenario – perception that this means development between the villages so they would lose their identity;
- Very limited support for new settlement option;

- Also relatively limited support for the public transport focussed scenario as it was felt that transport infrastructure is not strong enough to support this approach;
- Villages are at capacity – spaces are limited at schools and roads are congested.

Topic 3 – Call for Sites, Ideas and Opportunities

- Encourage small scale business expansion in the villages as well as business adaptation;
- Seek opportunities for biodiversity net gain and nature recovery. Needs to be considered more holistically;
- Solar should be incorporated on buildings – not in green fields.

TABLE 3 – Summary notes

Topic 1 – Draft Local Plan Objectives

- Are developers adhering to planning conditions? Is this being monitored and are local plan policies dictating obligations, especially in terms of infrastructure on new developments?
- Are overall quality standards of build being met, particularly in the sector of affordable housing?
- More control needed over planning sites and there must be mandatory compliance particularly in the areas of renewable energy and low carbon – net zero;
- Policies should be adopted on new schemes to include areas such as energy efficiency, charging points, heat and air source pumps, solar panels.
- Renewables do need rolling out and reviewed on a site-by-site basis to ensure the criteria met in terms of climate change. Climate Policy to be enforced.
- Agriculture – what role in terms of reducing carbon emissions? A role for re-generative farming and right to roam?
- Infrastructure a major problem across the county and this should be given priority at the beginning of a development not the end. Roads and footpaths need general improvement.
- Improvements to public transport across the district – more buses, cycle paths – consider Cotswold train line re-instatement or tram? New links to be established.
- School provision/transport across area to be considered as no funding in some rural villages;
- There is concern regarding sewerage and flooding, although National and Local policies dictate the risk.
- Integrated approach to be included in new plan to include water recycling, etc. Boundaries needed to be pushed for water environment and biodiversity – evidence based on supply. Thames Water still discharging.
- Dark skies and light pollution a problem in some areas.

Topic 2 – Pattern of Development

- Shortage of homes for younger people due to affordability – make properties affordable by adopting modern methods of construction such as kit housing and contemporary architecture;
- S106 payments – is system robust enough – is developer contribution formally adopted?
- Are there planning restrictions on short term lets such as Air BnBs and short term lets – can this be controlled, and the use class changed?

- What is the rural tourism legislation or perhaps a covenant considered? There are pros and cons to this as it can boost economy and income;
- Agriculture offers artisan employment.

Topic 3 – Call for Sites, Ideas and Opportunities

- Share in growth – distribute equally. Consider hybrid options;
- Balanced mix of sites catering for all ages and types.

Other points raised

- Look at statistics for young people – where do they work and travel to? Can they work from home to reduce travel? More employment opportunities needed, perhaps consider apprentices in rural trades and farming.

Appendix 3 – Table Notes from Town and Parish Council Event – 18 October 2023

TABLE 1 – Summary notes

Parishes: South Leigh, Aston and Coate, Bampton, Curbridge, Ducklington, Asthall Leigh

- Villages don't want to lose their identity – village cluster concept threatens that;
- District Cllr Lysette Nicholls (Aston, Standlake and Stanton Harcourt) supported a shorter Local Plan term – five years;
- Conversely, the Aston and Coate Clerk reported that her two new Councillors felt that the term of the Local Plan was too short and should be looking to 2051 if it is to be truly strategic and planning for the future. Supported the concept of a new settlement but didn't like development patterns 5 & 6;
- S106 – frustration that infrastructure delivery can fall outside the parish where the housing is accommodated;
- Some concern that WODC does not have sufficient influence over OCC S106 negotiations;
- South Leigh – concern about the burden on Parish Councils to engage in the planning process – skills and volunteer capacity ... is there scope to band together?
- The term 'limited development' needs to be better defined within the new Local Plan as this is currently exploited by developers to proposed schemes which too large/imposing out of scale with the settlement;
- The concept of good 'transport links' is a double-edged sword – there are implications to good transport links – good and bad;
- Considered premature to use 'Public Transport' to steer pattern of development in this Local Plan as some of this is not yet in existence e.g. trainline along A40;
- Would a new train line really be delivered? Doubt that adequate partnership working arrangements between OCC, WODC, Network Rail and train companies exist – want full disclosure of financial implications to the public;
- Asthall – concern about size/tenure of housing delivered – the lifestyle expectations that are generated by new developments. Who can really afford these? Perpetuates second home ownership issue;
- Asthall – genuine need to provide suitable retirement accommodation – two bed-homes with large gardens;
- Is there a role for covenants to restrict ownership/occupation to address AirBNB/second home ownership?
- WODC needs to challenge Thames Water – Grampian Conditions are positive;
- WODC needs to challenge Environment Agency – particularly in relation to their review of levels of flood risk;
- Need to be more imaginative in terms of active travel options;
- South Leigh – generally happy with the breadth of objectives in this Local Plan consultation;
- WODC should be engaging Witney College in Local Plan – young persons input is essential;
- Is the location of growth within villages sustainable?
- Bampton – doesn't want any more growth as time needed to assimilate new people who have moved into recently built homes into the community;
- Infrastructure first – transport, schools, dentists;
- Design Code role – specify phasing to enhance delivery of infrastructure ... but who enforces this? Believe WODC should take a much stronger enforcement role;

- Ducklington – biggest concern is losing local distinctiveness and sense of community;
- There was some aversion to the pattern of development scenarios 5 & 6 from other attendees.

TABLE 2 – Summary notes

Parishes: Fifield, Woodstock, Bladon, Chipping Norton, Carterton, South Leigh, Brize Norton, Long Hanborough, Ramsden.

Draft Objectives

- Tourism is important to the economy so need a balance where it avoids destroying communities but we also need to recognise the benefits. In Carterton, some individuals let out rooms in their house and this is important to serve RAF personnel so need to avoid blanket restrictions.
- The importance of infrastructure is not to be underestimated. This includes health care provision, education, highways etc. Infrastructure needs to be provided at an early stage to create sense of community and to promote good habits in terms of active travel etc.
- Importance of early engagement with infrastructure providers was stressed. Particularly health care providers, Thames Water etc.
- Need stronger emphasis on healthy place shaping in terms of building communities.
- Need stronger policies on design and sustainability.
- Settlement boundaries may have some value.

Pattern of Development

- There is little land in Carterton so no ability to expand without encroaching into neighbouring parishes. Need denser development on brownfield land within the town as part of REEMA, alongside facilities and services for young families in particular.
- Why is a 'Chipping Norton focus' not included as a scenario?
- Sprawl along the A40 and other transport corridors should be avoided as no sense of community.
- Instead of building out – look at regeneration opportunities.
- Many of the key towns have expanded out beyond capacity and now not walkable.
- New community – benefit would be that we could seek a higher level of infrastructure.

Call for Sites, Ideas and Opportunities

- Will windfarms be considered?
- As a rural district we must protect farming land in order for the country to be as self-sufficient as possible.

Other general issues

- How have we engaged young people? Need better youth representation.
- Very little confidence in the planning system and infrastructure providers (particularly TW).
- As a Council, we need to be stronger in terms of taking action against providers who do not comply with their requirements.

TABLE 3 – Summary notes

Draft Objectives

- Where is the housing demand coming from? Is it a combination of people moving into the county and district? National Statistics confirm that Oxfordshire County has had more houses built than any other area, but people are not being helped to get affordable housing. It looks as if more households are demanded for the same number of people due to lifestyle changes such as living longer and divorce and separation.
- Infrastructure a major problem across the county and this should be given priority at the beginning of a development not the end. Development is not supporting water/sewers and transport networks. Utility companies need to come in at beginning prior to development. Contributions to improve infrastructure should be made by developments linking A40. Education and health being affected by lack of infrastructure.
- Improvements to public transport across the district – more buses, cycle paths – consider rail line re-instatement or tram? New links to be established. A40 is getting slower so what impact is accepting new houses in the area having?
- Area needs preserving and provision made for people to live within their means. Currently applications are being approved for small extensions in back gardens as younger people can not afford to move home. Jobs need to be made available more locally.
- Balance needed for rural and urban areas as policy was not clear and was too focused on urban ideas. Clusters could not work as small villages being put together as none of them have the services.
- Salt Cross legal challenge was discussed in terms of the Inspectors decision being challenged with regards zero carbon. It was noted going forward that ambitious targets could get challenged or delayed, although other counties were getting approval on similar applications.

- How were change of policies dealt with as difficult to predict what may happen – partial updates could be made within local plan. Local neighbourhood plans would not be affected by the new local plan.

Patterns of development

- Shortage of homes for younger people due to affordability – younger people want to be in the centre of towns but no affordable housing available and affordable needs to be liveable in terms of size and space. A youth needs assessment was conducted recently and is available to review.
- S106 payments – is system robust enough? Not a clear process and more transparency is needed.
- Patterns of development means areas are being force fed. In the current Local Plan, what is defined by limited development is not clear – any growth needs defining, and the level more clearly stated.
- No more housing into small villages as they are losing their characters and becoming dormitory. Growth to go to larger areas where facilities and infrastructure already exists.

Call for Sites, ideas and opportunities

- Criteria for sites should be fully met in terms of the community and facilities.
- Safeguards should be in place to ensure developers build as agreed at application approval stage. Planning conditions need monitoring and enforcing.

Other key points

- Long discussion about the potential Carterton – Oxford railway line and the cost of approximately six hundred million. Feasibility study conducted by the county council and proved it a positive approach. The first part of the line if approved could be in place by 2031.

Appendix 4 – Table Notes from District Council Member Workshop – 26 October 2023

Table 1 – Summary Notes of Discussion

Infrastructure

- A problem across the county and should be given priority at the beginning of a development. Need supporting water/sewers, transport networks, roads, schools, and services such as doctors and dentists.
- S106 come with the housing and be running in parallel. WODC must enforce legal requirement by developers to provide necessary infrastructure.
- There cannot be situations arising such as currently on the Windrush development where services and facilities have still not been provided although a legal requirement, likewise at Colwell Green.
- How do we get more infrastructure? There does not appear to be any spare capacity.
- Clear policy to identify areas where there is capacity. This already happens on strategic sites but is harder to determine on smaller sites.
- Where new infrastructure is achieved, it is still reliant on others as issues such as staffing, particularly with GP's and dentists, etc.

Standards of Construction

- If zero net carbon cannot be achieved because of government policy, can it be made achievable within the local plan?
- Can it be made mandatory to build with solar panels, etc? Also, a policy is required for solar farms and all renewables.
- Retro-fitting – the local plan needs to cover this
- Guidance is required and to obtain a supporting document into a design code or level.

Pattern of Development

- Hierarchical approach favoured.
- Keeping communities intact – by building further away from centres it means people travel away and go elsewhere for shopping, etc which means they are not part of their settlement.
- The contribution of openness needs to be looked at and how it benefits the area and why it should be kept (like a buffer zone by default). Brize Norton are trying to incorporate a buffer zone in their neighbourhood plan.

- Boundaries are set naturally and not at parish level and the government cannot change this, although this is reviewed every 10 years and is not to be decided politically and the council can only work within the existing rules.
- A new settlement may be the way forward if a site could be found. It could be planned and take a large amount of the new housing required. Salt Cross could be expanded as infrastructure already in place. Discussion about the timescale of a local plan (e.g. new settlement needs to be looking longer term, so too new railway) and the ease of review to address new issues.
- Affordable housing needs looking at, particularly the type/sort of houses – are they appropriate for the needs of the population and the nuances – it's not just how they are built but also the internal plan.
- Are housing needs considered and the nature of them such as disability? Salt Cross has policies in place to address housing needs – e.g., mobility. Ageing population – should we be explicit by encouraging one level living and opportunities for down-sizing?
- Shortage of homes for key workers – is this scheme still available and if so, what is the definition?

Other key points

- Not enough emphasis on heritage and tourism.
- Policy to replace a house not clearly defined as to what is allowed. Also, if your house is changed in any way the policy is not clear or specific and you have to read between the lines and adapt sections from other policies – should be made clearer.
- Need local design codes.

Table 2 – Summary Notes of Discussion

Pattern of development

- Cluster scenario has been negatively received. Concern that this means ‘filling in the gaps’ between settlements and the resultant loss of identity. Terminology not helpful and should be reconsidered to avoid this misconception.
- Facilities are already shared to some extent between rural communities such as schools. Can this be improved through better planning and funding?
- Villages to remain villages but do need some development to sustain village life. Links to empowerment of local communities and potentially a stronger approach to neighbourhood development plans (NDPs).
- Strong infrastructure evidence needed.

Culture and heritage

- This is a key element of what makes West Oxfordshire distinctive. We should celebrate our identity, history and culture in a more proactive and positive way.
- Part of this is considering new uses (e.g. community uses) for heritage assets where they are in danger of becoming derelict or to make them more relevant to today’s society.
- Also opportunities to improve their sustainability credentials should be explored in more detail whilst respecting their history and fabric.
- Links to the positive strategy for the historic environment required by the NPPF.
- Strong connection between tourism and heritage.

Green Infrastructure

- Green spaces are often lacking to serve existing and new communities. Need more publicly accessible greenspace.
- Opportunities to improve spaces and networks through the new local plan, linked to healthy place shaping. However, need to be wary of developers using this as an argument for reducing their highway related infrastructure requirements.
- Greater recognition needed in relation to the importance of climate change adaptation.

Implementation

- A key issue which needs a stronger focus within the local plan.
- More robust approach in terms of infrastructure delivery is required and the phasing requirements should be set out in more detail.

Community services and facilities

- Public houses and other rural facilities are an important element of maintaining a sense of community in rural settlements, yet we continue to see a loss of these across the district.
- We need to explore how these can be supported in a positive and innovative way. Solutions such as allowing some flexibility to strengthen individual uses or supporting the community hub concept were discussed.

Changing role of technology

- This has impacted on so many aspects of our lives and is accelerating, including shopping habits and working arrangements so we need to adapt to this.
- Need to be open to new approaches to re-purpose high streets and make these more robust to future changes.

Role of neighbourhood plans in empowering communities

- General agreement that the development of neighbourhood plans and village design statements should be positively encouraged.
- Officers to consider how we can pro-actively support this including potential briefings and awareness raising sessions.