



**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 15 JULY 2026.
Subject	WEST OXFORDSHIRE PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2043
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Councillor Liz Leffman – Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure Email: liz.leffman@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Andrea McCaskie – Director of Governance and Regulatory Services Email: andrea.mccaskie@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Andrew Thomson – Planning Policy Manager Email: andrew.thomson@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	For Members to consider the proposed pre-submission draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 including the timetable for formally publishing the draft plan in accordance with legislative requirements.
Annexes	Annex A – Pre-Submission Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 Annex B – Local Development Scheme – LDS (July 2026) Annex C – Sustainability Appraisal – TO FOLLOW Annex D – Local Plan Addendum Report – TO FOLLOW
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive resolves to: 1. Recommend to Council to approve the pre-submission draft Local Plan attached at Annex A for the purposes of formal publication for a statutory period of at least 6-weeks in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. 2. Recommended to Council to delegate authority to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Infrastructure to make any necessary minor textual and presentational amendments, and any amendments necessary to reflect any agreed Overview and Scrutiny recommendations, to the pre-submission draft Local Plan in conjunction with Officers, prior to formal publication.

	3. Agree that the Local Development Scheme (LDS) attached at Annex B be published online and made available in hard copy format in agreed 'deposit' locations across the district.
Corporate priorities	The preparation of a new Local Plan for West Oxfordshire will help to support all of the Council's corporate priorities including: • Putting Residents First • Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All • Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	The emerging draft Local Plan has been the subject of extensive public consultation in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Taking account of the feedback received at each stage, Officers have now prepared the final pre-submission draft version of the plan which is proposed to be published for a statutory period of at least 6 weeks in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The pre-submission draft Plan has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – December 2024.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Members will be aware that all local planning authorities are required to have an up-to-date Local Plan in place, setting out an agreed vision for their local area and a framework for meeting housing needs and addressing other economic, social and environmental priorities.
- 1.2** The current Local Plan for West Oxfordshire was formally adopted in September 2018. A review of the plan was carried out in September 2023 and concluded that many policies, including those relating to housing and the economy require updating to take account of recent evidence and changes to national policy.
- 1.3** Work on a replacement Local Plan has been ongoing for some time, with four separate public consultations undertaken in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 1.4** Taking account of the comments received at each stage along with the findings of supporting technical evidence, including an iterative process of Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Officers have now prepared the final pre-submission draft version of the new Local Plan. Subject to the approval of Members, Officers propose to formally publish the draft Plan for a statutory period of consultation in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 1.5** The purpose of this report is for Members to consider the pre-submission draft Local Plan and determine whether it should be published for statutory consultation as currently drafted or incorporating any further changes.

2. PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT LOCAL PLAN – AN OVERVIEW

- 2.1** The pre-submission draft Local Plan is attached in full at Annex A. Because it is a long document, for ease of reference, the key issues of particular importance have been summarised below.
- 2.2** This includes:
 - Plan structure
 - Plan period
 - Spatial strategy
 - Housing and economic needs
 - Delivery of supporting infrastructure
 - Area Strategies
 - Priority growth locations
 - Development management policies
 - Delivery and monitoring
- 2.3** Dealing with each issue in turn.

Plan Structure

2.4 The draft plan adopts the following structure.

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

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

Plan Period

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

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

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

Spatial Strategy

2.9 The spatial strategy consists of five separate policies.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 2.19** Policy SP4 further supports the provisions of Policy SP2 in the form of a specific policy for the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which covers around 1/3 of West Oxfordshire. In line with the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, the policy places a particular emphasis on furthering the statutory purpose of the CNL which represents a distinct shift from the previous, more passive approach of ‘having regard’ to its statutory purpose. The policy takes accounts of comments raised through previous consultation, in particular the views of the CNL Board.
- 2.20** The final spatial policy SP5 relates to the A40 corridor and proposes to safeguard land to enable the potential delivery of a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) scheme to address long-standing issues of traffic congestion along this key arterial route.
- 2.21** This represents a deliberate shift from the previous draft policy which was based solely on the Carterton Witney Oxford Rail Corridor (CWORC). The shift of approach reflects the fact that Oxfordshire County Council have recently commissioned an options appraisal to explore all possible MRT options, including but not limited to, a heavy rail-based solution.
- 2.22** Importantly, the policy seeks to ensure that developer contributions towards the capital cost of any future MRT scheme are secured as appropriate. Carterton, Witney and Eynsham are identified in broad terms as having particular potential to accommodate mobility hubs but this will depend on which type of MRT scheme is taken forward.
- 2.23** Oxfordshire County Council have recently commissioned an options appraisal to help determine the most appropriate form of MRT scheme to take forward. Officers therefore anticipate that the policy will evolve through the examination process to reflect the latest available evidence and information at that time.

Housing and Economic Needs

- 2.24** In line with national policy, a key role of the local plan is to determine the housing and economic needs of the district and to plan for these accordingly – meeting them in full wherever possible.
- 2.25** In terms of housing need, the draft plan proposes to meet the standard method figure of 905 homes per year for West Oxfordshire in full and apply this to the 18-year period 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2043. The total level of housing need identified for West Oxfordshire is therefore 16,290 homes (i.e. 905 x 18).
- 2.26** As outlined earlier, the base date of 1st April 2025 has been selected to align with the plan-making provisions of the December 2024 NPPF. Importantly, it also aligns with the base date of the emerging Oxford Local Plan 2045 which helps to provide clarity on the issue of unmet housing need.
- 2.27** Oxford has confirmed that in the period 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2045, their assumed overall housing need is 21,560 homes. This is based on a standard method figure of 1,078 homes per year applied over 20 years.
- 2.28** They have also confirmed that their assumed housing supply over the same period is 9,041 homes (452 homes per year) resulting in an ‘unmet’ housing need of 12,519 homes which must be accommodated elsewhere.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Delivery of supporting infrastructure

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

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

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

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

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

Area Strategies

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

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

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

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

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

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

Priority Growth Locations

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

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

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

2.50 Where relevant, this includes:

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

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

Existing Planning Commitments

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

Extant Site Allocations from the adopted Local Plan 2031

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Proposed New Site Allocations

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

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

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

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

Proposed New Strategic Locations for Growth (SLG)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Proposed New Areas of Redevelopment Opportunity (ARO)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Development Management Policies

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Delivery and Monitoring

- 2.80** An effective delivery and monitoring framework is essential to ensure that the Local Plan is implemented as intended and that its policies translate into real, measurable outcomes on the ground.
- 2.81** It provides a clear mechanism for tracking progress against key targets, identifying where delivery is on track or where intervention may be needed, and ensuring accountability over the plan period.
- 2.82** The Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is a central part of this process, enabling the Council to assess whether development is meeting policy requirements, such as housing delivery, infrastructure provision, and environmental objectives, and to respond proactively to changing circumstances.
- 2.83** To ensure the above is achieved, the draft plan includes a delivery and monitoring framework explaining how each policy links to the Plan's overall objectives and will be monitored over the plan period. Once adopted, this will form the basis of the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

3. LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE

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

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1** Subject to the approval of Members, the pre-submission draft Local Plan attached at Annex A will be published for a statutory period of public consultation of at least 6 weeks, in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 4.2** It is anticipated that this will commence in August 2026.
- 4.3** A further report will then be brought back before Members, summarising the key issues raised through the Regulation 19 consultation and seeking formal approval to submit the draft Plan (and any proposed modifications) for independent examination in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 4.4** It should be noted that when submitted for examination, the draft Plan will be considered in the context of the December 2024 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 4.5** Subject to the approval of Members, the Local Development Scheme (LDS) attached at Annex B will be published online and made available in hard copy format in agreed 'deposit' locations across the district.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1** The District Council could choose not to formally publish the new Local Plan. However, local authorities are required to keep plans up to date, typically reviewing them every 5-years or so.
- 5.2** Furthermore, not having an up-to-date Local Plan in place is likely to exacerbate the prospect of speculative development proposals coming forward and appeal-led planning decisions taking place outside of the Council's control.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1** Progressing a new Local Plan is a lengthy and complex process and involves a number of potential risks. The main risks are outlined below.
- 8.2** The first risk relates to timing - in particular the risk of the Council not formally submitting the plan for independent examination before the end of December 2026. This would mean the plan cannot be considered under the current national framework for plan-making but would effectively need to 're-start' under the Government's new framework, thereby leading to significant delay. This risk reinforces the importance of the Regulation 19 consultation taking place in a timely manner beginning in August.
- 8.3** Once submitted, as always there is a risk that the appointed Inspector will find that the Council has failed to comply with the relevant legislative requirements and/or that the plan as submitted is 'unsound'. This risk will be mitigated by Officers submitting clear evidence that all legislative requirements have been complied with and through the examination process itself during which time Officers will have the opportunity to demonstrate that the policies and proposals of the draft Plan are sound including any necessary Main Modifications.
- 8.4** There is also an indirect risk arising from the Government's preparation of a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is due to be published later this year. Whilst the draft Local Plan will be examined under the December 2024 version of the framework, the indications to date have been that as soon as the new NPPF is published, any Local Plan policies (even recently adopted ones) may be rendered out of date and carry minimal weight if they are in conflict with the new framework. As this risk arises indirectly due to a forthcoming national planning policy shift, there is however no mitigation that can be put in place by Officers.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

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

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

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

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1** None.