

**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
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,850</b>

\*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

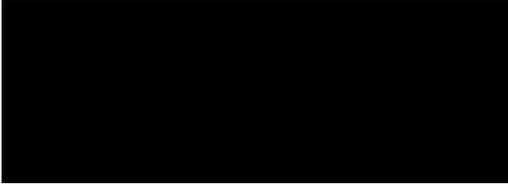
- 3.26 The parties agree that they have been engaged constructively, actively and on an on-going- basis to secure effective cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters when preparing the Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan.
- 3.27 The parties agree that the housing growth proposed in the Partial 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**



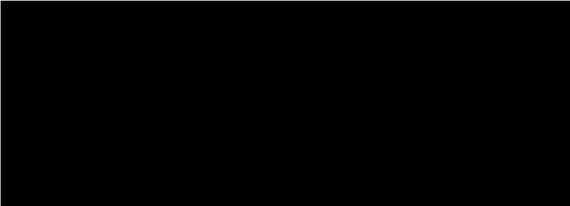
Adrian Arnold  
Acting Head of Planning Services  
4/2/19

**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**



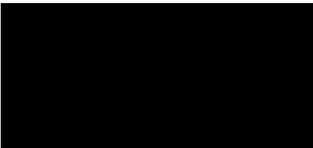
Adrian Duffield  
Head of Planning  
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**Signed on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council**



Giles Hughes  
Head of Planning and Strategic Housing  
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**Signed on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council**



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