

# South Oxfordshire District Council

## STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE DUTY TO COOPERATE



MARCH 2019

# **The South Oxfordshire Local Plan – Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate**

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## Section 1: Introduction

### Purpose of this Statement

This statement identifies how the joint working and strategic collaboration with neighbouring Councils and other organisations undertaken by South Oxfordshire District Council on matters related to the development of the Local Plan satisfies the current requirements of the Duty to Co-operate.

A Statement of Compliance would typically identify the strategic matters and key issues that a Plan needs to address and how the parties have resolved the issue through cooperation. This statement's structure clearly sets out where strategic matters exist and those required outcomes.

The Localism Act 2011<sup>1</sup> introduced the Duty to Co-operate and inserted this duty into the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004<sup>2</sup>. The following provide the relevant legislation and policy guidance for this matter;

- Section 110 of the Localism Act - 2011 /Section 33a of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act - 2004;
- The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 Part 2: Duty to Cooperate;
- National Planning Policy Framework - 2019<sup>3</sup>;
- National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>4</sup>;

The Localism Act 2011 and Duty to Cooperate imposes a duty on all Local Planning authorities to demonstrate wider cooperation in plan making with adjoining or nearby authorities and other organisations when preparing their development plan documents for 'strategic matters' and in relation to cross boundary issues.

In particular, the Duty to Co-operate applies to Local Planning Authorities, County Councils and other prescribed bodies or persons.

The duty:

- Relates to sustainable development or use of land that would have a significant impact on at least two Local Planning areas or on a planning matter that fall within the remit of a County Council;
- Requires that Councils set out planning policies to address such issues;
- Requires that Councils and public bodies to 'engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis' to develop strategic policies; and
- Requires Councils to consider joint approaches to plan making.

The appointed Inspector will assess whether the Council with its Local Plan has met the Duty to Cooperate. This is a legal duty that must be fulfilled in preparing the plan and any failure in this regard cannot be rectified after the plan has been submitted for examination. The Inspector will need to be satisfied that, within

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/section/110/enacted>

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/33A](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/33A)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

reason, all the various bodies have been given an adequate opportunity to influence the plan (not just been consulted on it), and that there have been serious discussions between the parties aimed at achieving an effective plan.

This statement explains how the Council has engaged with other bodies to produce an effective and positively prepared Local Plan. The statement is organised as follows:

- Section 2 sets out the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate and identifies the adjoining planning authorities and 'prescribed bodies'.
- Section 3 illustrates the stages of consultation we have undertaken in preparing the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.
- Section 4 identifies the strategic matters that exist between South Oxfordshire and other authorities and how the engagement with that body has been undertaken and the outcomes secured. It notes the formal strategic joint working arrangements and joint commissions between South Oxfordshire and other Councils. It includes details of how we work with Countywide organisations, the on-going liaison with Oxfordshire County Council, the wider coordination with other Local Authorities within Oxfordshire and other liaison with neighbouring local authorities on specific projects when required.

#### Background to South Oxfordshire's Duty to Cooperate

South Oxfordshire has a long history of joint working and co-operation with its neighbouring authorities and key stakeholders to achieve better spatial planning outcomes. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan is no exception. On-going and constructive engagement with neighbouring authorities and relevant organisations (set out in Section 2 of this statement) has taken place since work on the Local Plan began. The Duty to Cooperate is met and exceeded. South Oxfordshire and the other Local Authorities in Oxfordshire have moved from cooperation to collaboration and joint planning of all aspects of growth.

South Oxfordshire District Council benefits from possessing a series of very well developed, interlocking relationships with neighbouring Councils directly and through the Oxfordshire Growth Board and a particularly close engagement with Vale of White Horse District Council and Oxfordshire County Council. Through the various forums regular debate and coordination takes place on strategic planning, growth strategies, transport and economic development issues facing the sub-region, Oxfordshire County and South Oxfordshire in relation to its neighbours.

South Oxfordshire has worked actively, constructively and on an on-going basis with its neighbouring authorities, the other prescribed Duty to Cooperate bodies, service and infrastructure providers over the course of the preparation of the Local Plan. These activities have ranged from undertaking statutory consultation, meetings, preparing joint evidence to inform Local Plan making, exchanging written correspondence and on the production of Statements of Common Ground (SoCG). Given the continuous nature of working under the Duty to Co-operate, South Oxfordshire will continue to seek agreement on Statements of Common Ground with

Duty to Cooperate bodies up to and following the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State and commits to update this Statement of Compliance:

- a. After the production of any related SoCG;
- b. If strategic policies of another related body substantially alter;
- c. After six months of any previous update.

In terms of future co-operation, it is anticipated that the joint working established by South Oxfordshire with its neighbours will continue well into the future.

## **Section 2. National Context and the Requirements of the Duty to Cooperate**

This section sets out the national context in terms of the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate including the statutory details in the Localism Act (2011) and the further details described in the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **I. Localism Act**

Section 110 of the 2011 Localism Act inserts the Duty to Co-operate as a new Section 33A into the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended. Section 33A came into effect on 15 November 2011.

The Act makes it clear that the Duty:

- Cannot be undertaken retrospectively;
- Relates to sustainable development or use of land that would have a significant impact on at least two Local Planning areas or on a planning matter that falls within the remit of a County Council;
- Requires that councils set out planning policies to address such issues;
- Requires that councils and public bodies engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to develop strategic policies; and
- Requires councils to consider joint approaches to plan making.

Section 33A (1) and (3) of the 2004 Act, as amended, imposes a duty on a Local Planning authority to co-operate with other Local Planning authorities and other prescribed bodies when it undertakes certain activities, including the preparation of development plan documents, activities that can reasonably be considered to prepare the way for such preparation and activities that support such preparation so far as they relate to a strategic matter. This is to maximise the effectiveness of those activities.

Section 33 A (4) states that a strategic matter is: *“sustainable development or use of land that has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas, including (in particular) sustainable development or use of land for or in connection with infrastructure that is strategic and has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas.”*

Section 33A (2) requires a Local Planning authority *“to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis”* in respect of the activities that are subject to the duty.

For South Oxfordshire the relevant Local Planning authorities are:

- Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Cherwell District Council
- Oxford City Council
- Reading Borough Council
- Vale of White Horse District Council
- West Berkshire
- West Oxfordshire
- Wokingham Borough Council
- Wycombe District Council



The relevant County Councils: (The County Council and those bordering South Oxfordshire)

- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Oxfordshire County Council

The engagement with these Local Authorities and County Councils is detailed in Section 4.

Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended, sets out the prescribed bodies for the purposes of implementing Section 33A of the 2004 Act, as amended. Of those bodies listed in the Regulations it is considered that the following bodies are relevant to South Oxfordshire:

- Civil Aviation Authority
- Environment Agency
- Highways England (for Section 1 of the Highways Act 1980) with Oxfordshire County Council Highways
- Historic England
- Homes England
- Local Enterprise Partnerships - Oxfordshire Local Enterprise
- Natural England
- NHS Oxfordshire (Formerly Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust)
- NHS Buckinghamshire (Formerly Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust) covering northern parts of the South Oxfordshire District
- Office of Rail and Road (Formerly Office of Rail Regulation)

The engagement with these prescribed bodies is detailed in Section 4.

The prescribed bodies listed below are not relevant to South Oxfordshire as it is not in London nor does it have an integrated transport authority. South Oxfordshire is also not in a coastal area:

- The Mayor of London
- Transport for London
- Integrated Transport Authority
- The Marine Management Organisation.

## **II. The National Planning Policy Framework**

The Duty to Cooperate test is one of the first tests which will be applied by the appointed inspector in his/her examination of the Local Plan.

When assessing soundness of the Local Plan, in the NPPF under the ‘*examining plans*’ section it states:

*“Para 35. Local Plans and spatial development strategies are examined to assess whether they have been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and whether they are sound. Plans are ‘sound’ if they are:*

*a) Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs<sup>19</sup>; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, **so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development**;*

*c) Effective – deliverable over the plan period, **and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground**;*”

The NPPF, in a section titled ‘Maintaining effective cooperation’ sets out the national level guidance on the applicability of the Duty to Cooperate. Here it states:

*“Para 24. Local Planning authorities and county councils (in two-tier areas) are under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.*

*Para 25. Strategic policy-making authorities should collaborate to identify the relevant strategic matters which they need to address in their plans. They should also engage with their local communities and relevant bodies including Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Nature Partnerships, the Marine Management Organisation, county councils, infrastructure providers, elected Mayors and combined authorities (in cases where Mayors or combined authorities do not have plan-making powers).*

*Para 26. Effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere.*

*Para 27. In order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, strategic policymaking authorities should prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these. These should be produced using the approach set out in national planning guidance and be made publicly available throughout the plan-making process to provide transparency.”*

There is however, at the time of writing this statement, no such standard approach set out in the NPPG.

In relation to the Duty to Cooperate to deliver a sufficient supply of homes the NPPF states:

*“Para 60. To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs*

*that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.”*

Paragraphs 136 and 137 of the NPPF (2019) states:

*“136. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period. Where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans.*

*137. Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This will be assessed through the examination of its strategic policies, which will take into account the preceding paragraph, and whether the strategy:*

- a) makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;*
- b) optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of this Framework, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and*
- c) has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.”*

In relation to Oxford unmet housing needs there is relevant content within this statement of compliance that responds to these elements of the NPPF.

### **III. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

Further guidance is set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). It makes it clear that the Duty to Cooperate is not a duty to agree. However, it does advise that:

*“Local Planning authorities should make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their Local Plans for examination.”*

*“If a Local Planning authority cannot demonstrate that it has complied with the duty then the Local Plan will not be able to proceed further in examination.”*

Despite ongoing engagement, the duty to cooperate is not a duty to agree and it may not always be possible to reach agreement with neighbouring authorities, prescribed or other bodies.

The NPPF refers to the NPPG setting out an approach to the production of statements of common ground and in what circumstance they should be produced. The NPPG advises that a statement of common ground is needed for one of more authorities. That is to be a written record of the progress made in planning strategic cross-boundary matters and they form part of the evidence required to demonstrate compliance with the Duty to Cooperate.

It is expected to contain the following:

- a. a short written description and map showing the location and administrative areas covered by the statement, and a brief justification for these area(s);
- b. the key strategic matters being addressed by the statement, for example meeting the housing need for the area, air quality etc.;
- c. the plan-making authorities responsible for joint working detailed in the statement, and list of any additional signatories (including cross-referencing the matters to which each is a signatory);
- d. governance arrangements for the cooperation process, including how the statement will be maintained and kept up to date;
- e. if applicable, the housing requirements in any adopted and (if known) emerging strategic policies relevant to housing within the area covered by the statement;
- f. distribution of needs in the area as agreed through the plan-making process, or the process for agreeing the distribution of need (including unmet need) across the area;
- g. a record of where agreements have (or have not) been reached on key strategic matters, including the process for reaching agreements on these; and
- h. any additional strategic matters to be addressed by the statement which have not already been addressed, including a brief description how the statement relates to any other statement of common ground covering all or part of the same area.

At the point of submission of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, one key strategic matter relating to unmet housing need being dealt with in Oxfordshire requires a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG). This is a significant strategic matter for the area therefore a decision was taken to prepare this SoCG prior to the submission of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan in a bespoke statement on this matter. It is considered that this is the clearest and most expedient course of action to evidence joint working on this matter. The Oxfordshire SoCG has been written to contain all information required in stages a-h above. In addition, the NPPG states:

*“When authorities are in a position to detail the distribution of identified needs in the defined area, the statement will be expected to set out information on:*

- a. the capacity within the strategic policy-making authority area(s) covered by the statement to meet their own identified needs;*
- b. the extent of any unmet need within the strategic policy-making authority area(s); and*
- c. agreements (or disagreements) between strategic policy-making authorities about the extent to which these unmet needs are capable of being redistributed within the wider area covered by the statement.”*

These additional requirements were also understood when drafting the Oxfordshire SoCG attached at Appendix 1. There are a number of other matters with a number of bodies which are set out in this single statement of compliance and the statement will subsequently be accompanied by Statements of Common Ground(s) on those matters.

#### **IV. Planning Advisory Service Guidance**

The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) has published a guide to the Duty to Cooperate on its website as to the implementation of the Duty. This guidance is useful in helping to establish arrangements for strategic planning work and deliver positive outcomes.

The PAS guidance contains ten golden rules for strategic planning (<https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/pas-topics/strategic-plans/ten-golden-rules-effective-strategic-planning>) which assist in setting up working arrangements in the absence of regional plan making.

1. [Ensure political accountability and leadership](#)
2. [Ensure wider corporate ownership and responsibility](#)
3. [Have clear and agreed objectives](#)
4. [Establish clear governance structures](#)
5. [Make the best use of skills and resources](#)
6. [Get the right partners round the table](#)
7. [Develop and manage relationships](#)
8. [Maintain continuity in decision-makers and key personnel](#)
9. [Establish good project management principles](#)
10. [Keep arrangements under review](#)

#### **V. Compliance with the Duty to Co-Operate**

The Duty to Co-operate is thus a legal requirement of the plan preparation process and in order for the plan to be found sound by the Planning Inspectorate Councils need to demonstrate that the Duty has been undertaken appropriately.

The requirements of the Duty to Co-operate can be split into two main components - the process of co-operation and the outcomes of co-operation. Consequently, there is a need to demonstrate the following:

a) That South Oxfordshire District Council has striven to co-operate with neighbouring authorities and prescribed bodies i.e. that constructive engagement has occurred, actively and on an on-going basis in line with Section 33A of the Planning Act 2004. The process of co-operation is covered in Section 4 of this Statement; and;

b) That the basis and results of this cooperation have been positively prepared and are effective i.e. that the relevant cross-boundary issues have been identified and addressed within the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. The outcomes of this co-operation are covered in Section 4 of this Statement.

The regulations underpinning the development of Local Plans now state that Councils need to report how the Duty to Co-operate is being taken forward on an on-going basis through the Authority Monitoring Report. The South Oxfordshire District Council AMR complies with this reporting obligation<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> See latest Authority Monitoring Report at [www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/our-development-plan/authoritys-monitoring](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/our-development-plan/authoritys-monitoring)

## Section 3. Key Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement

### Consultation undertaken

The Council has undertaken significant consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including the general public, Town and Parish Councils, national organisations, key stakeholders, developers and statutory bodies in preparing the Local Plan.

The District Council has consulted the general public and other groups as required by the Regulations and as set out in the Councils adopted Statement of Community Involvement. The Council has also contacted all those that have been registered on our consultation database. This includes the following bodies:

- Prescribed Consultation Bodies - These are those we have to consult to meet the statutory requirements such as adjoining councils and agencies such as the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England and utility providers.
- General Consultation Bodies - These include voluntary bodies and groups representing the interests of different religious, racial, ethnic or national groups, local business groups and organisations that represent the interests of the disabled.
- Other Consultees - These are those that have expressed a desire to be involved such as agents, developers, landowners and individuals (on the consultation database) and clubs and societies, charities and special interest groups.

The Council has also published and consulted on many documents in the preparation of the Local Development Framework, the Local Plan and undertaken wider consultation on them.

As stated in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, documents need to be made available for inspection at the Council's principal office and such places within their area as the Local Planning authority considers appropriate, during normal office hours and published on the website. The consultation documents for the above consultations were made available at Deposit Locations which includes libraries and Council Offices.

Consultation has been supported by exhibitions, workshops and stakeholder meetings at various stages of plan preparation. The detail of this can be found in the Consultation Reports produced to support each stage of the Local Plan and also in the Regulation 22 document.

South Oxfordshire District Council has prepared four versions of the proposed new plan within Regulation 18. The four versions are:

<b>Local Plan Consultations Undertaken So Far</b>	
<b>Document</b>	<b>Date of Consultation</b>
Issues and Scope	11 June to 23 July 2014
Refined Options	19 February to 2 April 2015

Preferred Options	27 June 2016 to 19 August 2016
Second Preferred Options	29 March to 17 May 2017

Public consultation on the Publication version (1<sup>st</sup>) of the Local Plan took place between 11 October and 22 November 2017 and Publication version (2<sup>nd</sup>) took place between 7 January 2019 and 18 February 2019.

In addition to the formal consultations outlined in this statement, there have also been extensive ongoing and informal discussions and correspondence with a number of key stakeholders and other representatives of South Oxfordshire's communities. These include discussions with adjoining local authorities, district councillors, infrastructure providers, environmental groups, community action groups and representatives of the development industry. This extensive ongoing dialogue has helped to inform the preparation of the proposed Local Plan.

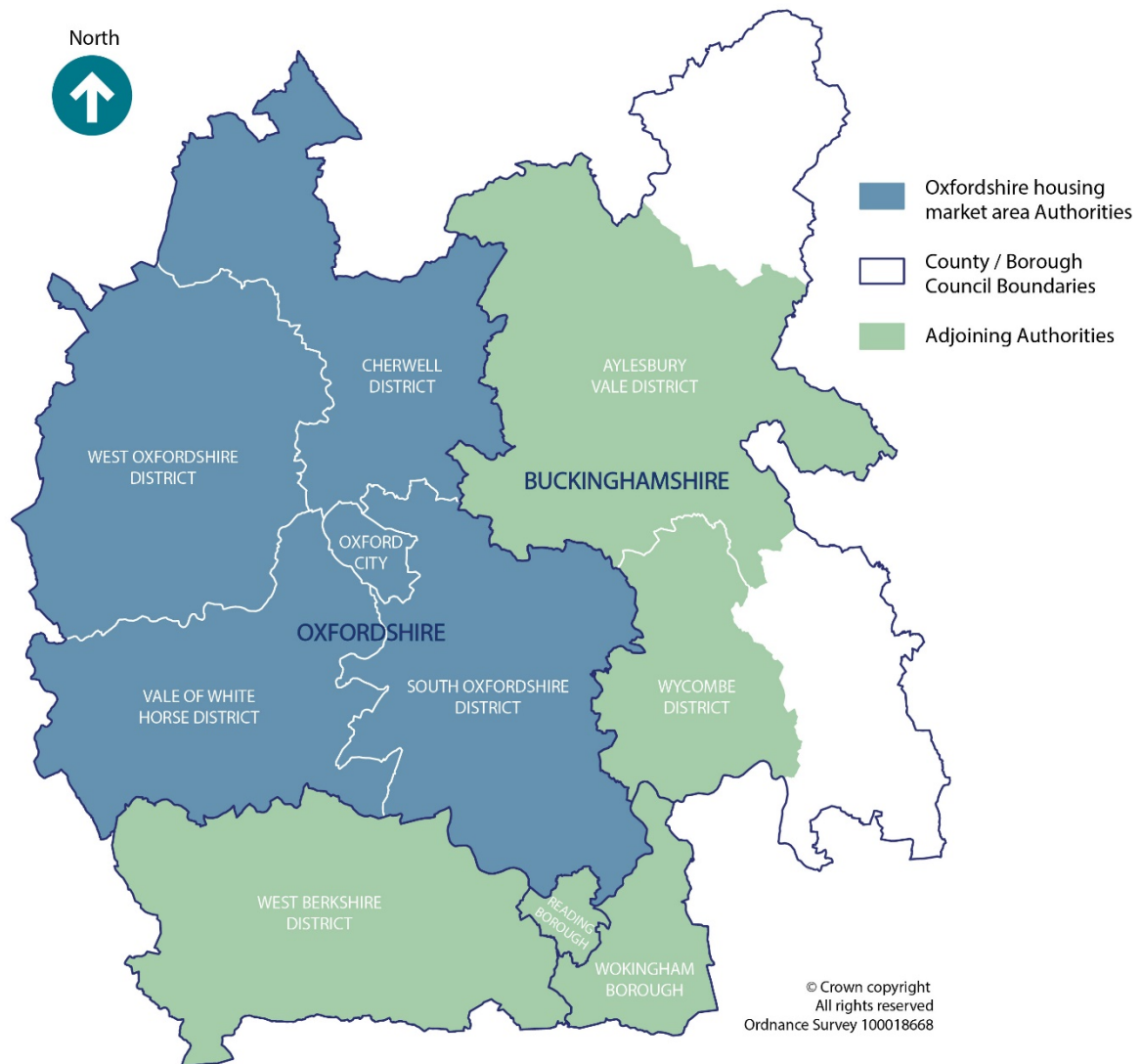
Engagement and cooperation with other bodies has taken place within and outside of these formal consultation periods.

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the relevant consultation documents were made available at range of 'deposit locations' including Council Offices, libraries and other locations.

The Statement of Consultation provides an account of public consultation carried out at the different stages of the Local Plan preparation. It explains how the Council has formally involved the local community, stakeholders and statutory bodies in the plan-making process, describes the various consultations undertaken and who was consulted and when. The statement summarises the main issues raised and explains how these were addressed.



## Map showing Neighbouring Councils



## **Section 4. Cooperation on strategic matters and outcomes from cooperation**

South Oxfordshire has engaged with neighbouring and other authorities throughout the Local Plan process. This is addition to engagement through public consultation stages.

On-going and effective engagement with neighbouring authorities and relevant organisations has taken place since work on the Local Plan began in 2014. Prior to publication of the South East Plan in May 2009 (now revoked), the Council had engaged with local authorities and other relevant bodies on a continuing, cooperative basis in regional planning and in relation to the preparation of the sub-regional strategy for a Central Oxfordshire sub-region centred on Oxford.

### **A. Countywide Structured Collaboration & Partnership**

The Local Planning authorities in Oxfordshire have work closely together for many years through the Oxfordshire Growth Board and its predecessor the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP).

#### The Oxfordshire Growth Board

The Oxfordshire Growth Board is a joint committee of the six councils, formed to facilitate and enable joint working on economic development, strategic planning and coordination for all the challenges that the growth agenda brings to Oxfordshire.

The Growth Board oversees strategic collaboration between Councils, LEP and Universities in Oxfordshire. It has commissioned studies that have helped inform the development of Local Plans and secured funding to assist delivery of planned growth across Oxfordshire.

The purpose of the Oxfordshire Growth Board (from the terms of reference<sup>6</sup>) is:

- to facilitate and enable collaboration between local authorities on economic development, strategic planning and growth;
- to deliver cross-boundary programmes of work including the City Deal, Growth Deal, Strategic Economic Plan and Local Transport Board programmes, within government timescales. This includes agreeing the detailed contents of specific priorities, plans, projects and programmes;
- to approve and monitor the implementation of a detailed work programme as laid out in the City Deal, Strategic Economic Plan and Local Transport Board programmes, together with any future Growth Deals or other programmes as agreed;
- to bid for the allocation of resources to support the above purposes.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/322/pr02-oxfordshire-growth-board--terms-of-reference>

The Board includes the local authorities within Oxfordshire. These are: Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council and they are represented by their respective leaders.

There are some non-voting representatives including:

- Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Oxfordshire Skills Board
- Oxford Universities
- Homes England
- Environment Agency
- Network Rail
- Highways England

The Growth Board meetings take place every other month. From 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019, the meetings have been chaired and will continue to be hosted by South Oxfordshire District Council. From 1 July 2019, the meetings will be chaired and hosted by the Vale of the White Horse District Council.

The forerunner of the Growth Board was the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP). SPIP coordinated the relationship between the Development Plans prepared across the County and their strategic/cross border impacts. This role was to increase awareness, provide an overview and assist in identifying issues of further interest or concern and inform and focus more detailed officer discussions.

Membership is at the Leader and Chief Executive level of the County and each District Council in Oxfordshire. SPIP was supported by meetings of the lead planning officers (OPPO) providing a technical overview and input.

SPIP initiated collaboration between member Councils on:

- Discussion on the development of each other's Local Plans;
- Development and maintenance of the Local Investment Plan (LIP) in 2011, 2012 and 2013 which brings together all the infrastructure plans in Oxford, each District and Oxfordshire as a whole. Includes transport projects, housing growth locations, economic analysis, rural housing and gypsy and traveller assessments on a joint basis. It has informed the development of each Local Infrastructure Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plans for each District which accompanies the Local Plan;
- A joint seminar was organised on Infrastructure Planning and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on 29th October 2012;
- Jointly Commissioning the Oxfordshire SHMA (2007) and update (2014) - See later section.

Recent discussions at the Oxfordshire Growth Board have focussed on the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal which includes all the Councils in Oxfordshire, the Universities and the Local Economic Partnership. In addition, work has now

commenced on the preparation of a Joint Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (see <https://oxfordshireplan.org>).

Key work areas of the Growth Board which are of direct relevance to the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and helped shape its development includes:

- Facilitation of County-wide joint work such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014, which is the foundation of each Oxfordshire District Local Plan and the 'post SHMA work';
- Other work between authorities, such as the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment;
- Coordinated closer engagement with the Environment Agency and Homes England members of the Oxfordshire Growth Board and engagement with water companies over planned growth and infrastructure need over the next 20-30 years to address 'water stress' and ensure an enhancement of supplies;
- Engagement with the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) over the development of the Oxford to Cambridge corridor/Arc. The Council has worked in partnership through a range of cross corridor joint working, bringing together 22 Councils and 4 LEPs at senior officer and Council leadership level, plus England's Economic Heartland. The NIC Report published in November 2017 led to Government funding for the completion of the East-West rail project and a proposed Expressway between Oxford and Cambridge. A joint declaration between government and local partners was published on 13 March 2019<sup>7</sup>;
- Initiated a rail strategy, working with Network Rail and the Rail Operating Companies such as Chilterns Railways and GWR, to support the reopening of old and new stations, to integrate with the development of the East-West rail project which aims to reintroduce direct rail services between the main population centres of Reading-Didcot-Oxford-Bicester-Milton Keynes-Bedford and onwards to Cambridge, with services from Reading to Bedford being operational from end of 2019. This will ensure South Oxfordshire has enhanced connections to the population centres of the South East Midlands, as well as connections through to Reading and the Crossrail/Elizabeth Line which is due to open in late 2019.

### The Oxfordshire Infrastructure Study (OXIS)

The Growth Board commissioned the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Study (OXIS) published in 2017, which drew attention to the importance of improving the A34 to later assist north-south connectivity and considered planned growth across Oxfordshire by key corridors.

OXIS sets out the long-term investment in transport, schools, hospitals and other infrastructure required to support the predicted growth in population, jobs and homes,

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-oxford-cambridge-arc-government-ambition-and-joint-declaration-between-government-and-local-partners>

based on the planned growth of all five Local Plans to deliver the 2014 SHMA to 2040 and beyond.

The report was prepared by consultants reporting to a steering group drawn from all Councils in Oxfordshire, working together to develop a joint infrastructure strategy, detailing the county's key infrastructure requirements and the locations for long-term investment that will be required to plan for and manage growth in a way that supports the local economy and protects quality of life across the county.

Some of these have been outlined already in individual Local Plans and the Local Transport Plan, but the Oxfordshire Growth Board has looked more comprehensively at what is going to be required further into the future across each District.

Major investment projects include:

- Improvements to the A34
- Rapid bus routes linking key locations
- East-West Rail connecting Oxford to Cambridge
- A long term strategy to address congestion on the A40
- Redevelopment of Oxford Station
- A new Garden Town for Didcot
- Incentives to encourage businesses to locate and expand within the Science Vale.

The OXIS report provided South Oxfordshire and the other members of the Oxfordshire Growth Board with a comprehensive infrastructure strategy that identified and mapped all the county's strategic infrastructure requirements within and between Districts. It included evidence of the infrastructure required for strategic transport, energy and the utilities, waste management, flooding and water management, green infrastructure, education, adult social care and broadband.

The OXIS underpins the priorities set out in The OXLEP Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire Growth Deal and the submissions made to secure funding through the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) lodged in 2017. The evidence set out in the OXIS enabled the Oxfordshire Growth Board members to engage in strategic discussions with Government to secure the funding award set out in the Oxfordshire Growth Deal, but also to discuss with other infrastructure funding partners how the infrastructure required might best be provided.

The OXIS report is published on the Oxfordshire Growth Board website at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/growthboard](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/growthboard).

### The Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)

The Growth Board coordinated bids in 2017/18 between the Councils to the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)<sup>8</sup> which is designed to deliver more homes and help support significant new growth initiatives, including funding for unlocking sites for new homes in areas of high demand such as Oxfordshire. The bids

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-infrastructure-fund>

drew on the OXIS report and a number of bids were successful, including for South Oxfordshire to support Didcot Garden Town.

### The Oxfordshire SHMA 2014 and the unmet housing need of Oxford

Of particular importance to the development of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan has been the development of undertaking of an assessment of the unmet housing need of Oxford City and agreement to a process of apportionment between the neighbouring Councils. This process has been tested at three Local Plan Examinations – Cherwell, Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire and found to be an appropriate process in each Inspectors Report.

The forerunner to the Oxfordshire Growth Board SPIP commissioned an update to the 2007 SHMA which reported in April 2014.

When the decision to update the 2007 Oxfordshire SHMA was taken in 2012 a working group was established to consider a process by which the unmet housing need of Oxford might best be apportioned between the neighbouring four districts.

A 'working assumption' was agreed that Oxford has an unmet need of 15,000 homes (which became 14,850), based on an overall housing requirement for the city to 2031 of 28,000 from the 2014 Oxfordshire SHMA.

In the absence of formal national guidance about how unmet housing need might be agreed between neighbours, the Oxfordshire Councils sought to adopt a process that was as robust as possible, recognising that all decisions would ultimately need to be taken through individual Local Plan processes.

Officers from all authorities met in May 2013 and discussed a policy approach to be incorporated in emerging plans to address the Duty to Cooperate. Officers considered wording that is already included within South Oxfordshire's adopted Core Strategy and how this could be adapted and brought up to date for emerging plans.

The following wording was proposed:

*"A new joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for Oxfordshire is currently underway. If following the SHMA, any of the Oxfordshire authorities are agreed, identify that any of the authorities they cannot accommodate their objectively assessed housing need, the council will fulfil its statutory 'duty to co-operate' in partnership with all the other necessary authorities. As part of this, the council would participate in any necessary joint work to identify and assess options in accordance with national policy and SEA regulations to establish where any unmet need might can be accommodated within the housing market area".*

Officers also discussed whether the policy or text should also refer to how, in terms of plan making, any unmet housing requirements would be incorporated. All officers agreed that the aim would be to ensure that it was made clear that a highly focussed review of the Local Plan would be implemented or any land requirements would be

made available through a subsequent development plan document. The following text could therefore also be incorporated into emerging plans:

*“If following subsequent joint work it is identified and agreed that any unmet housing need is required to be accommodated within this district one of the following approaches would be undertaken:*

- *a highly focussed, partial review of the Local Plan; or*
- *appropriate land allocations would be made through a subsequent development plan document.”*

The appropriate approach will depend on the scale of the provision required.

It was identified that in terms of structure it would sit comfortably within emerging housing distribution policies. Officers agreed that due to the likely prominence of this issue, text within each authorities housing distribution policy would be the recommended approach.

In addition to the proposed policy wording, officers recommended that SPIP consider establishing a Memorandum of Understanding<sup>9</sup> on this issue. It was considered that this would provide transparency on the process to be undertaken for a Planning Inspector when considering emerging Local Plans. This approach is recommended by the Planning Advisory Service on their website. It has also been used by other authorities who face similar issues relating to the Duty to Cooperate in recent months.

The Council considers the final apportionment from this partnership process of 4,950 homes to South Oxfordshire district to be soundly based on a cooperative process of countywide joint working, supported by appropriate evidence, and resulting in a memorandum setting out the agreed position (NPPF para's. 24 & 27).

The apportionment process was undertaken by the Post SHMA working group.

The process was coordinated by a 'Post-SHMA Working Group' of officers drawn from each of the six councils, meeting regularly, which reported to an Executive Officer Group which in turn reported to the Board.

The process was a non-statutory planning process to ‘...*address the unmet need arising from the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and assist Local Planning authorities meet the duty to cooperate, whilst protecting the sovereignty of individual Councils over their Local Plans*’. It culminated in the apportionment decision taken by the joint committee on 26 September 2016<sup>10</sup>.

In 2013, a Statement of Cooperation was produced by the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP) which preceded the Growth Board. It identified the scope, structure and process for cooperation in the event that one of the Councils was unable to meet its own assessed housing need. There was early recognition of the

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<sup>9</sup><https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/communityandliving/partnerships/GrowthBoard/PostSHMAStrategicWorkProgramme.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=970&MId=5060&Ver=4>



need for effective joint working on this cross-boundary strategic priority (NPPF2 para. 26 & 65).

The Oxfordshire SHMA 2014 was published in April 2014<sup>11</sup>. It provided an objective assessment of housing need for Oxford of 28,000 homes (mid-point) from 2011 to 2031. The SHMA was produced in accordance with both NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) requirements in place at the time of commencing. They remain related to the requirements of the revised NPPF (published in 2018).

In November 2014 the Growth Board agreed a joint programme of work for addressing the unmet need arising from the SHMA. The scope of the Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme was prepared providing for an expedient but sound planning process. In order to provide an independent view of the robustness of the process, Mr Keith Holland, a Planning Inspector seconded to DCLG to advise Local Planning authorities on Duty to Cooperate issues, reviewed the programme and endorsed it as meeting the Duty to Cooperate and being appropriate.

Oxford City's capacity to accommodate residential development was assessed, challenged and subjected to collective scrutiny. The Growth Board then agreed upon the working assumption of unmet need of 15,000 homes at a meeting on 19 November 2015.

The workstreams undertaken to apportion that need continued through 2016 and led to the report to the Growth Board on 26 September 2016<sup>12</sup>

A guiding principle of the work programme was not to hinder the 'sovereignty' of individual Local Plans. As a non-statutory process, it was understood that statutory plan-making processes would need to follow and that the shortlisted areas of search / spatial options considered to inform the apportionment decision were identified and considered without prejudice to consideration, through Local Plans, of all reasonable options for meeting unmet need.

### The evidence base and resulting apportionment

Oxford City's Objectively Assessed Need was identified through the 2014 SHMA as being 28,000 Homes (SHMA, 2014).

The SHMA has already been used as evidence for the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031<sup>13</sup> (adopted July 2015), the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (adopted December 2016), the West Oxfordshire Local Plan<sup>14</sup> (report of Examination dated 24 August 2018) and in the current Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 (Part 2) examination<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-studies/strategic-housing-market->

<sup>12</sup> [http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s34709/OGB\\_SEP2616R03%20Appendix%20One%20Post%20SHMA%20Strategic%20Work%20Programme%20Final%20Report.pdf](http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s34709/OGB_SEP2616R03%20Appendix%20One%20Post%20SHMA%20Strategic%20Work%20Programme%20Final%20Report.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/83/local-plans/376/adopted-cherwell-local-plan-2011-2031-part-1>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/localplan2031>

<sup>15</sup> [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2031-part-2/local-plan-2031-par](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2031-part-2/local-plan-2031-par)



It has repeatedly been found to be robust and appropriate evidence at these examinations (see para. 47 Cherwell Inspector's Report; para. 46 of the Vale of White Horse Inspector's Report; and paragraphs.44-46 of the West Oxfordshire Inspector's Report.)

The evidence informing agreement on the unmet need of Oxford comprised Oxford's Housing Land Availability Assessment (December 2014) and the process of scrutiny and challenge through the Post-SHMA work programme.

The decision of the Oxfordshire Growth Board to approve the final report was taken at its meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018 was a positive decision, justified by proportionate evidence, enabled collective progression with the apportionment process, in the interest of addressing Oxford's unmet needs (NPPF2 para 65).

The work undertaken to inform the apportionment of Oxford's agreed unmet need is set out in the Growth Board report leading to the apportionment decision.

An Oxford Green Belt Study<sup>16</sup> (October 2015) was produced to assess how the land within the Oxford Green Belt performed against the five purposes of Green Belts (as set out in NPPF). The study did not propose areas for release from Green Belt but enabled individual councils, with challenge from partners, to consider whether Green Belt land could be included as part of the areas of search that formed the basis of the apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing need.

An Oxford Spatial Options Assessment (SOA)<sup>17</sup> provided a criteria-based sustainability analysis of spatial options for use as guidance and evidence in determining how the unmet need could best be distributed across the county.

A total of 36 sites were identified by the six councils following a collective check and challenge process. The SOA was informed by both the Green Belt study and high-level transport work. Its purpose was to determine whether the spatial options could be considered to be potentially sustainable in broad terms for the purpose of identifying a reasonable and comparable understanding of district housing potential to help inform an apportionment.

Each of the 36 spatial options was assessed in terms of its likely effects in relation to overall sustainability, landscape and Green Belt. They were also assessed from a deliverability and viability perspective. The sustainability work was concluded as a 'RAG' assessment (Red-Amber-Green) showing a range of anticipated effects from 'significantly negative' to 'significantly positive' to enable a comparative judgement of options to be reached.

A high-level Transport Infrastructure Assessment of Spatial Options<sup>18</sup> (SOA) was undertaken in May 2016 which examined the transport implications of the 36 spatial

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/OxfordGreenBeltStudyFinalReport.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/OxfordSpatialOptionsFinalReport.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/projects/transport-infrastructure-assessment/>

options and considering, in particular, how those options might relate to Oxford. The work fed into the SOA and assisted the appraisal of the viability of different options.

An Education Assessment of Spatial Options<sup>19</sup> was produced to consider the implications for the provision of primary and secondary school places of the development of the 36 potential spatial options.

The work informed a final 'RAG' assessment of options undertaken by the Post SHMA project team and the Growth Board's Executive Officer Group. In considering the SOA, particular reliance was placed upon the sustainability criteria that indicated the relationship between the spatial options and Oxford city. The 'green' rated options informed the final apportionment recommendation (see para's. 136-138) which was carried by the Growth Board. Options were assessed in South Oxfordshire and those informing the apportionment of 4,950 homes without prejudice to Local Plans.

The Council considers that the Growth Board led process fully complied with the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 revised and updated in 2018 (NPPF2) and the statutory Duty to Cooperate.

It was undertaken in the interest of meeting objectively assessed needs (NPPF para 26 - 27) and ensured effective cooperation in respect of unmet needs (NPPF para 26 - 27 & 65). The output was a memorandum of cooperation<sup>20</sup> containing the apportionment and agreed by five of the six Oxfordshire Councils, South Oxfordshire did not sign this memorandum (NPPF2 para 26 & 65).

Note: The Inspector for the Vale of White Horse Local Plan concluded on the compliance of the apportionment process with NPPF1 as follows:

*"13. The overall approach to joint working across local authority boundaries in Oxfordshire has been, to my mind, a comprehensive and rigorous one: the joint evidence on, amongst other things, housing, in the form of the Oxfordshire SHMA, the co-operation through the Growth Board and its work programme for agreeing the level of unmet need in Oxford City and its appropriate distribution, was in line with paragraphs 178-181 of the NPPF in relation to engagement and planning strategically across local boundaries...."*

### The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal 2018

In November 2017 an outline agreement<sup>21</sup> was reached between the Oxfordshire Growth Board, the Oxfordshire councils and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) for a Housing and Growth Agreement with Government.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/projects/education-assessment-project-2/>

<sup>20</sup> [https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s34710/OGB\\_SEP2616R04%20%20Appendix%20Two%20Memorandum%20of%20Cooperation.pdf](https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s34710/OGB_SEP2616R04%20%20Appendix%20Two%20Memorandum%20of%20Cooperation.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/692093/Oxfordshire\\_Housing\\_and\\_Growth\\_Deal\\_-\\_Outline\\_Agreement.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/692093/Oxfordshire_Housing_and_Growth_Deal_-_Outline_Agreement.pdf)

A detailed delivery plan<sup>22</sup> was then developed and following agreement by Council meetings of each of the six Local Authorities and the OXLEP Board, including South Oxfordshire at its Council meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018. The Deal was agreed with Government in March 2018 and published by the Ministry for Housing and Local Government (MHCLG). The outline agreement lays out the basic framework for the deal. It is supported by the delivery plan and affordable housing grant parameters documents<sup>23</sup>.

The Deal provides £215 million of new funding over five years to support the infrastructure needed to implement the Oxfordshire Local Plans and achieve delivery of the 100,000 homes between 2011 and 2031 identified in the 2014 Oxfordshire SHMA, alongside a commitment to adopt an Oxfordshire-wide statutory joint plan by 2021.

Under the terms of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth deal the Government will provide Oxfordshire's six local authorities with £60 million of funding for affordable housing and £150 million of funding (£30m for five years) for infrastructure improvements that will benefit existing communities and unlock new development sites. Oxfordshire councils are already committing in excess of £340 million to infrastructure and housing investment over the same period.

Government will also provide £5 million in capacity funding to help meet the costs of taking the investment programme forward. This will include the development of a Joint Strategic Spatial Plan, providing a county-wide integrated planning framework to guide the sustainable growth to be in place by 2021.

As part of the Growth Deal the Government recognised the importance of Oxfordshire's knowledge intensive economy for UK plc with two universities and unique research institutions. It has committed to work with OxLEP to develop a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) to back Oxfordshire's world class science and innovation assets and identify and grow new sectors. Support will also be provided to help scale up high-growth companies, to identify and address specific skills needs and to attract further investment and expansion of the Science Vale and Didcot Enterprise Zones.

The ambitious and comprehensive investment programme will help deliver sustainable development with a focus on quality of place and more affordable housing. It will be overseen by the Growth Board, working in partnership with the Homes England, Highways England and other partners. Homes England will help ensure the volumes of land needed for development across the county are brought forward and work with councils on longer term solutions to make sure sites are built out.

As part of the Deal, to aid timely delivery of planned infrastructure and housing, the Government committed to provide greater freedoms and flexibilities for Oxfordshire councils to help prevent speculative development. On 12 September 2018 the first of the planning flexibilities agreed as part of the deal was enacted by written ministerial

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<sup>22</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/692097/Oxfordshire\\_Housing\\_and\\_Growth\\_Deal\\_Delivery\\_Plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/692097/Oxfordshire_Housing_and_Growth_Deal_Delivery_Plan.pdf)

<sup>23</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/692114/Oxfordshire\\_Housing\\_Deal\\_-\\_Affordable\\_Housing\\_Grant\\_Parameters.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/692114/Oxfordshire_Housing_Deal_-_Affordable_Housing_Grant_Parameters.pdf)

statement<sup>24</sup>. This has amended land supply policies for Oxfordshire whilst the joint statutory spatial plan is developed for implementation by 2021.

A working group of officers has met regularly, initially fortnightly, since September 2017 to design and introduce appropriate systems and workflows to ensure the deal can be fully implemented across all Council.

Strengthened scrutiny arrangements have been agreed by establishing joint scrutiny committees to oversee the different strands of the deal through elected members drawn from each Council.

Achieving the long-term ambitions for planned growth in the country will require a sustained partnership approach. Growth Board members will seek further rounds of Government funding and private investment alongside local authority funds to support infrastructure and housing development to support long-term growth.

#### The Oxfordshire Growth Deal (2018) - Oxfordshire commitments

The Oxfordshire Growth Deal records at that point in time (Plans have progressed since this date):

*20. The submission and adoption, subject to the inspection process, of a joint statutory spatial plan covering all five district councils in Oxfordshire, by 2021*

*21. The Oxfordshire authorities are committed to allocating land for development through their current Local Plans. There are adopted Local Plans in place in Cherwell and for Vale of White Horse, a recently examined Plan in the case of West Oxfordshire and new Local Plans underway for Oxford City and South Oxfordshire.*

*22. Oxfordshire's plans are focused on placing economic growth at the heart of a drive to provide more housing – meeting both current and projected need. And housing delivery across the county is up over 75% in the last three years (up to 2015/16). However, sustaining this level of increase will not be possible without greater collaboration to support delivery of a county-wide programme of infrastructure investment.*

*23. With support from the county council, Oxfordshire's five district councils will enter into an agreement to work together to produce a joint statutory spatial plan to be adopted by March 2021, subject to examination. The following milestones will need to be met, with funding contingent on achievement of each milestone:*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>Statement of Common Ground</i>	<i>31 March 2018</i>
<i>All Local Plans submitted for examination</i>	<i>1 April 2019</i>
<i>Draft joint statutory spatial plan</i>	<i>30 October 2019</i>
<i>Submission of joint statutory spatial plan</i>	<i>31 March 2020</i>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2018-09-12/HCWS955/>

All Oxfordshire Authorities are aligned to these milestones.

### Other Countywide Joint Working

Other joint working across Oxfordshire includes:

- The Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership (established following the Government's Natural Environment White Paper in 2011) which with District Council input is developing the Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy. South Oxfordshire District Council works with the Oxfordshire LNP as 'bodies bound by the Duty to Co-operate should cooperate with and have regard to the views of Local Nature Partnerships in the planning of sustainable development' (The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012).
- South Oxfordshire District Council has also worked with the County Council, other Districts and TVERC (Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre) to develop a set of common indicators to monitor biodiversity.
- In 2008, all Oxfordshire Councils jointly commissioned and signed off a Needs Assessment for Travelling Show people. The study included an analysis of accommodation needs at County and District level. The project was managed by a joint officer working group and full agreement was reached on the study's conclusions. Also jointly prepared was the June 2017 Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment and the April 2015 Oxford City Council South Oxfordshire District Council Vale of White Horse District Council Delivery of Pitches Final Report.
- Joint working on housing policy matters across Oxfordshire including:
  - Joint working on supported housing provision for Physical Disability, Learning Disability and mental health whereby the County have mapped necessary provision and are working with the Districts to provide. Specialist accommodation can significantly reduce support costs for the County.
  - Joint District/County steering group with local implementation groups at District level for Extra Care Housing.
- Collaboration is also well developed on sports and cultural matters through:
  - Active Oxfordshire which comprises local authorities and interested groups/organisations are a registered charity.

Joint officer working groups also meet regularly to discuss Conservation and Heritage and Finance issues.

## **B. The Oxfordshire Enterprise Partnership (OLEP)**

### Strategic Matters

There are no existing strategic matters disputed between SODC and Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) is responsible for championing and developing the Oxfordshire economy.

Board Membership is the Leader and Chief Executive of the County and each District Council in Oxfordshire. Officer support groups include:

- Oxon LEP Economic Development Officers quarterly meeting and day-to-day liaison;
- Invest in Oxfordshire service (OCC) on business development & inward investment;
- Oxon Tourism officer liaison group.

Of note has been collaboration between OxLEP members on:

- Development of the Strategic Economic Plan (2014) and refresh (2016);
- Development of the Local Industrial Strategy for Oxfordshire (2018);
- Collaboration on Inward Investment into the County, through 'Invest in Oxfordshire', a practical day-to-day service promoting South Oxfordshire and Oxon, providing details of available commercial property and assisting potential investors to move into or grow within South Oxfordshire. Collaboration includes a shared property database and joint meetings with investors and businesses;
- Skills promotion;
- Development of City Deal (2013) and the Local Growth Fund;

### The Strategic Economic Plan

Following the adoption of the Core Strategy, in March 2014 the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) published a 'Strategic Economic Plan' (SEP)<sup>25</sup> setting out an ambition for accelerated economic growth for Oxfordshire. The SEP seeks to meet the needs of our science and knowledge-rich economy, placing Oxfordshire at the forefront of the UK's global growth ambitions.

The 2014 Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for Oxfordshire was refreshed in 2016<sup>26</sup> and coordinated by a working group drawn from the OxLEP partners, including South Oxfordshire Council. It took account of evidence that had become available since the first SEP was produced, including new strategies relating to skills, innovation, culture and heritage, natural resources and the environment. It acknowledged the changing context for Oxfordshire's economic well-being. It also responded to substantial engagement from the county's businesses, universities, research institutions, local authorities, voluntary and community sectors.

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<sup>25</sup> <http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s24538/Oxfordshire%20LEP%20SEP.pdf?txtonly=1>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxfordshire%20SEP.pdf>



Like its predecessor, the refreshed SEP gave a strong ongoing commitment to sustainable economic growth across the county and through the funding streams which followed, led to direct support for economic investments and business support measures across the Oxfordshire economy, many which were focused on South Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire's SEP is intended to be a widely-owned "economic route map" focused on supporting the economic performance, potential and prospects of Oxfordshire, and managing the county's strong economic growth to ensure sustainability and inclusivity. The refreshed SEP has informed the development of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and is itself closely aligned with the measures brought forwards through the Local Plan.

The original SEP was prepared at the same time as the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), in 2013. It incorporated the figures for employment growth produced for the SHMA, along with the housing requirement figures. This refreshed and updated SEP also reflects these figures. It is important to note therefore that the employment and housing figures in this SEP are a product of the Local Planning process, not an input into it.

### The Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy

The emerging Oxfordshire Industrial Strategy (2018) is being developed as the overall plan to deliver inclusive economic growth in Oxfordshire and generate additional growth for the UK. HM Government commissioned the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to develop the Oxfordshire Industrial Strategy as one of the components of the Oxfordshire Growth Deal (2018) and to form part of the economic growth strand of the emerging Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

It has been overseen by a working group with extensive direct input from all Councils reporting to both the LEP Board and the Oxfordshire Growth Board so that Local Plans, the Growth Deal and LIS are all aligned.

The Oxfordshire Industrial Strategy<sup>27</sup> is designed to assist government, investors, businesses and our local communities understand how OXLEP is doing to drive inclusive growth and place-based transformation in Oxfordshire. It focuses on how local partners, including the Local Authorities of Oxfordshire can work together to improve productivity, innovate to tackle the UK's four Grand Challenges<sup>28</sup>, and propel Britain to global leadership in the industries of the future.

The OXLEP vision is to be 'a top three global innovation ecosystem by 2040'. The Oxfordshire Industrial Strategy includes a number of priority interventions to achieve this, including building on and taking forwards parts of the adopted Local Plans and will be supported by a delivery and investment plan.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/lis>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-the-grand-challenges/industrial-strategy-the-grand-challenges>



The accompanying working draft Baseline Economic Review (2018)<sup>29</sup> is an objective assessment of Oxfordshire's economic performance to date. It explores how Oxfordshire has performed relative to the UK as a whole and the relative performance of each district in Oxfordshire and key sectors within the county. This report provides detailed economic evidence which has helped us to shape and prioritise future plans for inclusive growth, productivity improvements and place-based developments which are to be brought forward through the adopted Local Plans. The evidence in this report also helps to provide the context for why Oxfordshire is now aspiring to be 'a top three global innovation ecosystem'. The report finishes with an exploration of what this means in practice.

## Engagement

The Local Enterprise Partnership is business led, with the private sector chairing the Executive Board. All of the local authorities in Oxfordshire are represented on the Board.

Oxfordshire has seen 45,000 new jobs created over the past five years, representing over half of the 2031 target of 85,600 new jobs. As a county, OxLEP and the Growth Board partners aim to maintain this growth whilst working jointly to ensure that investment in the infrastructure identified through OXIS supports the planned growth identified through the SEP, LIS and adopted Local Plans.

In 2018 OxLEP commissioned an energy study to identify future energy demand, supply needs and the opportunities to increase reliance on more sustainable energy sources. Whilst this report is not yet complete, it aims to ensure that the energy needs generated through the planned growth initiated by Local Plans can be met into the future.

The OxLEP SEP led to the award of funding programmes and key investment in nationally significant sectors. OXLEP coordinates delivery of funding streams such as Local Growth Fund in partnership with local councils including South Oxfordshire.

South Oxfordshire District Council has worked with OxLEP in the preparation of the Community Employment Plan policy along with the Vale of White Horse District Council.

OxLEP has been consulted at all stages of Local Plan preparation and have provided comments which have been taken on board.

## Outcome

The emerging Local Plan has been updated continuously following comments from OxLEP.

The Community Employment Plan policy is based on text shared by OxLEP.

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<sup>29</sup><https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxfordshire%20Baseline%20Economic%20Review.pdf>

South Oxfordshire reaffirmed its desire to work together with OXLEP and engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis, and where possible and to undertake joint work where benefits can arise.

## **C. Oxfordshire Authorities**

### **Oxfordshire County Council**

Collaboration with Oxfordshire County Council is particularly close. A number of joint planning documents have been commissioned that bring together the respective roles of the two Councils in considering the future development of the District and ensuring that the appropriate level of infrastructure is provided.

### **Strategic Matters**

The relevant strategic issues identified and considered as part of the Local Plan and its supporting evidence base in relation to the County Council include:

- Matters relating to highways, public transport, and provision of new cycleways and footpaths, especially given their role as Highway Authority;
- Matters relating to education, especially given their role as Education Authority;
- Matters related to adult social care, minerals and waste and fire services as relevant to the impacts associated with proposed new development;
- The consideration of the impact and potential of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

Extensive on-going engagement has been undertaken with the County Council throughout the development of the Local Plan.

This has been through regular, at least monthly, planning policy liaison meetings and on-going dialogue on matters related to infrastructure planning associated with the County Council. Specifically, this engagement has included:

- Joint preparation of a transport modelling evidence base through use of the Oxfordshire Strategic Model;
- Engagement of the County Council at each step in the production of Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Sustainable Transport Study;
- Partnership working on Growth Board workstreams, including development of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy;
- Review and agreement to proposed policies to safeguard land relevant to delivery of future transport schemes;
- Joint officer attendance at liaison meetings with site promoters of strategic allocations;
- Ensuring policies reflect and take account of County Council guidance and policy relevant to planning matters, including that set out in the latest Local Transport Plan and Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
- Engagement on development of a proposed delivery plan for Didcot Garden Town and HiF collaboration;

As a result of the extensive engagement undertaken with the County Council, evidence base work has been produced that both supports Local Plan policy and gives further detail and background to the development planned for within the Local Plan.

The most directly relevant evidence base produced in association with the County Council is the transport modelling work, as summarised in the Evaluation of Transport

Impacts Report: Stage 1, published at the Preferred Options consultation stage Spring 2017, the Stage 2 report published alongside the Regulation 19 consultation in October 2017 and the updates related to the second Regulation 19 Local Plan in late 2018/early 2019. The Sustainable Transport Study, Stage 1 and Stage 2 have also been produced with full engagement of officers dealing with public transport and cycling matters at the Council.

The final Infrastructure Delivery Plan has had extensive input from the County, who have ensured in particular that education and transport schemes included in the schedule of infrastructure are largely reflective of their current status and cost. This in turn has been informed by evidence and schemes identified in the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy prepared for the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

Engagement on matters relevant to the County Council will continue as more detailed planning for the proposed development set out in the Local Plan takes place. Examples of this include:

- Garden Town infrastructure workstreams, including the set-up of a jointly funded detailed traffic model of the Garden Town area to enable more detailed transport scheme development;
- Collaboration on transport schemes related to the HiF work, including for the proposed Didcot to Culham Thames River Crossing;
- Continuing to engage on the planning for school enhancements, including the proposed new schools on strategic allocations;
- Updating the Infrastructure Delivery Plan when possible, taking into account latest costs and more detailed work.

The SODC Publication Version Local Plan received a supportive response from OCC.

## Oxford City Council

### Strategic Matters

The key issue that South Oxfordshire and the other Oxfordshire authorities have continued to work with Oxford City on is the unmet housing need arising from Oxford City.

The post SHMA working group, comprising all of the Oxfordshire authorities sought to determine the level of housing need which Oxford City was unable to meet and how this might be redistributed elsewhere in the Housing Market Area (see earlier section under Oxfordshire Growth Board).

Oxford City Council indicated that they would have difficulties in meeting their housing need set out in the SHMA and that other districts across the county were asked to consider taking some of this “unmet housing need.”

The agreed working assumption, and the resultant unmet housing need for Oxford is 15,000 houses. The background to this working assumption is set out in the Statement of Common Ground at Annex 1.

The apportionment to South Oxfordshire was 4,950 homes, and as Oxford and South Oxfordshire are the only two authorities not to progress their Plans it is reasonable to presume that this working assumption is a sound basis from which to Plan to meet the unmet housing need. The table below displays the apportionment to each District in Oxfordshire.

District	Apportionment (2011-2031)
Cherwell	4400
Oxford	550
South Oxfordshire	4950*
Vale of White Horse	2200
West Oxfordshire	2750
Total	14,850

\*South Oxfordshire did not sign the Memorandum of Cooperation

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan’s strategic matter is meeting the unmet housing need of 4,950 homes.

### Engagement

The Oxfordshire Growth Board proposed a working assumption for this unmet housing need of 15,000 homes. In 2016 South Oxfordshire did not agree to the final apportionment approach. The extent of the unmet housing need has yet to be tested as the Oxford City Local Plan has not yet advanced to its examination and reporting stage, at which point this would be confirmed.

The West Oxfordshire Local Plan Inspectors’ conclusions do give all Oxfordshire Authorities the assurance that the working assumption is a reasonable figure to Plan

for in Local Plans. It is recognised that the Duty to Cooperate is not a duty to agree. Earlier stages of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan took positive steps to make contributions towards the unmet housing need for Oxford City, recognising that at that time, the full level of unmet need of Oxford City was undetermined.

The Growth Board undertook an exercise to explore how this overall figure could be met by identifying a series of potential sites across Oxfordshire and to arrive at an apportionment approach for consideration through the individual Local Plan processes, resulting in the Oxford Spatial Options Assessment Final Report (September 2016)<sup>30</sup>.

The approach to meeting unmet housing need by South Oxfordshire that was proposed within the first Publication Version Local Plan (October 2017) did not have the support of Oxford City, Cherwell and West Oxfordshire. But following the agreement in February 2018 to sign up to the Oxfordshire Growth Deal and the agreements that support new infrastructure investment, together with agreement by MHCLG to planning freedoms and flexibilities, South Oxfordshire revised the Local Plan to incorporate the full apportionment identified through the 2016 Growth Board Final Report of 4,950 dwellings.

South Oxfordshire and Oxford City continue to engage with the Growth Board on all matters related to the SHMA, the working assumption, the apportionment to Districts and each Local Plan.

The latest engagement resulted in a Statement of Common Ground with all Oxfordshire Authorities which was submitted to the Cherwell Local Plan Examination in February 2019<sup>31</sup>. This is updated in the Oxfordshire SoCG at Annex 1.

In other matters, South Oxfordshire worked with Oxford City Council and the Vale of the White Horse District Council on a jointly commissioned study to assess the need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show people accommodation. The Gypsy and Traveller Assessment (GTAA) was published in 2014 and following this a Joint Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment Delivery of Pitches Final Report was completed in April 2015<sup>32</sup>. Following this Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse collaborated to produce a joint GTAA in June 2017<sup>33</sup>.

## **Outcome**

The second Publication Version Local Plan (October 2017) received a supportive response from Oxford City Council.

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/OxfordSpatialOptionsFinalReport.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/8754/socg-04-oxfordshire-councils-redacted.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=710109253&CODE=6485F35814CDEE992C6165B83FE8EDCA](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=710109253&CODE=6485F35814CDEE992C6165B83FE8EDCA)

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Gypsy,%20Traveller%20and%20Travelling%20Showpeople%20Accommodation%20Assessment%20June%202017.pdf>

### Apportionment figure

In the second Publication Version Local Plan (January 2019), the position of the Council has evolved in response to the changing circumstances, i.e. the progression of neighbouring plans and the signing of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. The Local Plan meets the apportionment figure of 4,950 homes and identifies this full amount in Local Plan Policy STRAT2.

It is appropriate and practical to meet this agreed apportionment figure as there is sufficient capacity within South Oxfordshire on suitable, available and deliverable sites, albeit on Green Belt land. This is supported by the Council's Sustainability Appraisal.

As a result the same approach is now being taken in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan to that taken in the Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire Local Plans (the Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review is focused exclusively on addressing the unmet housing need of Oxford city through a series of proposed allocations) of incorporating unmet housing need into the Local Plan in the proportion identified in partnership with the other Planning Authorities, but considered through the Local Plan development process. The process taken through the Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire Local Plans has been tested at Examination and found to be sound, leading to an adopted Local Plan in each case.

The apportionment outcome is collaboratively agreed as set out in the Oxfordshire SoCG at Annex 1.

### Supply of sites

The second Publication Version Local Plan (January 2019) contains three proposed strategic allocations that are located on the edge of Oxford. They are all well connected to the City and cumulatively their development would enable a contribution towards the apportionment figure identified through the Oxfordshire Growth Board Post SHMA process and within the Local Plan of 4,950 dwellings.

The residential dwelling capacity of these three allocations is approximately 3,000 homes at Grenoble Road, 1,800 at Northfield, 1,100 at Land north of Bayswater Brook. In total this is approximately 5,900 dwellings which more than satisfies the unmet need of Oxford of 4,950.

These proposed allocations are currently located within the Oxford Green Belt. Paragraphs 136 and 137 of the NPPF (2019) are set out in Section 2 and the second Publication Version Local Plan (January 2019) responds to these paragraphs by presenting a review of this matter in the Site Selection Background Paper. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan:

- Proposes strategic allocations on Green Belt land;
- Provides exceptional circumstances for the release of Green Belt for each site. There are generic exceptional circumstances that would apply to the three proposed strategic allocations adjacent to Oxford City which is that this unmet need in itself is the exceptional circumstance to justify the allocations here;

- The extent of changes to the Green Belt boundaries are clearly identified in Appendix 4 (Green Belt Proposed Changes) of the Local Plan for all strategic allocation currently within the Green Belt;

The achievement of the supply of sites to meet the agreed apportionment of Oxford housing need is collaboratively agreed as set out in the Oxfordshire SoCG at Annex 1.



## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Strategic Matters**

The key strategic issue between all Oxfordshire authorities including Cherwell District is the unmet housing need arising from Oxford City.

The post SHMA working group, comprising all of the Oxfordshire authorities sought to determine the level of housing need which Oxford City was unable to meet and how this might be redistributed elsewhere in the Housing Market Area (see earlier section under Oxfordshire Growth Board).

Oxford City Council indicated that they would have difficulties in meeting their housing need set out in the SHMA and that other districts across the county were asked to consider taking some of this “unmet housing need.”

The agreed working assumption, and the resultant unmet housing needs for Oxford is 15,000 houses. The background to this working assumption is set out in the Statement of Common Ground at Annex 1.

Cherwell District Council adopted Part 1 of their Local Plan in July 2015. They are currently at examination for their Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan containing specific development proposals to provide 4,400 houses to meet their agreed proportion (from the Growth Board led Post SHMA process) of the Oxford unmet housing need <sup>34</sup>.

Cherwell District Council did not identify any housing need which they could not meet.

### **Engagement**

South Oxfordshire provided comments to the Cherwell Local Plan Options consultation in January 2017, their Local Plan proposed submission consultation in October 2017 and Regulation 19 Local Plan of July 2017.

In addition to the above engagement and formal public consultation, South Oxfordshire and the Cherwell have produced joint evidence including:

- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 (alongside the other Oxfordshire authorities);
- Gypsy and Traveller needs assessments;

### **Outcome**

Both authorities have a history of working together and engaging cooperatively. This should be continued in order to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis, and where possible to undertake joint work where benefits can arise.

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/83/local-plans/515/local-plan-part-1-partial-review---examination>

The latest engagement resulted in a Statement of Common Ground with all Oxfordshire Authorities which was submitted to the Cherwell Local Plan Examination in February 2019<sup>35</sup>. This is updated in the Oxfordshire SoCG at Annex 1.

The apportionment outcome is collaboratively agreed as set out in the Oxfordshire SoCG at Annex 1.

The achievement of the supply of sites to meet the agreed apportionment of Oxford housing need is collaboratively agreed as set out in the Oxfordshire SoCG at Annex 1.

The second Publication Version Local Plan (January 2019) received a supportive response from Cherwell District Council.

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/8754/socg-04-oxfordshire-councils-redacted.pdf>

## **Vale of the White Horse**

### **Strategic Matters**

The key strategic issue between all Oxfordshire authorities including Vale of White Horse District is the unmet housing need arising from Oxford City.

The post SHMA working group, comprising all of the Oxfordshire authorities sought to determine the level of housing need which Oxford City was unable to meet and how this might be redistributed elsewhere in the Housing Market Area (see earlier section under Oxfordshire Growth Board).

Oxford City Council indicated that they would have difficulties in meeting their housing need set out in the SHMA and that other districts across the county were asked to consider taking some of this “unmet housing need.”

The agreed working assumption, and the resultant unmet housing needs for Oxford is 15,000 houses. The background to this working assumption is set out in the Statement of Common Ground at Annex 1.

A second strategic matter between the Councils is the delivery of the Didcot Garden Town improvements. Didcot straddles both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District and it is an important town to facilitate sustainable development and the delivery of the garden town programme would support the strategies of both Councils Local Plans.

Vale of White Horse District did not identify any housing need which they could not meet.

### **Engagement**

The two councils of South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse have shared a management team, including a shared head of planning for a number of years. There is now a shared planning policy team.

At a strategic level both councils, together with the other Oxfordshire councils, are members of the Oxfordshire Growth Board and its supporting Executive Officers Group established in 2014. Prior to this both councils were members of the Oxfordshire Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP). The two councils are also members of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) which has prepared the Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire.

In addition to the above engagement and formal public consultation, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District have produced joint evidence including:

- the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (with the other Oxfordshire authorities);

- a joint Housing Strategy<sup>36</sup>;
- the Didcot Garden Town delivery plan (October 2017)<sup>37</sup> and supporting masterplan (that outlines the ambition to produce a joint planning document), and its supporting evidence to support housing and economic growth across Science Vale;
- Gypsy and Traveller needs assessments;
- a joint Green Infrastructure Strategy; and
- a joint hotel needs assessment.

The two councils have also collaborated closely on:

- Habitats Regulations Assessments;
- Leisure and sports pitches strategies;
- Infrastructure Delivery Plans;
- Evaluation of Transport Impacts;
- Water Cycles Studies; and
- Community Employment Plans

## Outcome

The two councils have produced similar or complementary policies for a number of the areas mentioned above in their respective plans and continue to share information and jointly monitor the delivery of houses, jobs and infrastructure. Both authorities have a history of working together and engaging cooperatively. This should be continued in order to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis, and where possible to undertake joint work where benefits can arise.

Vale of White Horse District did not identify any unmet housing need.

The Two Councils have made commitments in their Local Development Schemes to enable the delivery of Didcot garden town.

The two councils agreed common ground to support the Vale Local Plan Part One, and Part Two, with the latter (at the time of submission) nearing the completion of its examination.

The latest engagement resulted in a Statement of Common Ground with all Oxfordshire Authorities which was submitted to the Cherwell Local Plan Examination in February 2019<sup>38</sup>. This is updated in the Oxfordshire SoCG at Annex 1.

The apportionment outcome is collaboratively agreed as set out in the Oxfordshire SoCG at Annex 1.

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Joint%20Housing%20Delivery%20Strategy%20-%202018%20to%202028.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/business/support-business/supporting-our-town-centres/didcot/didcot-garden-town-0>

The achievement of the supply of sites to meet the agreed apportionment of Oxford housing need is collaboratively agreed as set out in the Oxfordshire SoCG at Annex 1.

## **West Oxfordshire District Council**

### **Strategic issues**

The key strategic issue between all Oxfordshire authorities including West Oxfordshire District Council is the unmet housing need arising from Oxford City.

The post SHMA working group, comprising all of the Oxfordshire authorities sought to determine the level of housing need which Oxford City was unable to meet and how this might be redistributed elsewhere in the Housing Market Area (see earlier section under Oxfordshire Growth Board).

The agreed working assumption, and the resultant unmet housing needs for Oxford is 15,000 houses. The background to this working assumption is set out in the Statement of Common Ground at Annex 1. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan includes 2,750 houses to meet their agreed proportion (from the Growth Board led Post SHMA process) of the Oxford unmet housing need.

In summer 2017, West Oxfordshire District Council embarked upon both Stage 2 and Stage 3 of their Local Plan Examination. Additional consultation on technical evidence including the Sustainability Appraisal took place in November 2017. In light of this, the Council published for consultation a series of further main modifications to the Local Plan in early 2018. Following the conclusion of their Examination, the Local Plan was adopted in September 2018.

West Oxfordshire District Council did not identify any housing need which it could not meet.

### **Engagement**

The council provided comments on the proposed 'Main Modifications' to the draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan consultation in December 2016 and February 2017. Correspondence took place in 2017 with regard to each district's draft Local Plan consultations and West Oxfordshire's Examination in Public.

In early 2019, West Oxfordshire District Council provided formal representations to the proposed submission draft South Oxfordshire Local Plan. The comments are summarised below:

- The identified housing requirement for South Oxfordshire at 775 homes per year is consistent with the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014) which remains the most up to date assessment of housing need for the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area.
- In addition to South Oxfordshire's housing need, the policy also recognises the requirement to provide a further 4,950 homes as a contribution to Oxford's unmet housing need. This is consistent with the apportionment agreed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board in September 2016, in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate and is therefore supported.
- The changes made to the overall strategy are significant and help to address the concerns raised previously. The allocation of seven strategic sites as proposed will make a significant contribution towards meeting identified

housing needs in the period to 2034 and beyond and they are therefore supported in principle

- Particularly support the explicit reference which is now made in the policy to meeting Oxford's unmet housing need on strategic allocations adjacent to the boundary of Oxford near to where that need arises.
- Support approach of additional provision to be delivered in the ten-year period (April 2021 – March 2031) as agreed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board in 2016 and subsequently reflected in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.
- Support Policy STRAT5 (Housing Densities) in principle. Note the basic premise of supporting higher densities in the most sustainable and accessible locations is consistent with national policy but note that the pursuit of higher densities should not be achieved at the expense of quality place making and residential amenity.
- Support the general premise of Policy STRAT6 in principle - it is self-evident that if provision is to be made for Oxford's unmet needs on sites close to the edge of Oxford, then some development within the Green Belt is inevitable. However, it will be for South Oxfordshire District Council to demonstrate that exceptional circumstances exist.
- Support the revised approach set out in Policy H9 (Affordable Housing) which increases the requirement from 40% to 50% on the three allocated sites adjoining Oxford.
- Support commitment made to partnership working in respect of east-west rail and the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway under Policy TRANS1a.

In addition to the engagement and formal public consultation, South Oxfordshire and West Oxfordshire have produced joint evidence including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (alongside the other Oxfordshire authorities).

## **Outcome**

Both councils collaborate on strategic housing matters through the Oxfordshire Growth Board and economic matters through the Oxfordshire Local Economic Partnership (OXLEP). The authorities have been cooperatively and actively engaged in a programme of joint work to assess the level of unmet housing need from Oxford and then how it might be apportioned. It was reaffirmed that through regular meetings and the growth board and OXLEP meetings, the authorities will continue to work cooperatively on matters of mutual interest and cross-boundary strategic importance including determining/implementing/delivering an apportionment of Oxford unmet housing.

A Statement of Common Ground between South Oxfordshire and West Oxfordshire district councils was prepared to support the West Oxfordshire Local Plan Examination in 2017<sup>39</sup>.

West Oxfordshire District Council did not identify any housing need which it could not meet.

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/1602191/WOLP-52-Statement-of-common-ground-with-South-Oxfordshire-District-Council-8-May-2017.pdf>

The latest engagement resulted in a Statement of Common Ground with all Oxfordshire Authorities which was submitted to the Cherwell Local Plan Examination in February 2019<sup>40</sup>. This is updated in the Oxfordshire SoCG at Annex 1.

The apportionment outcome is collaboratively agreed as set out in the Oxfordshire SoCG at Annex 1.

The achievement of the supply of sites to meet the agreed apportionment of Oxford housing need is collaboratively agreed as set out in the Oxfordshire SoCG at Annex 1.

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<sup>40</sup> <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/8754/socg-04-oxfordshire-councils-redacted.pdf>



## **D. Neighbouring Authorities joint working**

### **Aylesbury Vale District Council**

#### **Strategic issues**

Aylesbury Vale is located north-east of the district. The boundary between the two districts largely follows the River Thame which flows between two of the largest settlements on the shared border; the market town of Thame in South Oxfordshire and Haddenham in Aylesbury Vale.

The Aylesbury Vale Local Plan was subject to examination in July 2018.

It is recognised by both parties that there is an overlap of parts of the Oxfordshire HMA which covers South Oxfordshire and a part falls within Aylesbury Vale District. However, in terms of 'best fit' it is agreed that Aylesbury Vale and South Oxfordshire lie in separate but adjoining Housing Market Areas and Functional Economic Market Areas.

Aylesbury Vale did not identify any potential unmet housing need which they wished us to help with.

Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) signed a Duty to Co-operate Agreement. As of 13 July 2017, the four Buckinghamshire authorities formally signed a MOU agreeing the unmet need coming into Aylesbury Vale totalling 8,000 dwellings. Aylesbury Vale confirms that it can accommodate the identified unmet need.

Aylesbury Vale previously proposed significant development at; the following locations:

- Haddenham;
- Long Crendon;
- A new strategic settlement at Haddenham;
- Other locations throughout Aylesbury Vale.

South Oxfordshire District Council advised Aylesbury Vale that such development could present cross boundary impacts on South Oxfordshire and affect settlements such as Thame, where further development is likely to occur. Aylesbury Vale District Council previously advised that transport impacts should be fully assessed taking account of cumulative impacts in terms of the growth planned in the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, the Thame Neighbourhood Development Plan, the emerging SODC Local Plan, the draft new Princes Risborough Area Action Plan, and the draft new Wycombe District Council Local Plan.

The key strategic issues between South Oxfordshire and Aylesbury Vale include:

- Potential for any future unmet housing need;
- Cumulative impacts in terms of the growth planned;
- Cross boundary impact on transport/highways including implications of the proposed Oxford-Cambridge Expressway;
- Additional impact in relation to flood risk associated with the River Thame or tributaries.

## **Engagement**

SODC have been consulted on a number of Aylesbury Vale Local Plan documents. The council provided comments on the draft Aylesbury Vale Local Plan consultation in September 2016. Meetings were held between officers of the council and Aylesbury Vale District Council in May 2015, August 2016 and May 2017. Ongoing correspondence took place with regard to a potential site of a previously proposed reservoir close to Chinnor.

In addition to consultation on the SODC emerging Local Plan, we have also invited comments from AVDC on our Water Cycle Study and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment given the relationship of the districts and watercourses.

## **Outcome**

SODC and Aylesbury Vale agree to co-operate on matters concerning any other strategic issues which affect both local authorities and to consult on policies and proposals that have cross boundary impacts. These might include landscape and visual impact particularly concerning the landscape around Thame and between Haddenham and Thame or flood risk assessments covering the River Thame or tributaries thereof.

A Statement of Common Ground was completed for Aylesbury Vale Local Plan examination in February 2018<sup>41</sup>. In it, it was agreed that there is an overlap of parts of an Oxfordshire HMA covering both South Oxfordshire and a part covering Aylesbury Vale. However, in terms of 'best fit' it is agreed that Aylesbury Vale and South Oxfordshire lie in separate but adjoining Housing Market Areas and Functional Economic Market Areas.

Neither authority is requesting the other authority accommodate any unmet development needs.

In terms of the next Local Plans to be prepared after adoption of the VALP 2013-33 and the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-34, SODC and AVDC agree that dialogue can take place concerning playing pitch provision in the Northern sub-area of the South Oxfordshire around Chinnor in the context of growth being planned for in the respective next Local Plans for both districts. Aylesbury Vale anticipates there are likely to be higher levels of growth district-wide that will need to be taken forward in the next Local Plan post adoption of VALP.

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<sup>41</sup>[https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/VALP/Examination/Duty/CD.DTC\\_.010%20AVDC%20and%20South%20Oxfordshire%20Council%20MOU%20%28February%202018%29.pdf](https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/VALP/Examination/Duty/CD.DTC_.010%20AVDC%20and%20South%20Oxfordshire%20Council%20MOU%20%28February%202018%29.pdf)

## **Reading Borough Council**

### **Strategic Matters**

Reading Borough Council is a unitary authority covering the contiguous urban area centred on the town of Reading. It is located to the south of South Oxfordshire district.

The key strategic matter between South Oxfordshire and Reading is the proposed third Thames River crossing.

Housing need is not a strategic matter of relevance for this Local Plan. Reading Borough Council did not identify any unmet housing need or any other needs which they wished South Oxfordshire to assist with.

Reading Borough Council adopted its Core Strategy in 2008 and is in the latter stages of replacing this with a Local Plan. It undertook a pre-submission consultation on its draft Local Plan between May and June 2017 and it was submitted for examination in March 2018. The examination commenced, and hearing sessions took place in September/October 2018<sup>42</sup>. At the time of writing this statement the Inspector's report has not yet been received.

The four authorities of Bracknell Forest, Reading Borough, West Berkshire and Wokingham Borough agreed to work collaboratively to meet the identified Objectively Assessed Need in their housing market area (tested in their Local Plans under the provisions of the NPPF of 2014). The approach to meeting the areas housing needs is set out in the West of Berkshire Strategic Planning Framework (Dec 2016)<sup>43</sup> and followed through in each Districts respective Local Plans.

The two Councils have been in ongoing discussion to understand Reading's Gypsy and Traveller provision need; however this is not a key strategic matter for this Local Plan.

### **Engagement**

SODC has been consulted on a number of Reading's Local Plan documents.

Reading Borough Council has been consulted at each stage of the council's Local Plan and have provided comments at all stages. The comments received from Reading Borough Council on the SODC Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation were received late and therefore were not duly made representations. These comments have been considered in the Regulation 22 Statement accompanying Local Plan at submission.

There are no specific sites identified in Reading Borough Council's Local Plan or in its policies map; however we recognised that there is the potential to impact upon South Oxfordshire. The draft Local Plan for Reading explains that together the Councils will

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<sup>42</sup> Reading Borough Council Local Plan Examination Webpage

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/localplanexamination>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=412488>

identify measures to either improve the current situation and/or bring new facilities forward, where needed through its plan making. The Councils must work together to confirm the detail needed and impact on specific locations as well as any justification for any plans or projects.

Regular meetings to discuss the third Thames Crossing have been held. The Thames Crossing Working Group is made up of: Reading Borough Council, Wokingham District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Thames Valley LEP, Oxfordshire LEP and Oxfordshire County Council. Political meetings with local councillors and Members of Parliament have also been held. Further evidence is being gathered to justify the safeguarding of the route for the Thames crossing.

## **Outcome**

South Oxfordshire will continue to engage with Reading Borough Council in the preparation of its Local Plan and will work together on cross boundary matters that arise.

There is an outstanding conflict, in that Reading Borough Council wish to see safeguarding of routes for the Thames crossing. SODC cannot safeguard routes where there is not the justification or detail to do this and to do so would be inconsistent with the safeguarding of other routes through the District. The SODC Local Plan continues to reference the Thames crossing as a project that SODC Local Plan supports. This is the basis from which safeguarding could occur in subsequent Local Plans.

Balfour Beatty are currently doing some further work on feasibility for this proposed crossing. At present, this was focused on engineering feasibility. South Oxfordshire are keen to work with Reading and others to understand further and in more detail the specific locations and justification for any major transport projects such as the Thames crossing.

## **West Berkshire**

### **Strategic Matters**

West Berkshire is a unitary authority located to the south-west of the district and includes the town of Newbury. South Oxfordshire District and West Berkshire District lie in separate but adjoining Housing Market Areas and Functional Economic Market Areas.

The West Berkshire Development Plan is currently made up of a number of different documents:

- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2006 - 2026) adopted July 2012;
- Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document adopted May 2017;
- West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 (Saved Policies 2007) as amended in July 2012 and May 2017.

West Berkshire is now progressing its Local Plan review with a second round of consultation, as set out in the Regulation 18 consultation paper (November 2018)<sup>44</sup>.

West Berkshire Council did not identify any unmet housing need which it wished for South Oxfordshire to help with.

The key strategic issue is the impact of development on the road network, particularly the A34.

### **Engagement**

SODC have been consulted on a number of West Berkshire's development plan documents, CIL Regulation 123 list and local aggregates assessment.

West Berkshire have been consulted at each stage of the councils' Local Plan and have provided comments. At the first Publication version Local Plan (October 2017) consultation West Berkshire raised concerns about the impact of development at Didcot and Culham on the A34, in particular with regard to Personal Injury, Accidents and Safety. They also raised concerns regarding the proposed dwellings at Goring and the impact on the road network in Streetly and on the AONB. No response was received to the councils' Second Publication Version Local Plan (January 2019) from West Berkshire.

### **Outcome**

South Oxfordshire will continue to engage with West Berkshire in the preparation of its new Local Plan and will work together on cross boundary matters, particularly any anticipated issues related to the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway and existing transport corridors and growth.

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<sup>44</sup> <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=46409&p=0>

## **Wycombe District Council**

Wycombe District is located east of the district. Wycombe District Council (WDC) is proposing significant development across their administrative area, and in particular at Princes Risborough. The Central Buckinghamshire functional Housing Market Area (HMA) extends into South Oxfordshire to some extent; however, it is a sparsely populated area

Wycombe is preparing a Princes Risborough Area Action Plan, and a new Wycombe District Council Local Plan. Wycombe District Council is holding a consultation on behalf of the Planning Inspector on the Proposed Main Modifications to the Wycombe District Local Plan (submission version) from 13 February 2019 until 27 March 2019.

The council advised Wycombe that such development could present cross boundary impacts on South Oxfordshire and affect settlements such as Chinnor and Thame where further development is likely to occur. The council previously advised that transport impacts should be fully assessed taking account of cumulative impacts in terms of the growth planned in the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, the Thame Neighbourhood Development Plan, the emerging SODC Local Plan and the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan.

Wycombe District Council did not identify any potential unmet housing need which it wished South Oxfordshire to assist with.

## **Engagement**

The council provided comments on the Wycombe District Council Local Plan from preferred options consultation in August 2016 and SODC responded to Wycombe's modifications consultation in March 2019 by saying that no further comments were necessary.

Meetings were held between officers of the council and Wycombe on 21 March 2016, 11 August 2016, 26 April 2017. Ongoing correspondence took place with regard to a potential site of a previously proposed reservoir close to Chinnor. There have also been a number of specific meetings held to review traffic modelling outputs from both the Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire strategic models. There have been ongoing discussions on the potential cumulative impacts identified in Habitats Regulations Assessments and effects on Aston Rowant.

## **Outcome**

We reaffirmed our desire to work together with Wycombe District Council and engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis, and where possible and to undertake joint work where benefits can arise.

SODC signed a MoU in September 2017, this can be found at Annex 2. The MOU affirmed that WDC and SODC would meet their housing needs within their own local authority areas, and that they were not asking the other to accommodate any unmet need. This includes gypsy, traveller or travelling showpeople needs.

## **Wokingham District Council**

### **Strategic Matters**

Wokingham lies to the South and South East of South Oxfordshire and adjacent to Henley on Thames.

The key strategic matter between South Oxfordshire and Wokingham is the proposed third Thames River crossing.

Housing need is not a strategic matter of relevance for this Local Plan. Wokingham did not identify any unmet housing need or any other needs which they wished South Oxfordshire to assist with.

The Local Plan Update will refine the current Core Strategy from 2006 to 2026 to provide the strategy for the Borough from April 2013 to March 2036. The Wokingham Local Plan update 'Homes for the Future' consultation ran from November 2018 to February 2019.

The four authorities of Bracknell Forest, Reading Borough, West Berkshire and Wokingham Borough agreed to work collaboratively to meet the identified Objectively Assessed Need in their housing market area (tested in their Local Plans under the provisions of the NPPF of 2014). The approach to meeting the areas housing need is set out in the West of Berkshire Strategic Planning Framework (Dec 2016)<sup>45</sup> and followed through in each Districts respective Local Plans.

The Councils have been in ongoing discussion to understand Reading's Gypsy and Traveller provision need, however this is not a key strategic matter for this Local Plan.

### **Engagement**

SODC have been consulted on a number of Wokingham's Local Plan documents.

Wokingham have been consulted at each stage of the councils' Local Plan and have provided comments. At the SODC first Publication Version Local Plan (October 2017) consultation Wokingham raised an issue of legal compliance after suggesting that they were not notified of the consultation.

Regular meetings to discuss the third Thames Crossing have been held. The Thames Crossing Working Group is made up of: Reading Borough Council, Wokingham District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Thames Valley LEP, Oxfordshire LEP and Oxfordshire County Council. Political meetings with local councillors and Members of Parliament have also been held. Further evidence is being gathered to justify the safeguarding of the route for the Thames crossing.

### **Outcome**

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<sup>45</sup> <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=46409&p=0>

There is an outstanding conflict, in that Wokingham wish to see safeguarding of routes for the Thames crossing. SODC cannot safeguard routes where there is not the justification or detail to do this and to do so would be inconsistent with the safeguarding of other routes through the District. The SODC Local Plan references the Thames crossing as a project that the SODC Local Plan supports. This is the basis from which safeguarding could occur in subsequent Local Plans.

Balfour Beatty are currently doing some further work on feasibility for this proposed crossing. At present, this was focused on engineering feasibility. South Oxfordshire are keen to work with Reading and others to understand further and in more detail the specific locations and justification for any major transport projects such as the Thames crossing.

South Oxfordshire are keen to work with Wokingham and others to understand further and in more detail the specific locations and justification for any major transport projects such as the Thames crossing.



## **Buckinghamshire County Council**

### **Strategic Matters**

Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) covers the area to the east of the district and includes the towns of Aylesbury and High Wycombe.

The key strategic issues are the levels of growth and the resultant cumulative transport impacts, particularly on the road network around Thame and the cross boundary impact on transport/highways including implications of the proposed Oxford-Cambridge Expressway.

### **Engagement**

Meetings have been held between SODC, Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe, Oxfordshire County Council and Buckinghamshire County Council to review cross border transport modelling.

Buckinghamshire County Council were consulted on the emerging Local Plan and responded at various stages with regards to transport, education and earlier in the Local Plans' development they responded with regards to green infrastructure.

BCC published a Freight Strategy in 2018 where they stated that they are keen to work with their neighbouring authorities to address this issue, this would include South Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire County.

### **Outcome**

A 'Duty to Cooperate' Memorandum of Understanding between South Oxfordshire District Council, Wycombe District Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Buckinghamshire County Council was prepared and signed in February 2018. This is contained in Annex 3.

SODC and BCC will continue to engage in collaboration with Oxfordshire County Council as the highway and education authority. In particular, BCC wish to monitor the pupil/population trends.

BCC requests that South Oxfordshire District Council continues to engage with BCC and Oxfordshire County Council, as Highway authorities, to ensure appropriate mitigation is put in place for development at Thame.

BCC supported the SODC Local Plan and its inclusion of a policy dedicated to supporting Strategic Transport Investment across the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway.

## **E. Prescribed Bodies**

### **Aerodrome operators (formally Civil Aviation Authority)**

#### **Strategic Matters**

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is the public corporation which oversees and regulates all aspects of aviation in the United Kingdom. The CAA's functions include the development of aviation policy, both within the UK and Europe-wide. The Civil Aviation Agency has been consulted at each stage of the Local Plan's preparation. CAA has been invited to comment on the Local Plan consultations.

The Civil Aviation Authority is no longer the relevant body to consult on strategic safeguarding matters for aerodromes. This responsibility has been passed to the relevant airfield operators. The Defence Infrastructure Organisation are the relevant body for consultation on the Local Plan.

Strategic issues in this case relate to the safe operations of aircraft and ensuring that no planned development would have adverse impacts upon those operations or represent a potential danger to life. There are air bases and air fields around the District but there are no identified strategic issues associated with them. In addition the Local Plan proposes a strategic allocation at Chalgrove airfield where a significant land reserve is proposed to re-align the existing runway.

#### **Engagement**

We have consulted the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) through the stages of the Local Plan. The DIO has responded to the two Publication versions of the Local Plan (in 2017 and 2019), the latter response re-iterating the first.

#### **Outcome**

No objections were raised by the DIO but several advisory comments were provided about safeguarding. These comments are reflective of our standard procedures in considering development near to aerodromes and will be part of any future application process.

## **Environment Agency**

The Environment Agency's (EA) principal aims are to protect and improve the environment, and to promote sustainable development. It plays a central role in delivering the environmental priorities of central government through its functions and roles.

The Environment Agency is a member of the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

## **Engagement**

Public bodies such as the Environment Agency (EA) are subject to the duty to cooperate as prescribed in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Of primary concern are strategic flood risk matters and water cycle within the district.

South Oxfordshire District Council has worked closely with the EA throughout the preparation of the Local Plan including advising on the drafting of policies, and the supporting evidence base including the Strategic Flood Risk Assessments.

Officers of the council have met with the EA on numerous occasions to discuss the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), Water Cycle Study (WCS) and Local Plan development even informally to input into the site selection process. The EA has provided valuable advice and support to South Oxfordshire District Council, particularly in relation to water matters, infrastructure planning and the Sustainability Appraisal.

## **Outcome**

The SFRA and WCS have been updated following comments from the EA.

EA have submitted specific comments on the second Publication version Local Plan in 2019 as well as additional comments regarding clarity and accuracy after the close of consultation on the Plan (not duly made comments). EA states that these comments do not relate to the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan.

## **Outstanding issues have been raised during consultation such as:**

- Policy STRAT 9: Land Adjacent to Culham Science Centre references to flood risk;
- Policy STRAT 10: Land at Berinsfield not detailing specific flood risks that are identified in the SFRA;
- Policy STRAT 11: Land south of Grenoble Road not detailing specific flood risks that are identified in the SFRA;
- Policy STRAT 12: Land at Northfield needing greater emphasis on the need for development plans to take a proactive approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Policy STRAT 13: Land North of Bayswater Brook needing greater emphasis on the need for development plans to take a proactive approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

## **Highways England**

### **Strategic issues**

Highways England is responsible for managing, maintaining and improving England's motorways and trunk roads (known as the Strategic Road Network or SRN). The main strategic roads relevant to South Oxfordshire are the M40 running through the north-east of the district, but also the A34 which although does not run through the district has a key role in access to/from the Didcot Garden Town area, as well as providing a key north-south road spine through Oxfordshire.

There are no specific strategic issues with Highways England identified.

### **Engagement**

The main engagement with Highways England has been in association with the County Council, through the review of the Evaluation of Transport Impacts work being undertaken with the Oxfordshire Strategic Model.

To date, the modelled impact of growth in South Oxfordshire has not given rise to particular concerns from Highway's England, assuming that planned infrastructure mitigation can come forward in a timely and appropriate way. In particular, the Culham Crossing is shown to have wider strategic traffic impacts relevant to the A34 that will need further engagement with Highways England.

### **Outcome**

South Oxfordshire will continue to engage with Highways England on outcomes of the strategic and more detailed transport modelling, seeking to address any concerns should they arise through the planning process. The Council will also continue to engage with Highways England and the National Infrastructure Commission as more detailed plans come forward for the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway to understand both the potential benefits and impacts of these proposals. The Highways England response to the second Publication Version Local Plan (January 2019) was positive, it agreed that "further clarity on any preferred option(s) are required from central government before any conclusions can be drawn on links to proposed development" and that "any impacts or benefits for South Oxfordshire will depend on the route of any new road".

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan takes account of the need to address the impact of development on the SRN through considering with Oxfordshire Highways Authority, i) Mitigation measures required and ii) How these measures will be funded.

## **Historic England**

Historic England is the Government's advisor on the historic environment and heritage assets. Its responsibilities include:

- Managing the national collection of sites, monuments, archive records and photographs taken into state care;
- Giving grants to national and local organisations for the conservation of historic buildings, monuments and landscapes;
- Advising government on which English Heritage assets are nationally important and should be protected by designation (i.e. listing, scheduling etc.);
- Administering and maintaining the register of England's listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered battlefields, conservation areas and protected parks and gardens;
- Advising local authorities on managing changes to the most important parts of heritage;
- Providing expertise through advice, training and guidance to improve the standards and skills of people working in heritage, practical conservation and access to resources;
- Consulting and collaborating with other heritage bodies, local and national planning organisations; and
- Commissioning and conducting archaeological research.

Public bodies such as Historic England (HE) are subject to the duty to cooperate as prescribed in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Of primary concern are the Heritage Assets of the district although there are no specific strategic issues to resolve.

## **Engagement**

Historic England has been involved in all the preparation stages of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and in its evidence base development. HE has been consulted at all stages of Local Plan preparation and have provided comments which have been taken on board in the preparation of policy and more recently in the Council's suggested modifications to the Local Plan at submission.

## **Outcome**

Changes have been made to the Local Plan in response to comments received from Historic England and we will continue to work together on matters concerning the historic environment including the evidence base to support it.

In its consultation response to the second Publication Version Local Plan (January 2019) Historic England states that it is satisfied that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to date and relevant evidence about the historic environment as required by the National Planning Policy Framework, and that the Local Plan is therefore consistent with national policy in this regard.

## **Homes England**

Homes England is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. They are the government's housing, land and regeneration agency, and the regulator of social housing providers in England.

Homes England is responsible for:

- increasing the number of new homes that are built in England, including affordable homes and homes for market sale or rent
- improving existing affordable homes and bringing empty homes back into use as affordable housing
- increasing the supply of public land and speeding up the rate that it can be built on
- regulating social housing providers to make sure that they're well managed and financially secure, so maintaining investor confidence in the affordable housing sector and protecting homes for tenants
- helping to stimulate local economic growth by using our land and investment, and attracting private sector investment in local areas

Homes England is a member of the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

Homes England and its predecessors have been involved in the development and support of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan through the statutory consultation process and the development of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Study (OXIS) and the Housing and Growth Deal and in the development of the Didcot Garden Town proposals.

Homes England are also landowners and promoters of one of the Councils' strategic allocations, namely at Chalgrove airfield.

No strategic issues exist with Homes England (in their capacity as site promoter) relevant to the Local Plan.

## **Engagement**

Homes England has been closely involved in several projects in South Oxfordshire. This includes the support for delivering houses on specific sites in Didcot, the promotion of the strategic development opportunity at Chalgrove airfield and support for the regeneration project at Berinsfield. In general Homes England have supported officers with the Local Plan.

## **Outcome**

Homes England is a member of the Garden Town (Non-Executive) Board which meets quarterly and an active partner in the Berinsfield community investment scheme. South Oxfordshire District Council continue to work closely and proactively with Homes England and their planning and development partners and will continue to progress the Local Plan in collaboration with Homes England.

## **Natural England**

Natural England (NE) is the Government's adviser on the natural environment. It provides practical advice, grounded in science, on how best to safeguard England's natural wealth for the benefit of everyone.

Natural England's responsibilities include:

- Managing England's green farming schemes;
- Increasing opportunities for everyone to enjoy the natural world;
- Reducing the decline of biodiversity and the licensing of protected species across England;
- Designating National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
- Managing most of the National Nature Reserves and notifying the Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Public bodies such as Natural England (NE) are subject to the duty to cooperate as prescribed in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Of primary concern are the Habitat Regulations and the Councils Habitats Regulations Assessment.

There are no strategic issues with Natural England relevant to this Local Plan.

## **Engagement**

Natural England has been involved in all the preparation stages of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan including the development of the Sustainability Appraisal.

NE has been consulted at all stages of Local Plan preparation and has provided comments which have been taken on board. NE has been an active participant in the development of the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

## **Outcome**

The Habitat Regulations Assessment has been continually updated following comments and informal feedback from NE who have worked well with the Councils consultants LUC, these discussions have been ongoing up until the point of submission of the Local Plan.

We reaffirmed our desire to work together and engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis, and where possible to undertake joint work where benefits can arise.

## **NHS Oxfordshire - NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)**

The National Health Service has undergone extensive re-organisation since 2010. As part of these changes new area clusters are being established. PCT clusters work with local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to commission, or buy, a range of services such as hospital and dental services, optometry, pharmacy, mental health services, the Ambulance Service and community services such as district nurses and health visitors.

In July 2010, the Health White Paper, 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS' outlined plans to transfer NHS commissioning responsibilities from PCTs to groups of general practitioners. The transition to CCGs was completed in 2013. PCTs are pooling resources under new Cluster working arrangements to ensure capacity and capability is maintained. Each PCT has continued as statutory organisations in their own right.

The Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is now responsible for planning, buying and overseeing health services for many of the residents of South Oxfordshire. Buckinghamshire CCG includes the Aylesbury South Locality which covers a part of South Oxfordshire District around Thame.

Oxfordshire CCG is currently undertaking a 'Transformation' programme, whereby it is considering the future of healthcare in Oxfordshire and consulting on changes to primary and secondary care provision.

There are no strategic issues with the CCGs relevant to this Local Plan.

### **Engagement**

South Oxfordshire District Council has engaged with the local healthcare providers throughout the development of the Plan to understand the implications of the development proposed in the Local Plan for healthcare provision of all types.

Engagement with the CCGs has been through either regular liaison meetings which have also included the Vale of White Horse District Council, the Didcot Garden Town team, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and, more recently, representatives from the Oxfordshire County Council Public Health team or direct email.

There has also been specific engagement with the CCGs to inform the development of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

### **Outcome**

South Oxfordshire continues to work closely with the CCGs, and other health partners, to ensure that the future healthcare needs of South Oxfordshire residents are taken into consideration. In addition, following discussion with the Oxfordshire CCG and the Oxfordshire County Council Public Health team, we have undertaken and updated a



Health Impact Assessment of the Local Plan to demonstrate that health has been taken into consideration.

## **Office of the Rail Regulator / Public Transport Infrastructure and Service Providers**

The Office of the Rail Regulator (ORR) is the economic and safety regulatory authority for Great Britain's railway network. Functions include i) Control and allocation of capacity of railway assets and ii) Independent health and safety regulation for the railway industry.

South Oxfordshire District Council has also liaised with Chilterns Railways, the Train Operating Company that operates in South Oxfordshire and Network Rail.

It is recognised that the district is a largely rural area, and therefore high quality current public transport routes do not serve all of South Oxfordshire. However, rail and bus links to locations of employment and services will still be key to develop in association with planned development, particularly in the Didcot Garden Town area and in association with the large proposed strategic sites at Chalgrove and Berinsfield. As far as possible, we have therefore sought to engage those involved in the provision of current and future rail and bus services relevant to the district and reflect outputs from this work in the Local Plan and its associated evidence base.

There are no strategic issues with public transport infrastructure and service providers relevant to this Local Plan.

## **Engagement**

Engagement undertaken on public transport has largely been through development of the Sustainable Transport Study, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and development of policies for strategic sites. In summary, it has included:

- Discussions with Thames Travel in association with the County Council on what a future bus service network could be for the district, taking into account proposed new development
- Discussions with Network Rail and First Great Western on how rail services could be improved in association with development, particularly at Culham
- Informal consultation in the preparation of the site selection background paper.

## **Outcomes**

Results of engagement on public transport matters has influenced the final Sustainable Transport Study, which in turn has been fed into the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and schedule published alongside the second Publication Version Local Plan.

The results of liaison on rail matters at Culham strategic allocation have also resulted in additions to the proposed policy on the Culham strategic allocation.

It is recognised that the planning and delivery of rail and bus services is complex and given the role of the private sector to an extent dependent on commercial decisions, which for bus services can be relatively short-term. As such, there will need to be

continued and on-going engagement as more detailed planning for development is progressed, both at the strategic sites and as part of Neighbourhood Plans.

## **Local Wildlife Partnerships**

There are two key charities operating in Oxfordshire that promote nature conservation these are; Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and Wild Oxfordshire.

## **Engagement**

The council meets regularly with the County and District councils together with the Environment Agency, Natural England, BBOWT and Wild Oxfordshire to discuss biodiversity and planning matters at the Oxfordshire Biodiversity and Planning meeting. Members of this meeting have been specifically involved in the development of the joint Green Infrastructure (G.I.) Strategy for South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse.

BBOWT have responded to the Publication version Local Plan (January 2019) and have a strong objection to the allocation of the strategic site Land North of Bayswater Brook.

## **Outcome**

The Oxfordshire Biodiversity and Planning meeting has directly influenced the content of the G.I. Strategy and their advice was used to help shape policies ENV1 to ENV5 of the Local Plan. In addition, the council has worked directly with the Environment Agency and the Letcombe Brook Trust in developing the watercourses policy (ENV4).

There is an outstanding objection from BBOWT on the Local Plan.

## **F. Non-prescribed bodies**

There are a number of other bodies and key stakeholders who have been engaged throughout the preparation of the Local Plan. These have helped to shape and inform the plan and its supporting evidence base.

One of the key documents of the evidence base which has required extensive dialogue and understanding of issues is the South Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This has required input from the following:

- Oxfordshire County Council (including as their role as Highway, Education and Fire Authority)
- Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Thames Water
- Environment Agency
- Oxford Bus Company and Thames Travel
- Network Rail
- Utility Companies

Many of these organisations were also involved in the preparation of OxIS, the Countywide Infrastructure Strategy.

### **Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauties Conservation Board and North Wessex Downs Conservation Board**

Officers of the council attended a 'Cumulative Impacts Workshop' organised by the Chilterns Conservation Board. Feedback from this meeting has been incorporated into the proposed Local Plan.

Both conservation boards have been consulted at all stages of Local Plan preparation and have provided comments which have been taken on board.

### **Sport England**

Sport England have and continue to be a key stakeholder in the preparation of the South Oxfordshire Leisure Strategy and its development.

They have been engaged and have made comments on the emerging Local Plan throughout the plan-making process. Their comments on previous consultations has led to changes to the emerging plan.

In early 2019, Sport England made formal representations to the proposed submission draft South Oxfordshire Local Plan. Their comments are summarised below:

- Support in principle policies (CF3 to CF5) which explore existing and new sport, open space and recreation requirements within the district.
- Policy CF4 (Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities) itself echoes paragraphs 96 and 97 of the NPPF.
- Support Policy CF5 (Open Space, Sport and Recreation in New Residential Development), however believe that the third paragraph should be reworded to

be more in line with South Oxfordshire District Council's Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facilities Strategy.

- Design policies DES1 (Delivering High Quality Development) and DES4 (Masterplans for Allocated Sites and Major Development) should reference Active Design in the policy, in line with Section 8 promoting healthy and safe communities in the revised NPPF

The Council will continue to work with Sport England on the Local Plan and as a key stakeholder in the preparation of the Leisure Strategy.

## **Towns and Parish Councils**

In addition to consultation at all stage of plan preparation, the Council has held a series of sessions to discuss the emerging Local Plan. This has been further supplemented by Council hosted Town and Parish Forums which cover a range of subjects, but the Local Plan and its evidence base has frequently been a key part of the agenda, most recently 5th January 2019. Further information is provided in the Statement of Consultation.

In addition to this, Council officers have met with Town and Parish Councils to discuss issues arising, such as the distribution of housing and infrastructure needs.

The Council will continue to work with the Town and Parish Councils on the Local Plan and other planning policy matters.

## **Neighbourhood Development Plan groups**

South Oxfordshire has been at the forefront of Neighbourhood Planning with a number of 'made' Neighbourhood Development Plans. Development at our market towns and larger villages is being largely delivered through these NDPs.

The Council has maintained a dialogue with all of the Neighbourhood Planning groups to provide updates on the emerging Local Plan and also to inform the level of development to be provided at the market towns and the larger villages. Neighbourhood Planning groups were also invited to attend a briefing on the Local Plan on 5 January 2019 alongside Town and Parish Councils.

## **Section 5. Future Joint Working and Collaboration**

The high level of cooperation already undertaken between South Oxfordshire and its neighbouring Councils, partner bodies and other stakeholders will continue

South Oxfordshire District Council is committed to working through the 'Duty to Cooperate' with its neighbouring Councils and key stakeholders.

As Section 3 of this paper illustrate existing engagement is extensive on both strategic planning and local assessments.

Of particular note is the mechanism established to structure the forward dialogue with all Councils in Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire Growth Board which meets on a regular cycle of meetings and is co-ordinating a range of activities related to the coordination of growth in the County.

The delivery of the Oxfordshire Growth Deal requires closer collaboration to ensure that the delivery of housing in each District is optimised to hit the targets and triggers set out in the Growth Deal. All Councils now have a shared interest not just in the development of each other's Local Plans, collaborating through the Duty to Cooperate, but in the delivery each Council achieves, as national funding for infrastructure is now dependent on the cumulative delivery.

The implementation of the planning freedoms and flexibilities set out in the Oxfordshire Growth Deal illustrates how this mature partnership will operate over the long term.

### Oxfordshire Growth Deal (2018) - Oxfordshire Plan and Planning flexibilities

In summary the freedoms and flexibilities agreed between Government and the Oxfordshire Councils include the following:

A key commitment for Oxfordshire in the deal is the development of an Oxfordshire Plan. Building on the existing Local Plans, the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy and Oxfordshire Transport Strategy, the JSSP will set the strategic direction for planning to 2050.

The Oxfordshire authorities have been preparing the Oxfordshire Plan. A business plan for production of the Oxfordshire Plan was produced in October 2017, in advance of the Deal in early 2018, and this was endorsed by the Growth Board, which recommended to Oxfordshire Authorities that they should work together on a joint strategic plan, now called the Oxfordshire Plan.

The approval of the Deal provides an in-principle agreement to the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan. The plan would be prepared under Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which enables 2 or more Local Planning authorities to agree to prepare a joint Local Plan. However, formal decision making to commence, submit, and adopt the plan would remain with the Local Planning authorities individually through full Council meetings.

The Deal will provide up to £2.5 million capacity funding to Oxfordshire Partners to support the development of the Oxfordshire Plan.

Key objectives of the plan are to provide a countywide strategic vision for sustainable growth, give the public a clear overview of the countywide growth picture and greater opportunities to engage in collective decision-making, and to avoid incremental, speculative and unplanned development.

Through the Deal, Government has granted planning flexibilities on a time limited basis to address the impact in Oxfordshire of unplanned development during the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan. The Deal also commits government to working with Oxfordshire on longer-term solutions to make sure sites are built out. This places all Oxfordshire councils in a good position to influence the Government.

The planning flexibilities offered are:

- Land Supply requirements - for the duration of the development (from commencement of s 28 process to adoption) of the Oxfordshire plan a 3-year land supply will be applied in Oxfordshire
- Bespoke Housing Delivery Test measures for Oxfordshire will apply for 3 years following submission of the Oxfordshire Plan. The rates for November 2018 and November 2019, which are 25% and 45%, and which trigger the presumption in favour of sustainable development would remain as set nationally, but the figure from November 2020 would be a bespoke Oxfordshire figure subject to the submission of the JSSP by March 2020.

MHCLG support the completion of the current suite of Oxfordshire Local Plans and recognise this is required to enable Oxfordshire to meet the Deal commitment of submitting Local Plans by 1st April 2019.



## **Appendices**

### Appendix 1 - Oxfordshire Statement of Common Ground

## Appendix 2 - Wycombe District Council Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix 3 - South Oxfordshire District Council, Wycombe District Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Buckinghamshire County Council Memorandum of Understanding

**Oxford Local Plan 2036**

**and**

**South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034**

**STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND**

**Between**

**South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell District Council and, Vale of White Horse District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council**

**22 March 2019**

## **Introduction**

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared in relation to the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034 and Oxford Local Plan 2036. This SoCG has been prepared further to that agreed between the Oxfordshire authorities in support of the Cherwell District Council Local Plan Partial Review examination (February 2019) which is appended to this statement (Appendix One). That Plan is being examined under NPPF1 (2012) This SoCG has been prepared for the purpose of the Oxford and South Oxfordshire Local Plans within the context of the NPPF 2019. It focuses on the changes to national policies and guidance and the particular circumstances of the South Oxfordshire and Oxford City Local Plans. The matters agreed by the Oxfordshire authorities in the SOCG for the Cherwell hearings remain up to date and relevant for that NPPF1 based examination.
- 1.2 This SOCG has been prepared jointly between South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and Oxford City Council (OxCC), Cherwell District Council (CDC), Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC), West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) as the strategic plan making authorities and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) as an additional signatory given their role as highway and education authority, hereafter referred to as “the parties”. Some parts of this SOCG relate only to matters that are directly relevant to both SODC and OxCC in the context of the new NPPF and NPPG. These sections are clearly marked.
- 1.3 This SoCG relates to the administrative areas of Oxford City and South Oxfordshire District Councils. However, without prejudice to other on-going Local Plan Examinations (Vale of White Horse and Cherwell) and the draft Statement of Common Ground (April 2018) for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, it includes strategic matters relating to Oxfordshire’s geographical area as indicated on the map in Appendix Two, which also shows the plan making authorities administrative areas and corresponds to the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Area.
- 1.4 It confirms matters agreed with regard to the Duty to Cooperate, the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), the apportionment of Oxford’s unmet housing need, and update positions insofar as it relates to the preparation of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034 and the Oxford Local Plan 2036. It also relates to joint signing and on-going implementation of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and the commitments therein.
- 1.5 Future SoCGs will be prepared and maintained and kept up to date through joint working between the plan making authorities. There may be final reports or

interim statements made by Inspectors at the separate Local Plan examinations that are relevant to all Parties. The process for updating any SoCGs will be managed through ongoing discussion between authorities.

- 1.6 This statement is provided without prejudice to other matters of detail that the parties may wish to raise during the examination.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Oxfordshire councils have a long history of working effectively together and work closely and continuously on matters of strategic cross boundary importance in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, as set out in the Cherwell SOCG appended.

## **3. Key Matters on which the parties agree**

### Additional matters since the Cherwell SOCG – NPPF (2019)

- 3.1 The Submission Oxford Local Plan 2036 and Submission South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034 are the first Local Plans in Oxfordshire to be examined under the NPPF (2019). All other Local Plans in Oxfordshire have been or are being examined under the NPPF (2012).
- 3.2 The parties acknowledge that the total housing needs being planned for in Oxford City and South Oxfordshire District for the period 2011 to 2031 are higher than the minimum housing need identified through the standard method, which was introduced in the NPPF (2019). The parties acknowledge that this is only relevant to South Oxfordshire and Oxford City Local Plans due to their examinations taking place under the NPPF (2019). The Planning Practice Guidance accompanying the NPPF (2019) relating to Housing and Economic Needs sets out at paragraph 010 several situations where it might be appropriate to plan for higher housing numbers than the standard method indicates.
- 3.3 The parties agree that the following circumstances are present:
- Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal has been signed by the Government and the local authorities in the Oxfordshire area and the Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). The Deal provides £150 million for infrastructure, £60 million for affordable housing and £5 million capacity funding over a five-year period and among other things commits Oxfordshire to plan for and support the delivery of 100,000 new homes for the period 2011 – 2031.
  - The latest cooperative assessment of housing need remains that contained within the Oxfordshire Strategic Market Assessment 2014, which identifies housing need (rounded) for Oxfordshire for the period 2011-2031 to be 100,060 homes.
  - Oxfordshire Growth Board's agreement of 26 September 2016, sets out the

latest cooperatively produced agreement about the apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing need for 2011 to 2031, which is reflected in the adopted and emerging Local Plans in Oxfordshire.

- The Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) is an Oxfordshire Growth Board commissioned project involving all six Oxfordshire Local Authorities. Its purpose is to identify, map and rank Oxfordshire's strategic infrastructure requirements to 2040 and beyond.

#### Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014)

- 3.4 The parties agree that the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014) remains the latest, cooperatively produced and agreed assessment of housing need for the period 2011-2031 for the whole of the strategic housing market area, which has been taken forward within the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, as set out in the Cherwell SOCG.
- 3.5 The parties agree that any assessment of housing need beyond 2031 would need to be established and agreed through a strategic and cooperative process. It follows that the parties agree that any district/city specific assessment of housing need cannot be relied upon for planning outside of that district/city without strategic cooperative consideration through the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

#### Apportionment of Oxford's Unmet Housing Need (2011-2031)

- 3.6 The parties agree that the Oxfordshire Growth Board's agreement of 26 September 2016, on the apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing need, remains the latest, cooperatively produced agreement. Despite South Oxfordshire not signing that agreement its Local Plan reflects this agreed apportionment.
- 3.7 The parties agree that the apportionment of unmet housing need (or any adjustment to current apportionments), arising from the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area, must be strategically and cooperatively considered through the Oxfordshire Growth Board.
- 3.8 The parties agree that the Growth Board's agreement as set out below remains the latest:

<b>District</b>	<b>Apportionment (2011-2031)</b>
Cherwell	4400
Oxford	550
South Oxfordshire	4950*
Vale of White Horse	2200
West Oxfordshire	2750
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,850</b>

\*South Oxfordshire did not sign the Memorandum of Cooperation although this figure is now incorporated within the Submission South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034

- 3.9 The parties agree that the conclusions of the West Oxfordshire Inspector, on the now adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2018), clearly demonstrates that the Growth Board apportionment can be found sound on the basis of the agreed level of unmet need, notwithstanding the fact that it was considered to be a 'working assumption'. This was most recently confirmed again by the Inspector examining the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 in his post hearing letter dated 30 October 2018. This states that "the Oxfordshire Growth Board has overseen an objective and robust process to determine both the quantum of this unmet need and its apportionment between the relevant districts".

Meeting Housing Need (2011-2031)

- 3.10 The parties agree that the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 and the submission Partial Review of that Plan; the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031; the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 (Part 1) and the submission Part 2 to that Plan; the Submission South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034; and, the Submission Oxford Local Plan 2036 have been prepared to meet the identified needs of the 2014 SHMA and the requirements of the Growth Deal. It is agreed that each of these Plans is required to meet those needs and that their adoption would complete the agreed programme of cooperation which began in 2014.
- 3.11 The parties agree that planning for housing needs across Oxfordshire must be secured on a consistent basis, particularly in light of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. It is agreed that the successful completion of the above Plans, with the requisite growth to 2031, is key to delivering on the Growth Deal requirement for 100,000 homes.
- 3.12 The parties agree that should any individual Oxfordshire authority not be able or willing to meet the Growth Board's apportionment of unmet need (following the completion of that authority's Local Plan) the implications would need to be considered on a joint basis through the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

Specific agreement between Oxford City Council and South Oxfordshire District Council

- 3.13 Oxford City Council agrees that the proposed allocations on the edge of Oxford in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034 do not conflict with the economic growth strategy of Oxford. As set out in the Oxford City Council representations to the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034 Regulation 19 consultation in February 2019 there are a range of exceptional circumstances



that justify the release of land from the Oxford Green Belt on the edge of Oxford within South Oxfordshire.

- 3.14 South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxford City Council agree that they, as housing authorities, will seek to agree an allocations policy and operational arrangements for the provision and allocation of completed affordable homes from sites that help to meet Oxford's unmet needs. This will be to allocate specific affordable homes to people with identified housing needs arising from their existing local connection with the administrative area of Oxford City. The definition of local connection will be agreed as part of the discussions between South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxford City Council regarding allocations and operational arrangements. The allocations policy and operational arrangements are currently being progressed and are sought to be agreed by the two Councils, within 12 months of the date of this SoCG or prior to planning permission for any sites allocated within the South Oxfordshire District Local Plan 2034, which will help to meet Oxford's unmet housing needs, whichever is sooner.

#### **4. Conclusions**

- 4.1 The parties agree that they have a positive working relationship and a demonstrable track record of successful, collaborative, joint working with effective outcomes.
- 4.2 The parties agree that issues of housing need in Oxfordshire are intrinsically linked to supporting the well-being of its residents and to the county's strong and continued economic growth. The parties agree that the establishment of a clear process and programme for cooperative working in 2014 and thereafter and the successful delivery of that programme has led to the current clear understanding of housing needs, the 'roll- out' of adopted / emerging local plans and the securing of the Oxfordshire Housing Growth Deal. The parties agree that any re-appraisal of jointly produced assessments of housing need at this time is not necessary. It is agreed that all of the Oxfordshire Local Plans, including the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and Oxford City Local Plan, to which this SoCG directly relates, are required to meet the housing needs identified within the Oxfordshire SHMA 2014 and the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal to 2031, and that their adoption would complete the agreed programme of addressing the City's unmet housing needs, which began in 2014.
- 4.3 Through the Oxfordshire Growth Board, its working groups and bi-lateral meetings the authorities will continue to work cooperatively on matters of mutual interest and cross-boundary strategic importance, including implementing/delivering the agreed apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing needs and the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.

**Signed on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council**



Holly Jones  
Planning Policy Manager

**Signed on behalf of Oxford City Council**



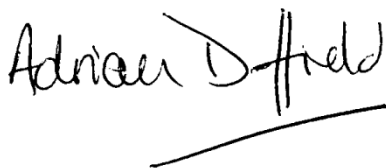
Adrian Arnold  
Interim Head of Planning

**Signed on behalf of Cherwell District Council**



Robert Jolley  
Assistant Director – Planning and Economy

**Signed on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council**



Adrian Duffield  
Head of Planning

**Signed on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Giles Hughes', with a stylized, cursive script.

Giles Hughes

Head of Planning and Strategic Housing

**Signed on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Disley', with a stylized, cursive script.

John Disley

Infrastructure Strategy & Policy Manager

**Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1)**

**Partial Review – Oxford’s Unmet Housing Need**

**Examination Hearings**

**STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND**

**Between**

**Cherwell District Council and Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council**

## **Introduction**

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared jointly between Cherwell District Council (CDC), Oxford City Council (OxCC), South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC), West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) hereafter referred to as “the parties”.
- 1.2 The statement documents key matters agreed by the parties with regard to the Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1): Oxford’s Unmet Housing Need, joint work on Oxford’s unmet housing need, the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal and the collective preparation of Local Plans within Oxfordshire.
- 1.3 It confirms matters agreed with regard to the Duty to Cooperate, the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), the apportionment of Oxford’s unmet housing need, the preparation of the Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan and the Proposed Submission Oxford Local Plan (November 2018), and the joint signing and on-going implementation of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.
- 1.4 This statement is provided without prejudice to other matters of detail that the parties may wish to raise during the examination.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Oxfordshire councils have a long history of working effectively together and work closely and continuously on matters of strategic cross boundary importance in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate.

### *Oxfordshire Growth Board*

- 2.2 At a strategic level the Councils are members of the Oxfordshire Growth Board (OGB) and its supporting Executive Officers Group established in 2014.
- 2.3 The purpose of the Growth Board is to:
  - facilitate and enable collaboration between local authorities on economic development, strategic planning and growth
  - to deliver cross boundary programmes of work, and
  - to bid for the allocation of resources to support growth.
- 2.4 Prior to the establishment of the OGB, the authorities were members of the Oxfordshire Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP) which had begun the process of formal cooperation including for the Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal.

*Statement of Cooperation*

- 2.5 An Oxfordshire wide statement of cooperation was produced in 2014 (CD PR01). It states:

'The purpose of this Statement of Cooperation is to set out the scope and structure of cooperation between the Parties on a range of issues. In particular, it outlines the process and arrangements for cooperation between local authorities should one of the Parties be unable to accommodate their objectively assessed need identified in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)'

*Strategic Economic Strategies*

- 2.6 At the strategic level, the authorities collaborate on economic matters through the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), which prepares the Strategic Economic Plan (CDs PR06 and PR86) and leads work on the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (on-going).

*Strategic Housing Market Assessment and 'Post-SHMA' Consideration of Unmet Housing Need*

- 2.7 From 2013/14 to 2016, a particular focus of joint working was on housing matters including the preparation of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 (CD PR04) and projects comprising the 'Post-SHMA process' (see CDC's Written Statement on Preliminary Matter 1).
- 2.8 In particular, the councils were consistently and actively engaged in a programme of joint work to assess housing need across the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area (2011-2031); to identify the level of unmet housing need arising from Oxford and to determine how that unmet need should be apportioned. The final apportionment of unmet need was agreed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board on 26 September 2016 (CD PR27).
- 2.9 The work was supplemented in 2017 by the preparation of a joint Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) (CDs PR35 & PR82).

*Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal 2018*

- 2.10 The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal is published by the Government at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/oxfordshire-housing-deal> .
- 2.11 On 31 January 2018 an Outline Agreement for an Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (CD PR85) was agreed with Government. A joint Delivery Plan was then approved by each council (e.g. CD PR88, Item 8). On 18 March 2018, the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal was signed by the Minister of State for Housing (Appendix 1 to this statement).

- 2.12 The Deal, announced in the November Budget, offers £150 million for infrastructure, £60 million for affordable housing and £5 million capacity funding. This funding, over a five-year period, will support the ambition of building 100,000 new homes across Oxfordshire between 2011 and 2031 to address the county's severe housing shortage and expected economic growth. This level of housing growth is consistent with that which was identified by the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 and is being addressed by existing and emerging Oxfordshire Local Plans (CD PR99, Item 8).
- 2.13 The six Oxfordshire authorities, the Oxford Local Enterprise Partnership and key partners engaged with Government officials on an ambitious, comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing Oxfordshire's housing, infrastructure and economic challenges, so as to deliver the potential of Oxfordshire's world class knowledge economy and high quality sustainable development across the county. This strong collaboration was carried out under the auspices of the Oxfordshire Growth Board.
- 2.14 The Oxfordshire Partners and Government both view the Deal as the first part of a long-term commitment to Oxfordshire, with the measures announced in the Budget being *"an initial package, intended to kick-start a process of meeting Oxfordshire's long-term potential"* and a statement of support for the ambitions for Oxfordshire.
- 2.15 The key elements of the deal, as set out in the Outline Agreement are:
- strategic housing and infrastructure delivery
  - a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan and planning flexibilities
  - productivity
- 2.16 Through the deal (Delivery Plan, para. 1.3.2), Oxfordshire commits to:
- plan for and support the delivery of 100,000 new homes between 2011 - 2031 - backed up with a credible plan for delivery outlining interim milestones and targets and agreed with Homes England and Government
  - the submission (by March 2020) and adoption, subject to the examination process, of a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP) covering all five districts, by 2021, and submission of the current suite of Oxfordshire Local Plans
  - work with government to explore further opportunities to drive innovation in partnership, design and construction
  - work to secure additional public and private funding to plan for and support delivery of 100,000 homes by 2031
  - consider the introduction of a Strategic Infrastructure Tariff.
- 2.17 The Government commits (Delivery Plan, para. 1.3.3) to:

- provide Oxfordshire with up to £215m funding
- explore options for time-limited planning freedoms and flexibilities (subject to consultation where appropriate)
- support for encouraging more private sector investment in Oxfordshire as an area with high economic potential
- future collaboration to break down barriers to housing delivery.

2.18 The Oxfordshire Growth Board is accountable for the successful implementation of the deal as agreed with Government with the political support of the Leaders of each council.

2.19 The Deal states (para's. 2.2.1- 2.2.2):

*“Using the Housing and Growth Deal funding an Infrastructure Fund and Delivery Programme will be established to support Oxfordshire’s ambition to plan for and support the delivery of 100,000 homes by 2031. Although the £150m does not meet the full funding gap to deliver the infrastructure required to plan for and support the delivery of all 100,000 homes, it will help support the delivery of approximately 6,500 houses during the period of the Deal, and a total of up to 14,000 by 2031. It will also establish an infrastructure fund that will lever in additional investment.*

*Using evidence from OxIS (that has been informed by the 5 Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plans) the Infrastructure Delivery Programme will focus on unlocking the housing planned for in current and emerging Local Plans. The overall Infrastructure Delivery Programme will be viewed as a package (and will include any successful Housing Infrastructure Fund bid(s)) allowing for flexibilities within the Deal period to ensure continued value for money and strategic fit across Oxfordshire.”*

2.20 As an output from the Growth Deal, on 12 September 2018, the Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government made a written statement implementing a temporary change to housing land supply policies as they apply in Oxfordshire - a temporary three year requirement for Oxfordshire (Appendix 2)

### **3. Key Matters on which the parties agree**

#### **Duty to Co-operate**

3.1 The parties agree that the Oxfordshire Councils have continuously engaged with each other through to consider housing needs across the county and through the evolution of the Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (and other Local Plans). More information and details of this engagement can be found in CDC’s Duty to Cooperate Statement (CD PR90). This is most clearly evidenced through:



- i. the establishment of the Oxfordshire Growth Board as a joint committee
- ii. the preparation of the 2014 SHMA
- iii. the completion of the ‘post-SHMA work programme’ to examine Oxford’s level of unmet housing need and to apportion that need to the district councils
- iv. the preparation of the Strategic Economic Plan
- v. the preparation of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy
- vi. the agreement of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.

Housing Need (2011-2031)

- 3.2 The parties agree that that the latest cooperative assessment of housing need remains that contained within the Oxfordshire Strategic Market Assessment 2014.
- 3.3 The Parties agree that the housing need (rounded) for Oxfordshire for the period 2011-2031 remains as follows:

	No. of homes per annum	Total 2011-2031
Cherwell	1140	22,800
Oxford	1400	28,000
South Oxfordshire	775	15,500
Vale of White Horse	1028	20,560
West Oxfordshire	660	13,200
<b>Oxfordshire Total</b>	<b>5003</b>	<b>100,060</b>

- 3.4 The parties agree that countywide housing need must be considered on a countywide basis through the Oxfordshire Growth Board.
- 3.5 The parties agree that the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (March 2018) commits the Oxfordshire authorities to plan for and support the delivery of the 100,000 homes identified by the SHMA by 2031.

Oxford’s Unmet Housing Need (2011-2031)

- 3.6 The Parties agree that that the total working assumption of Oxford’s unmet housing need remains as 15,000 homes for the period 2011-2031.
- 3.7 For the reasons explained in the Cherwell District Council’s Written Statements on Preliminary Matters 1 and 2, and having regard to conclusions of the West Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Inspectors (extracts appended to those statements), the parties agree that objective assessment of housing need has been ‘fully and accurately defined’ and meets the requirements of NPPF1.

- 3.8 The parties agree that the matter of unmet need arising from the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area must be strategically and cooperatively considered through the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

Apportionment of Oxford's Unmet Housing Need (2011-2031)

- 3.9 The parties agree that the Oxfordshire Growth Board's agreement of 26 September 2016, on the apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing need, remains the latest, cooperatively produced agreement.
- 3.10 The parties agree that the apportionment of unmet housing need (or any adjustment to current apportionments), arising from the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area, must be strategically and cooperatively considered through the Oxfordshire Growth Board.
- 3.11 The parties agree that the Growth Board's agreement as set out below remains the latest:

<b>District</b>	<b>Apportionment (2011-2031)</b>
Cherwell	4400
Oxford	550
South Oxfordshire	4950*
Vale of White Horse	2200
West Oxfordshire	2750
Total	14,850

\*South Oxfordshire did not sign the Memorandum of Cooperation

- 3.12 The parties agree that the conclusions of the West Oxfordshire Inspector, on the now adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2018), clearly demonstrate that the Growth Board apportionment can be found sound on the basis of the agreed level of unmet need, notwithstanding the fact that it was considered to be a 'working assumption'.

Meeting Housing Need (2011-2031)

- 3.13 The parties agree that the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 and the submission Partial Review of that Plan; the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031; the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 (Part 1) and the submission Part 2 to that Plan; the Proposed Submission South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034; and, the Proposed Submission Oxford Local Plan 2036 have been prepared to meet the identified needs of the 2014 SHMA. It is agreed that each of these Plans is required to meet those needs and that their adoption would complete the agreed programme of cooperation which began in 2014.

- 3.14 The parties agree that planning for housing needs across Oxfordshire must be secured on a consistent basis, particularly in light of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. It is agreed that the successful completion of the above Plans, with the requisite growth to 2031, is key to delivering on the Growth Deal requirement for 100,000 homes.
- 3.15 The parties agree that should any individual Oxfordshire authority not be able or willing to meet the Growth Board's apportionment of unmet need (following the completion of that authority's Local Plan) the implications would need to be considered on a joint basis through the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

Proposed Submission Oxford Local Plan (2018)

- 3.16 The parties understand that the Oxford Local Plan needs to make provision for housing land supply for a period of 15 years post adoption to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.
- 3.17 The parties agree that that the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 remains the latest, cooperatively produced and agreed assessment of housing need for the period 2011-2031 for the whole of the strategic housing market area, which has been taken forward within the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.
- 3.18 The Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan must be examined under the provisions of NPPF1 (2012). The parties understand that the emerging Oxford Local Plan is expected to be submitted in March 2019 (to meet a commitment in the Housing and Growth Deal for the submission of all Oxfordshire Local Plans for examination by April 2019). Under the NPPF's transitional arrangements, a submission after 24 January 2019 would mean that the Plan would fall to be examined against NPPF2 (2018) rather than NPPF1.
- 3.19 With regard to NPPF2, the parties note that Planning Practice Guidance States:

*"The government is committed to ensuring more homes are built and are supportive of ambitious authorities who want to plan for growth. The standard method for assessing local housing need [NPPF 2] provides the minimum starting point in determining the number of homes needed in an area. It does not attempt to predict the impact that future government policies, changing economic circumstances or other factors might have on demographic behaviour. Therefore there will be circumstances where actual housing need may be higher than the figure identified by the standard method.*

*Where additional growth above historic trends is likely to or is planned to occur over the plan period, an appropriate uplift may be considered. This will be an uplift to identify housing need specifically and should be undertaken prior to and separate*

*from considering how much of this need can be accommodated in a housing requirement figure. Circumstances where this may be appropriate include, but are not limited to:*

- *where growth strategies are in place, particularly where those growth strategies identify that additional housing above historic trends is needed to support growth or funding is in place to promote and facilitate growth (e.g. Housing Deals);*
- *where strategic infrastructure improvements are planned that would support new homes;*
- *where an authority has agreed to take on unmet need, calculated using the standard method, from neighbouring authorities, as set out in a statement of common ground;...” (paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 2a-010-20180913).*

3.20 The parties agree that the City Council has itself undertaken its own specific update of the SHMA 2014. The parties agree that it sets out and explains a scale of housing need for the period to 2036 of 1356 homes per annum to fulfill the objective of affordable housing needs in full (para. 9.25 and draft OLP, para. 3.7).

3.21 The parties agree that the cooperative agreement on housing need, the apportionment of unmet need across Oxfordshire, and the delivery of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, are very significant circumstances for plan-making across all five district/city councils.

3.22 The parties agree that any district/city specific assessment of housing need cannot be relied upon for planning outside of that district/city without strategic cooperative consideration through the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (Oxfordshire Plan 2050)

3.23 Work has commenced on the Oxfordshire Plan. Under the current terms of the Growth Deal, the Plan must be submitted for examination by March 2020.

3.24 The parties agree that the Government’s emerging policies on the Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge corridor are likely to be significant in preparing the Oxfordshire Plan. In particular, the Government’s future announcements on the precise route of the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway and its ambitions for accommodating up to one million homes along the corridor are awaited. Discussions are on-going with Government officials as to how the timing of such announcements might affect the programme for the Oxfordshire Plan in the context of the commitments within the Growth Deal.

- 3.25 The parties agree that the Oxfordshire Plan provides an appropriate review mechanism for considering any changes in circumstances across Oxfordshire following the completion and adoption of the emerging suite of Local Plans.

Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan

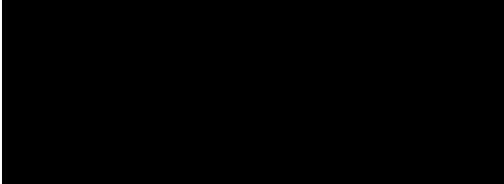
- 3.26 The parties agree that they have been engaged constructively, actively and on an on-going- basis to secure effective cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters when preparing the Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan.
- 3.27 The parties agree that the housing growth proposed in the Partial Review is aligned with Oxford's specific housing needs, with the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan and with the wider growth needs of the county.
- 3.28 Oxford City Council and Cherwell District Council agree to engage constructively and substantively on the implementation of the Partial Review including consultation in the Development Brief process as set out by the Plan's site specific policies.
- 3.29 The two Councils agree that they, as housing authorities, will agree to an allocations policy and operational arrangements for the provision and allocation of completed affordable homes to those with identified housing needs arising from their existing residential, employment or other local connection with the administrative area of Oxford City. The allocations policy and operational arrangements are currently being progressed and are to be agreed by the two Councils, within 12 months of the date of this SoCG or prior to planning permission for any sites allocated within the Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review Local Plan to meet Oxford's unmet housing needs, whichever is sooner.

**4. Conclusions**

- 4.1 The parties agree that they have a positive working relationship and a demonstrable track record of successful, collaborative, joint working with effective outcomes.
- 4.2 The parties agree that issues of housing need in Oxfordshire are intrinsically linked to supporting the well-being of its residents and to the county's strong and continued economic growth.
- 4.3 The parties agree that the establishment of a clear process and programme for cooperative working in 2014 and thereafter and the successful delivery of that programme has led to the current clear understanding of housing needs, the 'roll-out' of adopted / emerging local plans and the securing of the Oxfordshire Housing Growth Deal. The parties agree that any re-appraisal of jointly produced assessments of housing need at this time is not necessary, such an exercise would necessitate a re-running of extensive cooperative work and would thereby impact on the completion of emerging Local Plans and the deliverability of the Growth Deal including planning for and supporting the delivery of 100,000 homes by 2031.

- 4.4 Through the Oxfordshire Growth Board, its working groups and bi-lateral meetings the authorities will continue to work cooperatively on matters of mutual interest and cross-boundary strategic importance, including implementing/delivering the agreed apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing needs and the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.

**Signed on behalf of Cherwell District Council**



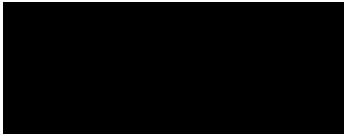
Robert Jolley  
Assistant Director – Planning and Economy  
4/2/19

**Signed on behalf of Oxford City Council**



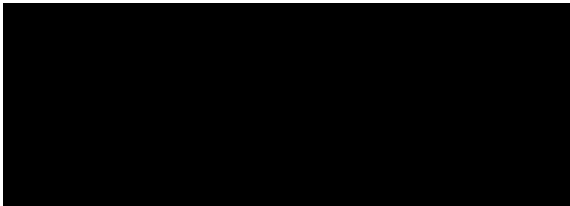
Adrian Arnold  
Acting Head of Planning Services  
4/2/19

**Signed on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council**



Holly Jones  
Planning Policy Manager  
4/2/19

**Signed on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council**



Adrian Duffield  
Head of Planning  
4/2/19

**Signed on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council**



Giles Hughes  
Head of Planning and Strategic Housing  
4/2/19

**Signed on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council**



Rachel Wileman  
Assistant Director for Strategic Infrastructure & Planning  
4/2/19



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Dominic Raab MP**  
Minister of State for Housing

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Leader, Oxfordshire County Council  
Leader, West Oxfordshire District Council  
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[www.gov.uk/mhclg](http://www.gov.uk/mhclg)

*Dear Leaders,*

*15 March 2018*

**A housing and growth deal for Oxfordshire**

Thank you for your letter of 28 February 2018, to the Secretary of State concerning Oxfordshire's Housing and Growth Deal, I am replying as the Minister for Housing. I am pleased to note that the deal has been approved by all six Oxfordshire councils and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

I welcome your plans to deliver 100,000 homes by 2031 – well in excess of the published figures in our draft NPPF published last week - and your commitment to adopting a joint statutory spatial plan by 2021. I have been impressed with the collaborative approach you have taken to develop the deal. It will be of benefit to local people across Oxfordshire, whilst setting an ambition for housing delivery which other areas should seek to replicate.

It will be essential to ensure that the homes committed through the deal get delivered. You have committed to bring forward for adoption a joint statutory spatial plan by 2021 to deliver 100,000 homes by 2031 and to deliver 14,000 homes directly from the infrastructure funding provided by the deal and a further 1322 affordable homes from the affordable homes grant. I am therefore pleased to approve the delivery plan. My officials and Homes England will continue to work with you to track implementation of the deal and funding will be contingent on the milestones in the delivery plan being met. I hope to be able to visit Oxfordshire in the coming weeks, to publically sign off the deal.

I would like to thank you for the significant amount of work done to get to this stage and for the collaborative approach your councils have demonstrated when working with my officials. I look forward to a productive and on-going relationship between Oxfordshire and Government, as we continue to work together to build the homes this country needs.

*Yours sincerely,*



**DOMINIC RAAB MP**



<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2018-09-12/HCWS955/>

## **Housing Land Supply in Oxfordshire: Written statement - HCWS955**

WS

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Made on: 12 September 2018

Made by: James Brokenshire (Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)

Commons

HCWS955

### **Housing Land Supply in Oxfordshire**

In March this year the Government committed to the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, to support ambitious plans to deliver 100,000 homes by 2031. The Oxfordshire-wide Joint Statutory Spatial Plan to be adopted by 2021 will be supported by £215 million of funding to help deliver more affordable housing and infrastructure improvements to support sustainable development across the county.

Paragraph 217 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out that the Government will explore potential planning freedoms and flexibilities, for example where this would facilitate an increase in the amount of housing that can be delivered. Such freedoms and flexibilities are to be considered by the Government on a case by case basis. In this instance the Government has worked closely with the authorities in Oxfordshire to agree planning freedoms and flexibilities that will support the ambitious plan-led approach through a Joint Spatial Strategy and the Housing Deal.

As part of the Housing Deal, Oxfordshire sought flexibility from the National Planning Policy Framework policy on maintaining a 5 year housing land supply. This policy supports the delivery of housing by ensuring sufficient land is coming forward to meet housing need. However, we recognise the ambitious plans in Oxford to deliver above their housing need in the long term. The Government wants to support this strategic approach to supporting housing delivery through joint working. We have therefore agreed to provide a short term flexibility which will support the delivery of the local plans for the area and ensure that the local authorities can focus their efforts on their Joint Spatial Strategy. The Government recognises that in the short term this will result in fewer permissions being granted under paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework but the Government believes that it is important to support these ambitious plans that will deliver more housing in the longer term.

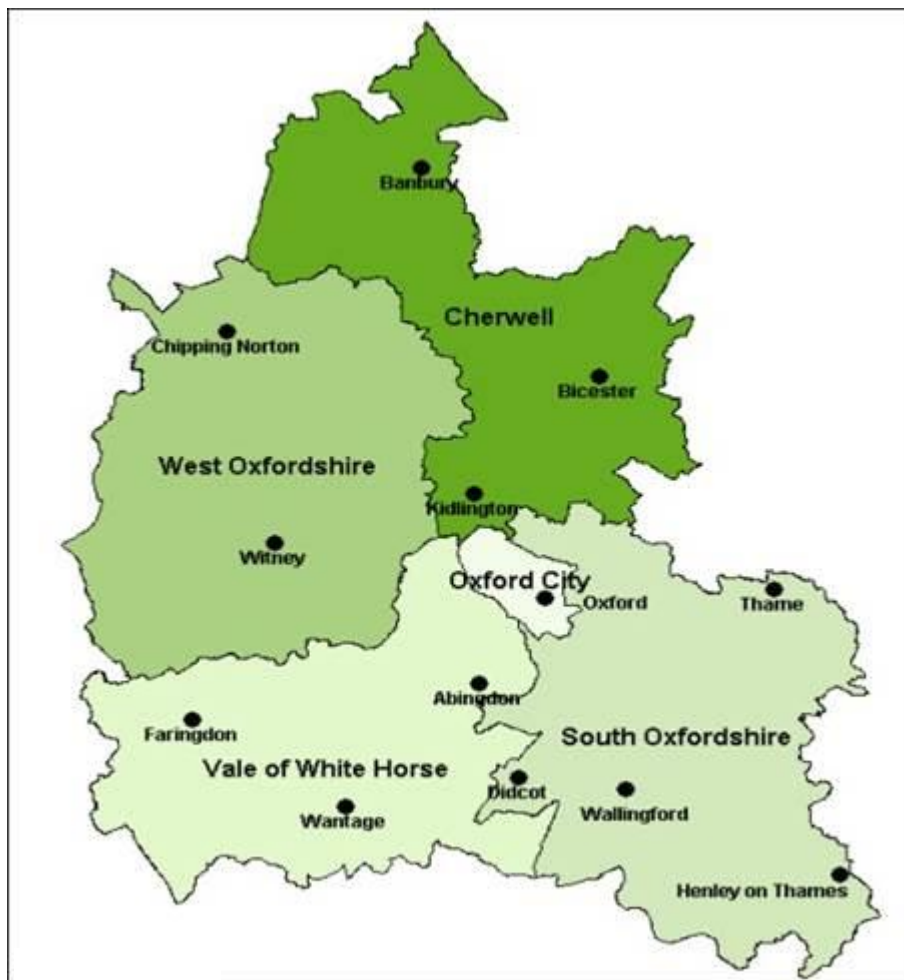
Having considered the responses from a local consultation, which closed on the 12th July 2018, I am today implementing a temporary change to housing land supply policies as they apply in Oxfordshire.

For the purposes of decision-taking under paragraph 11(d), footnote 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework will apply where the authorities in Oxfordshire cannot demonstrate a three year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer, as set out in paragraph 73). This policy flexibility does not apply to the Housing Delivery Test limb of footnote 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework nor plan making policy in paragraph 67. If a local authority intends to fix their land supply under paragraph 74 they will still be required to demonstrate a minimum of five year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the appropriate buffer.

This statement is a material consideration in planning decisions and applies to those local planning authorities in Oxfordshire with whom the Government has agreed the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, namely Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council. This statement applies from today and remains in effect until the adoption of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan in each area, provided the timescales agreed in the Housing and Growth Deal are adhered to. I will monitor progress against these timescales and keep the planning flexibility set out in this statement under review.

This statement has also been made in the House of Lords: HLWS924

## Appendix 2: Oxfordshire geographical area



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**Classification: OFFICIAL**

## **Duty to Cooperate Memorandum of Understanding between South Oxfordshire District Council and Wycombe District Council ("the Councils")**

**September 2017**

The Localism Act 2011 brings significant changes to strategic planning in England. Strategic planning remains an essential part of the planning system. The Act provides for a bottom up approach to strategic planning in a local area through the "duty to co-operate."

The Act sets out that a local planning authority has a duty to co-operate by:

*"engaging constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in the preparation of development plan and other documents and in activities that can reasonably be considered to prepare the way for the preparation of such documents for strategic matters."*

The requirements of the Localism Act are complemented by the guidance in paragraphs 178-181 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), although these are additional to those within the Act. The NPPF includes reference to local authorities considering agreements on joint approaches to the undertaking of activities and to considering whether to agree to prepare joint local development documents. The duty involves a continuous process of engagement from initial thinking through to implementation. It should result in meeting development requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities, where it is practical to do so. Authorities should also consider producing plans or policies prepared as part of a joint committee, a memorandum of understanding or a jointly prepared strategy which is presented as evidence of an agreed position.

The Duty to Co-operate has become the first matter that is tested at a local plan examination. Failure to co-operate will result in delay and increased costs in bringing forward up to date local plans thereby increasing the risks at planning appeals.

In the light of the Duty to Cooperate, South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and Wycombe (WDC) District Council have agreed this memorandum of understanding to identify areas and topics of common strategic concern.

The memorandum of understanding builds on long established joint working between local authorities and acknowledges where issues cannot be resolved by local authorities acting alone.

The following schedules identify the current position between the authorities, where agreement has been reached, and also where further cooperation will be undertaken to seek resolution of outstanding matters. This Memorandum of Understanding will be updated as necessary and updates can be sought at the request of either of the signatory authorities.

### **Schedule A: Housing Market Areas and Functional Economic Market Areas**

SODC

1. SODC position is that it lies within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area, as identified in the 2014 Oxfordshire SHMA. The SHMA was jointly commissioned and accepted by all Oxfordshire authorities.

#### WDC

2. WDC position is that functionally the whole of Wycombe District lies within the Buckinghamshire Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area, on a 'best fit' basis. This is based on studies that have defined functional areas and applied a best fit to these market areas based on plan making areas. These studies have been shared with neighbouring authorities including with SODC.

#### Agreement

It is agreed that Wycombe District and South Oxfordshire lie in separate but adjoining Housing Market Areas and Functional Economic Market Areas.

#### **Schedule B: Unmet Needs**

#### SODC

1. SODC position is that it has identified a housing requirement of 17,050 and that it will meet its own objectively assessed needs. In addition SODC is planning to help meet some of Oxford City's unmet housing needs, having consulted on a contribution of 3750 homes. The draft local plan strategy seeks to deliver this requirement within the District and SODC is not seeking to accommodate any unmet needs from any authorities outside the District.
2. SODC's Employment Land Review (2017) assessed that between 33.2 and 35.9 hectares of employment land would be needed within the Plan period. SODC is aiming to identify a total of 37.2 hectares of employment land. Of this, over 11.5 hectares have already been allocated with the remainder identified at Chalgrove, Culham and Berinsfield (through strategic allocations) and in the towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford with locations to be further detailed through Neighbourhood Development Plans. SODC does not anticipate that there will be a need to seek to meet needs for any additional employment land outside the District.

#### WDC

3. WDC position is that through discussions with the other authorities in their HMA and FEMA (Aylesbury Vale District Council, Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council) there is a Duty to Co-operate Agreement that in principle agrees that the unmet needs of the constrained south of the County will be planned for in the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. As of 13th July 2017 WDC has a more detailed agreement that the identified unmet housing needs in Wycombe District of 2275 will be accommodated in Aylesbury Vale District. As such WDC are not seeking any of their unmet housing needs to be met in SODC emerging plan but will need to keep this under review.

4. Regarding employment and retail floorspace provision, the overall approach by the Buckinghamshire planning authorities across the Bucks Functional Economic Market Area broadly delivers sufficient land for economic growth taking into account a range of factors including an element of redistribution of growth from the three southern districts into Aylesbury Vale to take account of their shortfalls due to their constrained nature. It is recognised however that the nature of retail development is such that it cannot be 'exported' to a neighbouring authority because retail catchments are generally on a smaller geographical scale to housing and the needs for B class employment.

#### Agreement

That neither authority is requesting the other authority to accommodate unmet needs.

#### **Schedule C: Strategic transport issues:**

Traffic forecasting work is being undertaken by both authorities in association with their respective Highway Authorities (Oxfordshire County Council and Buckinghamshire County Council), to assess the impacts of growth on the road network. Forecasting work for Oxfordshire is being modelled by Atkins using SATURN, while forecasting work for Buckinghamshire is being modelled by Jacobs using the VISUM platform. It has been agreed that given the way the models are set up it would be difficult to use them to test the impact of growth in surrounding districts/ Counties in any detail, but forecast demand traffic flows on key cross-border routes can be exchanged.

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#### SODC

1. SODC position is that it has concerns about traffic flows into the District resulting from the major expansion of Princes Risborough. Forecasting reports provided by WDC indicate that these flows are not of a scale to present a soundness issue but SODC welcome further joint working to resolve any issues. The results of modelling SODC's preferred option for growth are yet to be finalised but the latest reports show localised impacts upon traffic flow, for which mitigation is being tested. It is unlikely that there will be any significant cross boarder impacts in Buckinghamshire, but we will continue to share our evidence and proactively work together to manage any potential impacts that could arise.

#### WDC

2. WDC and the other authorities in Buckinghamshire have worked together to prepare traffic forecasts of the overall growth scenarios across the county (county-wide modelling). In addition, WDC has commissioned more detailed work on the specific impacts of the potential major expansion at Princes Risborough and how it is mitigated by the provision of major new road infrastructure. At this time the Buckinghamshire county-wide modelling is showing limited additional flows into South Oxfordshire as a result of growth in Wycombe District. As far as SODC's plans are concerned we are happy to work together as their plan progresses.

#### Agreement

3. SODC and WDC agree to cooperate on matters concerning strategic transport networks which affect both local authorities and to consult on policies and proposals that affect the strategic network or which have cross boundary impacts. The exchange of cross-border flows will allow authorities to assess potential impacts on their respective road networks through more detailed junction modelling where necessary. Should these impacts require mitigation then the authorities commit to work together on the identification and delivery of appropriate interventions. This could be through a multi-authority project group including the respective Highway Authorities.

#### **Schedule D: Other strategic matters**

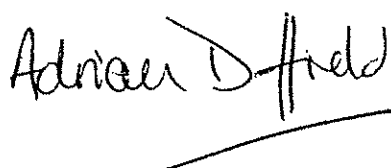
##### **Agreement**

1. SODC and WDC agree to cooperate on matters concerning any other strategic issues which affect both local authorities and to consult on policies and proposals that have cross boundary impacts. These might include landscape and visual impact. At the time of signing, no other significant issues have been identified.

This Memorandum of Understanding provides a framework for joint working between SODC and WDC. It allows refined Agreements to be agreed between individual authorities/infrastructure providers on specific areas where they consider it appropriate. At the time of signing, both authorities agree that they are complying with the Duty to Cooperate.

It is not a legally binding document but a document through which authorities have agreed an approach to work together on shared planning principles to assist in the preparation of their respective Local Plans.

**Signed by the following Council representatives**

Signature: 

**Name: Adrian Duffield. Head of Planning**

Signature: 

**Name: Penelope Tollitt, Head of Planning and Sustainability**

**For South Oxfordshire District Council**

**For Wycombe District Council**

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**Agreement Dated – 06 September 2017**





**Duty to Cooperate Memorandum of Understanding between South Oxfordshire District Council, Wycombe District Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Buckinghamshire County Council (“the Councils”)**

**Introduction/ Context**

1. The Localism Act 2011 brings significant changes to strategic planning in England. Strategic planning remains an essential part of the planning system. The Act provides for a bottom up approach to strategic planning in a local area through the “duty to co-operate.”

The Act sets out that a local planning authority has a duty to co-operate by: *“engaging constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in the preparation of development plan and other documents and in activities that can reasonably be considered to prepare the way for the preparation of such documents for strategic matters.”*

2. The requirements of the Localism Act are complemented by the guidance in paragraphs 178-181 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), although these are additional to those within the Act. The NPPF states that public bodies have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those which relate to strategic matters such as the provision of infrastructure for transport. The NPPF includes reference to local authorities considering agreements on joint approaches to the undertaking of activities and to considering whether to agree to prepare joint local development documents. The duty involves a continuous process of engagement from initial thinking through to implementation. It should result in meeting development requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities, where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development. Authorities should also consider producing plans or policies prepared as part of a joint committee, a memorandum of understanding or a jointly prepared strategy which is presented as evidence of an agreed position.
3. The Duty to Co-operate has become the first matter that is tested at a local plan examination. Failure to co-operate will result in delay and increased costs in bringing forward up to date local plans thereby increasing the risks at planning appeals.

4. In the light of the Duty to Cooperate, the Councils have agreed this memorandum of understanding to set out a jointly agreed position on cross-boundary transport matters affecting the area around the Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire border where Aylesbury Vale, South Oxfordshire and Wycombe Districts come together. Cross-boundary transport matters elsewhere are the subject of separate agreements.
5. The memorandum of understanding builds on long established joint working between local authorities and acknowledges where issues cannot be resolved by local authorities acting alone.
6. The following section identifies the current position between the authorities, where agreement has been reached, and also where further cooperation will be undertaken to seek resolution of outstanding matters. This Memorandum of Understanding will be updated as necessary and updates can be sought at the request of any of the signatory authorities.

### **Strategic transport matters**

7. Traffic forecasting work is continuing to be undertaken by South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) and Wycombe District Council (WDC) in association with their respective Highway Authorities (Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC)), to assess the impacts of growth on the road network. Forecasting work for Oxfordshire is being modelled by Atkins using SATURN, while forecasting work for Buckinghamshire is being modelled by Jacobs using the VISUM platform. It has been agreed that given the way the models are set up it would be difficult to use them to test the impact of growth in surrounding districts/ Counties in any detail, but forecast demand traffic flows on key cross-border routes can be exchanged.

### **South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC)**

8. The SODC position is that it has concerns related to forecast increased traffic flows into the District resulting from growth in Buckinghamshire that it considers will likely require further more detailed work, including the major expansion of Princes Risborough and development planned for the Haddenham area. Forecasting reports provided by WDC indicate that these flows are not of a scale to present a soundness issue but SODC welcome further joint working to resolve any issues.
9. The results of traffic modelling undertaken to test committed and planned South Oxfordshire growth through use of the Oxfordshire Strategic Model

(OSM) are set out in the Evaluation of Transport Impact: Stage 1 and Stage 2 reports, dated March and September 2017 respectively. The results of the modelling work undertaken shows that impacts of the planned growth are mainly concentrated in the Oxfordshire area, and that cross border impacts in terms of traffic flows and congestion on Buckinghamshire roads are forecast to be relatively limited. However, it is recognised the OSM has not been developed in detail in this area and that the quantum and level of growth in certain locations close to Buckinghamshire such as Thame is proposed to be identified through the Neighbourhood Plan process. There will therefore need to be continued on-going review of potential cross border impacts and possible mitigation. This will include additional more detailed work such as that carried out through the development management process in support of new sites.

### **Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)**

10. OCC has been working with SODC to assess the transport impacts of proposed development growth in the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2033, using the Oxfordshire Transport Model (OSM). The evaluation of appropriate mitigation measures in response to the evaluation of transport impacts (ETI) is ongoing.
11. Future growth is proposed through SODC's Local Plan 2033 in areas close to the Buckinghamshire border, such as Thame. OSM covers Oxfordshire, with the outer limits of the County being outside the area of detailed modelling, meaning that assessment is less reliable in these locations. However, the results indicate that there are network capacity issues around the A418/ A4129 / B4011 roundabout in Thame. OCC is keen to continue to work with all Councils party to this agreement to fully assess the impacts of this and the appropriate mitigation. Proposals will also be further refined and assessed through the Neighbourhood Plan process.
12. OCC has previously commented on the pre-submission draft of the Vale of Aylesbury District Council Local Plan. Future work between the relevant councils will assess the impacts of proposed growth, identify and cost mitigation measures and identify necessary funding for their delivery.
13. OCC has previously commented on the pre-submission draft of the Wycombe Local Plan. The plan includes proposals for the expansion of Princes Risborough by 2,650 homes, 2,050 within the plan period. Future work between the relevant councils will assess the impacts of this proposal on the highway network within Oxfordshire, identify and cost mitigation measures, and identify necessary funding for their delivery.

### **Wycombe District Council (WDC)**

14. All the authorities in Buckinghamshire (the County Council and the four Local Planning Authorities) have worked together to prepare traffic forecasts of the overall growth scenarios across the county (county-wide modelling). In addition, WDC has commissioned more detailed work on the specific impacts of the potential major expansion at Princes Risborough and how it is mitigated by the provision of major new road infrastructure. At this time the Buckinghamshire county-wide modelling is showing limited additional flows into South Oxfordshire as a result of growth in Wycombe District. WDC are happy to work with all authorities on cross-boundary transport issues and jointly develop an equitable approach to their resolution. This is likely to be through the development of a supplementary planning document (and its associated evidence base) and/or the development management process.

### **Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC)**

15. All the authorities in Buckinghamshire (the County Council and the four Local Planning Authorities) have worked together to prepare traffic forecasts of the overall growth scenarios across the county (county-wide modelling). AVDC's position is that increases in demand flow are observed on the approaches to the Thame Roundabout from the A418, A416 and on Aylesbury Rd both in and out of Thame town centre in the AM peak. Generally there is a small reduction in demand flow in the PM peak.
16. AVDC is committed to cooperating with SODC in commissioning further modelling work to better understand the impacts of the levels of proposed Local Plan development at SODC, AVDC and WDC. This will involve, where relevant, development management dialogue and consultation on relevant schemes. Any recommendations that are derived as a result of the modelling work will also be considered and further dialogue between SODC, AVDC and WDC along with BCC and OCC will determine the work programme and any necessary scheme development.

### **Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC)**

17. All the authorities in Buckinghamshire (the County Council and the four Local Planning Authorities) have worked together to prepare traffic forecasts of the overall growth scenarios across the county (county-wide modelling). The current Countywide Modelling shows that the main impact of growth in Buckinghamshire on South Oxfordshire is around Thame Roundabout. BCC

will work with the Councils where appropriate to understand what mitigation measures might be required.

### **Agreement from all parties**

18. The Councils agree to cooperate on matters concerning strategic transport networks which affect these local authorities and to consult on policies and proposals that affect the strategic network or which have cross boundary impacts. The exchange of cross-border flows will allow authorities to assess potential impacts on their respective road networks through more detailed junction modelling where necessary. Should these impacts require mitigation then the authorities commit to work together on the identification and delivery of appropriate interventions. This could be through a multi-authority project group drawing from each of the Councils, the sharing of relevant more detailed information on the forecast transport impact of development, co-ordinated bidding for funding and discussions on likely developer contributions. Based on current evidence, the following areas of study and actions are proposed. This is not a definitive list and other areas of study may arise. Where additional highway capacity tests are required as a result of predicted cross border flows the lead authority arranging the tests shall be that from which the flow originates.

<b>Location/ issue</b>	<b>Proposed actions</b>
A418/ A4129/ B4011 Thame Roundabout Junction. OSM local plan test has forecast that the A418 link from Aylesbury direction would be operating at capacity in the AM peak 2031 forecast year. BCC modelling has shown an increase in traffic demand accessing this junction in the AM Peak future year test.	Need to test junction operation in more detail as proposed development becomes more certain.
B4009 route between Princes Risborough- Chinnor and M40. Transport Modelling for Princes Risborough has forecast an increase in cross border traffic flows on this route.	May need to test the operation of key junctions on this route in more detail as proposed development becomes more certain.
Proposed cycle link between Thame and Haddenham via Haddenham and Thame Parkway Station.	OCC and BCC to continue to liaise on the feasibility and funding for this proposed link.

Proposed increase in frequency of 280 bus service between Thame and Aylesbury.	OCC and BCC to continue to liaise with Arriva Travel on the feasibility and funding for this improvement.
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19. The councils also commit to continue to co-operate on other matters that may arise that lead to changes or impacts in cross border transport flows.
20. The councils acknowledge that central government has committed to progressing development of two major transport schemes - East-West rail and the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway - that may have significant impacts on transport flows in the area. However, it is currently too early to understand impacts and/or their relationship to planned development, and therefore there will need to be on-going liaison between the parties represented in this MoU as these schemes and their associated evidence base work are further progressed. This will be of particular importance to the Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan and Local Plan reviews in order to support any future development strategy decision making.
21. The councils further acknowledge that they have a duty to co-operate with Natural England, and a legal duty to carry out a Habitat Regulations Assessment in support of their local plans. This work had identified that there is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) at Aston Rowant (on the South Oxfordshire/ Wycombe District border) that could be impacted upon by Oxon/ Bucks cross border traffic flows. For South Oxfordshire, an Appropriate Assessment was undertaken which found that whilst the combined effects of growth could increase NOx concentrations in the area, the increases are considered unlikely to have an adverse effect on the qualifying features based on long-term trends and past monitoring at the SAC. As such it is concluded that the in-combination effects of planned growth would not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of the Aston Rowant SAC. For Wycombe District Council, the HRA work concluded that based on the traffic modelling work undertaken to support the local plan, there would be no likely significant effect on the SAC in relation to increased pollution due to forecast traffic increase on this road.

## Conclusion

22. This Memorandum of Understanding provides a framework for joint working between the Councils. It allows refined agreements to be agreed between individual authorities/infrastructure providers on specific areas where they consider it appropriate. At the time of signing, all authorities agree that they are complying with the Duty to Cooperate.

23. It is not a legally binding document but a document through which authorities have agreed an approach to work together on shared planning principles to assist in the preparation of Local Plans and infrastructure delivery.



**Signed by the following Council representatives:**

Signature



Name: Holly Jones

For South Oxfordshire District Council

Signature



Name: David Johncock

For Wycombe District Council

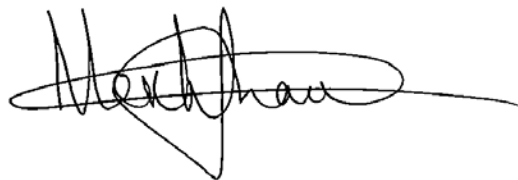
Signature



Name: Carole Pasternoster

For Aylesbury Vale District Council

Signature



Name: Mark Shaw

For Buckinghamshire County Council

Signature



Name: Sue Halliwell

For Oxfordshire County Council

Agreement Dated – **26 02 2018**

Please contact Planning Policy on  
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