

Non technical summary

What is a sustainability appraisal?

The sustainability appraisal (SA) process seeks to ensure that social, economic and environmental considerations are incorporated within the preparation of planning documents. More specifically, the process ensures that social, economic and environmental impacts of plans and policies, both positive and negative, are fully understood and taken account of. It is intended that this will help to ensure that new plans and policies contribute towards a sustainable form of development.

What are we carrying out an appraisal of?

- i. This sustainability appraisal relates to the Core Strategy Submission Document. The Core Strategy forms part of our Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF along with the regional spatial strategy (the South East Plan) provided the framework for planning in South Oxfordshire. In July 2010 the Government attempted to revoke the South East Plan but following the first Cala Homes judgement this was overturned and the South East Plan is currently an on-going part of the Development Plan. At this time of uncertainty we tested a further set of options to refine our strategy. These were in general conformity of the South East Plan and are contained in Table E below. The LDF will replace the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011.
- ii. The Core Strategy sets out how we see the district and the places within it developing over the next 20 years. It details the overall amount of development in the district, the broad locations for delivering housing and other development needs such as employment, shopping and transport. The strategy includes the allocation of strategic sites for development and establishes what physical, social and green infrastructure is needed and how and by what means it will be delivered. It covers the period to 2027.
- iii. The Submission document is the third and final stage of the Core Strategy. The first stage was the Issues and Options document. This identified the key spatial planning issues for the district and a series of options for how the district could develop and accommodate new growth between now and 2026. The second stage was the Preferred Options. This set out our preferred approach and explained why alternative approaches had been rejected.

Stages of the Sustainability Appraisal process

- iv. There are five formal stages (A to E) to the sustainability appraisal process each with a series of tasks which need to be completed.

Stage A – baseline and contextual information

- v. As part of this stage we have taken account of the relevant plans, policies and programmes at the international, European, national, regional and local level which will have an influence on the Core Strategy. This is detailed in

Appendix 1 of our revised Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Scoping Report) which is available to view at www.southoxon.gov.uk/planning-policy.

- vi. In order to predict and monitor the social, economic and environment effects of the Core Strategy, we need to know what the current or ‘baseline’ situation is for the district. We have prepared 18 sustainability objectives covering social, economic and environmental issues. For each of these objectives we have detailed the current situation and future trends. This is set out in Appendix 2 of our Scoping Report. The 18 sustainability objectives are displayed in Table A below.

Table A. The 18 sustainability appraisal objectives for South Oxfordshire.

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES	
1	To help to provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home.
2	To help to create safe places for people to use and for businesses to operate, to reduce anti-social behaviour and reduce crime and the fear of crime.
3	To improve accessibility for everyone to health, education, recreation, cultural and community facilities and services.
4	To maintain and improve people’s health, well-being and community cohesion and support voluntary, community and faith groups.
5	To reduce harm to the environment by seeking to minimise pollution of all kinds.
6	To improve travel choice and accessibility, reduce the need for travel by car and shorten the length and duration of journeys.
7	To conserve and enhance biodiversity.
8	To protect and enhance the District’s open spaces and countryside and in particular, those areas designated for their landscape importance.
9	To protect and enhance the District’s historic environment and to ensure that new development is of a high quality design and reinforces local distinctiveness.
10	To seek to address the causes and effects of climate change by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) securing sustainable building practices which conserve energy, water resources and materials; and b) maximising the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources. c) ensuring that the design and location of new development is resilient to the effects of climate change
11	To reduce the risk of flooding and resulting detriment to public well-being, the economy and the environment.
12	To seek to minimise waste generation and encourage the re-use of waste through recycling, composting or energy recovery.
13	To improve efficiency in land use and reduce development pressure on the countryside and natural resources/material assets, such as landscape, minerals, biodiversity and soil quality.
14	To ensure high and stable levels of employment and facilitate inward investment within the district.
15	To assist in the development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a strong, innovative and knowledge-based economy that delivers high-value-added, sustainable, low-impact activities; and b) small firms, particularly those that maintain and enhance the rural economy.

	c) thriving economies in market towns and villages
16	To assist in the development of a skilled workforce to support the long term competitiveness of the district by raising education achievement levels and encouraging the development of the skills needed for everyone to find and remain in work.
17	To encourage the development of a buoyant, sustainable tourism sector.
18	Support community involvement in decisions affecting them and enable communities to provide local services and solutions.

- vii. Using this baseline information alongside other data, we have identified the main sustainability issues for the district. This has helped to inform the development of the Core Strategy and predict the effects of the different options. These key sustainability issues are set out in Table B below.

Table B. Key sustainability issues for the district.

Sustainability problem	
Environmental problems	
1	Landscape deterioration: In some areas of the district the condition of landscape has deteriorated and is in need of repair. <i>(South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment: SODC, 2003).</i>
2	Loss of biodiversity: There has been a loss of habitats and species as a result of neglect, harmful agricultural practices, urban development and climate change. <i>(State of the Environment 2008 South East England: EA, 2008, Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire 2009 and baseline data in appendix 3)</i>
3	Congestion: Traffic in Oxfordshire is increasing with congestion around major junction and town centres in peak times. <i>(Baseline data in Appendix 3 and Local Transport Plan for Oxfordshire 2006/11)</i>
4	Flood risk A small proportion of the district is located within the flood zone. <i>(Baseline data in Appendix 3, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment District wide (2009) and Didcot (2007)).</i>
5	Risk of drought: Global warming is likely to result in periods of drought spanning more than one season or one year. Summer rainfall is expected to reduce. <i>(Baseline data in Appendix 3 and 'Climate change - Time to get ready,' EA, 2005)</i>
6	Climate change: Oxfordshire's main areas of climate-related vulnerability are increasing intense downpours and higher temperatures. <i>(Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy, Briefing Paper 6: Environment, 2007 and baseline data in Appendix 3)</i>
7	Energy Consumption: Household energy consumption is higher than the South East and UK averages. <i>(Our Place, Our Future SODC SCS 2009 – 2026 and baseline data in appendix 3)</i>
Social problems	
8	Affordable Housing: There is a shortage of affordable housing. The cost of general market housing is much higher than the South East average. <i>(Housing Needs Assessment Study 2008 produced by DCA), (Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment, 2007)</i>
9	Lack of appropriate size of housing. There is a shortfall of two-bedroom accommodation within the district. <i>(Housing Needs Assessment Study, 2008 produced by DCA)</i>
10	An ageing population: The district has a growing proportion of older people and fewer younger people. <i>(Baseline data in Appendix 3)</i>

11	Social exclusion: Access to health and social care services, shops and employment is difficult for residents without use of a private car in small settlements, where public transport services are limited. <i>(Our Place, Our Future SODC SCS 2009 – 2026)</i>
12	Community sports facilities: There is a deficiency in the provision of indoor and outdoor community sports facilities in the district. <i>(PPG17 Assessment of Sport and Recreation Facilities, 2008)</i>
13	Fear of crime and anti-social behaviour: Despite relatively low levels of crime, community safety has consistently been a priority for local people and anti-social behaviour remains a major concern. <i>(South Oxfordshire Community Safety Strategy 2008-2011)</i>
Economic problems	
14	Pockets of deprivation: Although one of the least deprived local authorities in the county, pockets of deprivation exist within the district. <i>(Baseline data in Appendix 3)</i>
15	Ageing resident population structure: The ageing population structure will result in a fall in the size of the local workforce. <i>(Baseline data in Appendix 3)</i>
16	Workforce skills: Skills shortages in the district are an obstacle to business success. <i>(Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement 2005 , baseline data in Appendix 3 and Our Place, Our Future SODC SCS 2009-2026).</i>
17	Road traffic congestion: The principle road network in the county is operating at or near capacity. <i>(Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement 2005 and baseline data in Appendix 3)</i>
18	The availability of sufficient housing and its high cost: Average house prices are very high (in 2007 it was 10 times the average wage of the local resident workforce). <i>(Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement 2005 and baseline data in Appendix 3)</i>
19	Investment in infrastructure: Investment in infrastructure (such as roads, public transport, health and social care, water supply, drainage, sport and leisure) has not in the past and may not in the future be adequate to support development. <i>(South East Plan, 2009)</i>
20	Threats to the vitality and viability of town and village centres: Changing patterns of consumer spending and travel, increasing competition from larger town centres and relocation of businesses to out-of-centre locations is threatening the vitality and viability of town and village centres. <i>(SODC Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment, 2009, Our Place, Our Future SODC SCS 2009 - 2026).</i>

Stage B – developing and refining the options and predicting effects

Testing the Core Strategy objectives

- viii. The starting point of the Core Strategy is a vision of how the district will be in 20 years time. To help us get there, we have prepared six Core Strategy objectives. We need to make sure that these Core Strategy objectives accord with our sustainability objectives and identify any incompatibilities. The Core Strategy objectives and the compatibility assessment are shown in Tables C and D below.

Table C. The Core Strategy objectives.

Objective 1: Settlements

- Support the character and distinctiveness of all our towns and villages, recognising the need for all communities to thrive.

- Transform Didcot into a lively thriving town through regeneration of the central area and construction of urban extensions ensuring it meets the community's aspirations for positive change.
- Enhance Henley, Thame and Wallingford as local market towns.
- Maintain the general balance between the market towns and villages recognising the need to maintain the character of the district.

Objective 2: Communities and housing

- Ensure that day-to-day services (local shops, schools, pubs) are available nearby.
- Support those facilities that keep communities strong.
- Improve poor quality housing estates and other run down areas.
- Provide for a range of housing development across the district that respects the scale of existing settlements and caters for resident's needs.
- Ensure that a significant proportion of this housing falls within the 'affordable' definition.

Objective 3: Environment & Design

- Ensure that all new development is well-designed, reflects the local character, and fosters a sense of community and safety.
- Ensure that all new development is built to the highest viable standards in terms of water and energy efficiency, waste management and sustainable construction measures.
- Ensure that all new development integrates in its design and location the need for adapting to and mitigating against climate change.
- Ensure all new development provides the necessary infrastructure including green infrastructure.
- Enhance and manage the built and natural environment.

Objective 4: Employment and Education

- Build on the economic success of the area through supporting existing business and encouraging new business.
- Seek to reduce long distance commuting out of the district especially by encouraging those creating more high value jobs for example in the science and high technology sectors.
- Encourage the provision of high standard education and training facilities to develop the skills employers need.
- Encourage investment in technologies to enable remote working.

Objective 5: Getting Around

- Encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport whilst recognising that the rural nature of the district means that many residents will rely on car travel.
- Ensure that new development is accompanied by the necessary infrastructure for efficient and effective transport systems.
- Encourage adequate provision for parking
- Encourage improvements to make cycling and walking safer and more attractive.
- Support local and community led transport initiatives.

Objective 6: Leisure and Health

- Promote provision of high quality health and leisure facilities for all ages across the district
- Enable people to adopt healthy lifestyles .
- Support the provision of high quality design in public buildings and spaces.
- Encourage innovative ideas for activities and facilities.
- Encourage investment in technologies to enable remote access to services.

Table D. Testing the Core Strategy objectives against the sustainability appraisal objectives

		Sustainability Appraisal Objectives																	
Core Strategy Objectives		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	-	✗	✓	-	-	✓	-
	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✗	-	✓	-	-	✗	✓	-	-	-	-
	3	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-
	4	✓	-	-	-	✗	✓	✗	✗	-	-	-	-	✗	✓	✓	✓	-	-
	5	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓
	6	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

- ix. The main inconsistencies relate to the delivery of new homes and economic growth within the district alongside the objectives of reducing harm to the environment, conserving and enhancing biodiversity, protecting and enhancing open space and countryside reducing development pressure on the countryside.
- x. The inconsistencies between these sets of objectives are however tempered through Core Strategy objectives 1 and 3. These seek to maintain the character of the district and ensure that new development is well designed, reflects local character, achieves high standards of sustainable design and construction and that overall the natural and built environment is managed and enhanced.

Testing the Core Strategy options

- xi. The Core Strategy sets out the key issues for the district that need to be addressed. We have developed several options which are alternative ways of addressing these issues. These are shown in Table E below with the preferred options highlighted.

Table E. The options assessed through this strategy with preferred options highlighted

Core Strategy Topic area	Options assessed (Up to Examination in Public Stage – Appendix 2)
The settlement strategy	<p>Option A – A strong network of settlements</p> <p>Option B – A new settlement</p> <p>Option C – Focus on the towns only</p> <p>Option D – Clusters around the towns</p> <p>Option E – Dispersal to all settlements</p> <p>Option F – Focus along public transport corridors</p> <p>Option G – Focus growth around Oxford and Reading</p>
The movement strategy	Preferred strategy – strategy dictated by national and regional planning policy (at the time and now taken forward) and Local Transport Plan. No reasonable alternatives.
The amount of employment land	<p>Option A - Allocate the amount of land identified as required in the ELR update together with an allowance for the SE Plan housing allocations, and an contingency allowance giving a total of 20ha. Plus</p> <p>Option B - To achieve a 5% decrease in out commuting from 2001 to 2026.</p> <p>Option C - To achieve a 10% increase in high tech jobs from 2006 to 2026.</p>
The distribution of employment land	<p>Option A -Allocate employment land within the four main towns and the larger villages and encourage the redevelopment of existing employment sites for employment uses</p> <p>Option B - promote development in just one or a limited number of towns</p> <p>Option C - develop only large employment units</p> <p>Option D - Allow the redevelopment of employment sites for other uses</p>
The scale of housing	<p>Option A - Plan for the number of houses set out in the revised South East Plan and Didcot Growth Point</p> <p>Option B - Plan for more houses than that set out in the revised South East Plan and Didcot Growth Point</p>
The scale of housing	Option C – Plan for fewer houses than that set out in the revised South East Plan and Didcot Growth Point.
Housing distribution strategy	<p>Option A – Allocate more to market towns than larger villages based on appropriate sites available</p> <p>Option B – Allocate all new housing to market towns</p> <p>Option C – More development in larger villages than the market towns</p> <p>Option D – Concentrate development in one or two larger villages</p> <p>Option E – Exclude green belt villages from housing allocations</p> <p>Option F – Exclude Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty villages from housing allocations</p> <p>Option G – Include land adjacent to Reading in housing allocations</p>

Housing distribution strategy	<p>Building on Option A above, but as part of this approach:</p> <p>Option A - Remove the Central Oxfordshire Sub-Region and have two way split (Didcot and Rest of District) applying proportional growth to the rest of the district.</p> <p>Option B – Retain the Central Oxfordshire Sub-Region and have three way split in district (Didcot, Central Oxfordshire and Rest of District).</p> <p>Option C – Remove the Central Oxfordshire Sub-Region and have two way split (Didcot and Rest of District) allocating more housing to Wallingford (higher than option with Central Oxfordshire Sub-Region retained).</p> <p>Option D – Remove the Central Oxfordshire Sub-Region and have two way split (Didcot and Rest of District) allocating more housing to Thame (higher than option with Central Oxfordshire Sub-Region retained).</p>
Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People strategy	<p>Option A - Retention of existing sites with extension where possible; a sequential test in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document for allocating new sites</p> <p>Option B - Reliance upon a criteria based approach in selecting new sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people.</p>
Town centres and retail	Preferred strategy – strategy dictated by national and regional planning policy. No reasonable alternatives.
The environment strategy	Preferred strategy – strategy dictated by national and regional planning policy. No reasonable alternatives.
Quality development	<p>Option A - Require 20% of energy demand from new development to come from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources but accept a lower proportion where it can be demonstrated that due to technical or site constraints this would not be feasible or viable.</p> <p>Option B - Require a fixed % for the proportion of energy demand from new development to come decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources e.g. either 10%, 15% or 20%.</p> <p>Option A* - Require Code level 4 for all new housing from adoption of Core Strategy in 2011</p> <p>Option B* - Require Code Level 3 for new housing, rising to Code Level 4 in 2013</p> <p>Option C* - Require Code Level 3 for new housing and Code Level 4 for schemes of 200+ houses from adoption of Core Strategy in 2011 and Code level 4 for all new housing in 2013</p>
Green infrastructure strategy	Preferred strategy – strategy dictated by national planning policy. No reasonable alternatives.
Infrastructure strategy	Preferred strategy – strategy dictated by national planning policy. No reasonable alternatives.
Directions of growth for Didcot	<p>Option A – North East (North East or Lady Grove estate)</p> <p>Option B – North East (North of Hadden Hill)</p> <p>Option C – East</p> <p>Option D – South East</p> <p>Option E – South</p> <p>Option F - North West</p> <p>Option G – Split housing option between Option A (1,350 houses) and western half of Option E (450 houses)</p>

Directions of growth for Henley	Option A – Land off Fair Mile Option B – Land off Reading Road Option C - Land to the rear of Gillotts school Option D – Land at Highlands Farm (not a formal option but proposed for consideration) Option E –Land at Gillotts Field – No longer a viable option as site is now a registered village green
Directions of growth for Thame (850 dwellings and no allowance for unallocated sites)	Option A – North East Option B – South East Option C – South Option D – South West Option F – West
Directions of growth for Thame (530 dwellings and allowance for unallocated sites)	Option A – North East Option B – South East Option C – South Option D – South West Option F – West
Directions of growth for Thame (Split 775 dwellings with majority on Greenfield Neighbourhood and the remainder to be brought forward in the Site Allocations DPD allowing for the possibility of using brownfield sites within the town; not including an allowance for unallocated sites)	Option A – 530 on site D with 245 brought forward in Site Allocations DPD Option B – 600 on site D with 175 brought forward in Site Allocations DPD Option C – 530 on site F with 245 brought forward in Site Allocations DPD Option D – 600 on site F with 175 brought forward in Site Allocations DPD Option E – 775 on site D Option F – 775 on site F
Level of housing allocated at Thame	Option A – 850 dwellings Option B – 775 dwellings Option C – 530 dwellings
Directions of growth for Wallingford (750 dwellings and no allowance for unallocated sites)	Option A – North Option B – West Option C – South West Option D – South West Option E - South

Directions of growth for Wallingford (400 dwellings and allowance for unallocated sites)	Option A – North Option B – West Option C – South West Option D – South West Option E - South
Housing allocations at Wallingford (allocation of 555 not including an allowance for unallocated sites)	Option A – North Option B – West Option C – South West (West of Hithercroft Industrial Estate) Option D – South West (South of Hithercroft Industrial Estate) Option E – South
Level of housing allocated at Wallingford	Option A – 750 dwellings Option B – 555 dwellings Option C – 400 dwellings
Rural areas	Option A - Allow limited development in rural areas. Option B - A more restrictive approach to development in rural settlements
Core Strategy Topic area	Options assessed (Changes following Examination in Public – Appendix 2a) November 2011 Hearings
The overall strategy	Delete the first sentence (referring to the abolition of the South East Plan) in the submission and post-submission versions of the CS
The overall strategy	Delete Footnote 54 to the post-submissions changes
Housing distribution strategy	Below Para 7.6 insert two paragraphs which (i) summarise the history of SOSDA (ii) set out that any provision of a Strategic Development Area on the scale identified in the South East Plan would require joint working and sustainability appraisal of reasonable alternative options involving a number of Districts bordering the City, (iii) set out that the Oxford City adopted Core Strategy makes no reference to any wider growth needs beyond the City boundaries, and (iv) that if it became necessary to address this matter on inter-authority basis the established County/ District mechanisms provide a means of pursuing the ‘duty to cooperate’.
Housing distribution strategy	Re-draft paragraphs 7.8 and 7.9 to bring together the explanation of the distribution strategy in one place and provide increased clarity. The exact wording changes suggested by the Inspector are set out in section 5 of this document.

Housing distribution strategy	Place an asterisk next to the figure of 1,154 in Table 7.3 referring to a footnote to read 'These allocations should be divided so that at least 500 are provided at Larger Villages in the Central Oxfordshire area. This will secure general conformity with the South East Plan. The larger villages in Central Oxfordshire are Benson, Berinsfield, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford and Wheatley. Part of this Central Oxfordshire provision may also be met by an appropriate allocation at Bayswater Farm.'
Henley	Reword first bullet to read: 'identify land for a minimum of 400 new homes'
Henley	Change to Para 10.9 – reword final two sentences
Thame	Housing allocations at Thame not including an allowance for unallocated sites* (Split 775 dwellings with the majority on a greenfield neighbourhood and the remainder to be brought forward in the Site Allocations DPD allowing for the possibility of using brownfield sites within the town, or allocating all 775 on a single site compared with deferring the allocation at Thame of 775 homes to the forthcoming Thame Neighbourhood Plan) (5.1 and 5.2).
Wallingford	Housing allocations at Wallingford (allocation of 555 not including an allowance for unallocated sites*) with inspector draft changes to Policy CSWAL2 (change of allocation from Site B to Site E), Para 12.12 and Map 12.1
Affordable Housing	Add new text to Para 7.31 as follows: The council's Housing Needs Assessment showed that 75 per cent of the housing need is for social rented and 25 per cent for intermediate housing. PPS3 also includes the category of affordable rented housing. Our affordable housing viability study shows that there are circumstances where the 40% affordable housing target could be achieved if the 75% social rent to 25% shared ownership tenure split is retained. This could be achieved on sites with low existing use values. In such circumstances we will seek a 75% social rented to 25% shared ownership tenure split, unless viability or other factors show a robust justification for a different mix or rent model. For sites with medium or high existing use values where viability issues can be demonstrated in achieving a 75% social rented to 25% shared ownership tenure split, we will accept a tenure split of 75% affordable rented and 25% shared ownership, unless viability or other factors show a robust justification for a different mix.

<p>Meeting Housing Needs</p>	<p>Amend title above para. 7.38 as follows:</p> <p>Extra care housing Specialist accommodation for older people</p> <p>Delete paragraph 7.38 and replace as follows:</p> <p>There are a range of models that can play a part in providing specialist accommodation for the elderly. These include sheltered and enhanced sheltered housing, Extra Care housing, retirement villages, continuing care retirement communities and registered care homes both with and without nursing care. The council's preference is for Extra Care housing or schemes which include an element of Extra Care provision within them, in accordance with the county council's Extra Care housing strategy*.</p> <p>*Include footnote reference to OCC Extra Care Housing Strategy Jan 2008.</p> <p>Amend paragraph 7.39 as follows:</p> <p>Extra Care housing should ideally consist of schemes of about 60 units Where appropriate, specialist accommodation for the elderly should be provided on a mixed-tenure basis, and such accommodation should be located on sites in or adjacent to the towns or within the larger villages, although other forms of Extra Care provision (hub and spoke) may be appropriate too. The affordable housing component of any scheme Where any scheme providing specialist accommodation for the elderly (with or without care) includes an affordable housing component would this can count towards the overall 40 per cent affordable housing requirement if part of a wider development on new developments.</p>
<p>Meeting Housing Needs</p>	<p>Change Policy CSH4 – Meeting Housing Needs as follows.</p> <p>Delete third and fourth bullet point of the policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist accommodation for older people will be permitted in locations where housing would normally be allowed. • Extra Care housing should be provided in the new greenfield neighbourhoods identified in this strategy and other suitable locations <p>Insert new final bullet point:</p> <p>Specialist accommodation for older people should be provided in the new greenfield neighbourhoods identified in this strategy and will be permitted at other suitable locations</p>

July 2011 Hearings	
Economy Strategy	Policy CSEM1 Supporting a successful economy - Insert additional clause in Policy CSEM1 (vi) Supporting the prosperity of the area's tourism industry and recreation-based rural diversification where proposals are of a scale and type appropriate to their location.
Economy Strategy	Policy CSEM4 Supporting economic development - Bullet (i) change 'economic growth' to 'employment'
Density	Policy CSH2 Density – Replace wording with 'On sites where housing development is acceptable in principle, a minimum density of 25 dwellings per hectare (net) will be required'
Rural areas	Para 13.8 Rural Communities - Delete second sentence 'We will update this each year through our annual monitoring report'
May 2012 and June 2012 Hearings (see Appendix 2b)	
Overall Strategy	<p>New Policy: Policy CS1</p> <p>Planning applications which accord with the policies in the Development Plan (including, where relevant Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p> <p>Planning permission will also be granted where relevant policies in the Development Plan are out of date or silent unless:</p> <p>any adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or</p> <p>specific policies in the Framework or other material considerations indicate that development should be restricted.</p> <p>New para 1.19</p> <p>When considering development proposals which accord with the policies in the Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework is also a material consideration. The Council will take a positive approach to the consideration of development proposals, following the presumption in favour of sustainable development. We will work proactively with applicants and other stakeholders to seek solutions which mean that proposals can be approved where possible, and to secure development which achieves sustainable improvements in the economic, social and environmental conditions in South Oxfordshire.</p>

Density Policy	Add following caveat to end of policy CSH2 'unless this would have an adverse effect on the character of the area'
Town Centres and Shopping	<p>Amend policy CST1 as follows (new text underlined)</p> <p>Proposals for out of centre development will not be permitted</p> <p><u>As a starting point, the Council looks for proposals for main town centre uses to be sited within defined town centres.</u></p> <p><u>Applications for such uses on unallocated sites outside town centres will be required to be in accessible locations well connected to the town centre. Such proposals will be subject to the sequential test and, for proposals over 2,500sq.m, an impact assessment. Proposals which fail to satisfy these tests will not be permitted.</u></p>
Rural Communities	<p>Reword text under matrix as follows (new changes underlined)</p> <p>All development should respect national designations such as Green Belt and should conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty while also supporting. Suitably designed and located development at an appropriate scale that necessary to <u>facilitates the economic and social well-being of such areas, especially in the Larger Villages in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty</u> will be supported including. <u>This includes the provision of adequate housing to meet identified local needs. Local</u> the character of the area and local distinctiveness and should meet will be protected and the requirements of relevant development plan policies will be met</p>

<p>Environment</p>	<p>New policy: Policy CSEN3 – Historic Environment</p> <p>The district’s designated historic heritage assets, both above and below ground such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nationally designated assets including listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, historic battlefields and Scheduled Ancient Monuments; • conservation areas; and • their settings <p>will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance and their important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.</p> <p>This will be carried out through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conservation area appraisals/reviews; • management plans; • designating new conservation areas where appropriate; • the determination of planning, listed building consent and other relevant applications. <p>Proposals for development that affect non-designated historic assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.</p>
<p>Quality Development</p>	<p>Change to policy CSQ3 Design (changes underlined)</p> <p>Amend first bullet point to read ‘responds <u>positively</u> to and respects the character of the site and its surroundings, <u>particularly the historic significance and heritage values of the historic environment, whilst</u> enhancing local distinctiveness and ensuring that new development is of a scale, and type and density appropriate to the site and its setting.</p>

Delivery and Contingency	<p>Change to policy CSC1 Design (changes underlined)</p> <p>For the strategic housing sites, if the Annual Monitoring Report shows that <u>allocated development sites and/or neighbourhood plans are</u> is not coming forward in a timely manner, we will <u>consider</u>:</p> <p>(i) <u>seeking</u> consider alternative sources of funding if lack of infrastructure is delaying development</p> <p>(ii) <u>bringing</u> forward sites phased anticipated to come on stream later in the plan process</p> <p>(iii) allocate <u>identifying</u> alternative deliverable site(s) through a <u>development plan document or other mechanism in general accordance with the distribution strategy of this plan as set out in Tables 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3.</u></p>
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- xii. The sustainability appraisal process enables us to predict the effects of these different options against our sustainability objectives and compare them against each other. The results of this are set out in Appendix 2, 2a and 2b. An assessment of whether the predicted effect was significant or not was made by considering its likelihood of happening, the scale of the effect, whether it would be temporary or permanent and whether it would happen in the short, medium or long term.
- xiii. Testing and comparing the different options against each other has helped our decision making in selecting a preferred option or preferred way of addressing the issues. The reasons why we have selected our preferred options and rejected the alternatives are set out in Table F below.

Table F. Influence of the SA on selecting the preferred options

The settlement strategy – selecting the preferred option
<p>Options for the settlement strategy have evolved through initial testing of the housing distribution options. The housing distribution options were appraised at the issues and options and preferred options stages and primarily concentrate on the proportion of split between towns and villages, including the focussing of development only in the four main towns or one or two of the main towns. These options were appraised against an option to distribute development evenly throughout the district.</p> <p>Whilst the results of assessing these options are informative (see below – spatial approach to new housing) the SA process highlighted a need for a more strategic assessment of our distribution strategy. This resulted in the generation of options for a new settlement, clustering around the towns, focussing development along public transport corridors and focussing growth around Oxford and Reading.</p> <p>The SA shows that in general the ‘strong network of settlements’ scores more</p>

positively than the other options. This is because a good level of accessibility to services and facilities is provided across the district, including the more rural areas, and the option also helps to promote the rural economy. The other options, including clustering around the towns, were less effective in promoting accessibility to the more rural areas. This has informed our overall strategy which is based on a strong network of settlements.

Housing Options – selecting the preferred options

The amount of new housing

The SA shows that providing more housing than identified in South East Plan could positively contribute to certain objectives, for example, by providing more affordable homes for people to live in and support the growth of the economy. However, there would be a significant negative impact on the district's open spaces and countryside because more greenfield land would be used and the loss of this is irreversible, which we have considered in developing our preferred option. The effect would also be finite in relation to housing need.

The results of the SA along with the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the overwhelming public support, additional growth already being accommodated in Didcot and concerns over the delivery of infrastructure have informed our choice to plan for the number of houses set out in the South East Plan.

We also tested the option of allocating fewer houses than the South East Plan target. This option still provided housing and helped community cohesion but to a lesser extent than the other two options. The option could still mean the loss of open space but less so than the other options. Impacts on the economy and biodiversity are uncertain as it would depend on the level of housing and location of sites.

The housing numbers in the South East Plan are based on robust and credible evidence. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, providing for less than the identified need would not contribute towards providing existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home.

The distribution of new housing

The SA shows that dispersing development evenly throughout the district scores negatively in relation to a number of objectives. The principal issue with this approach is that it would not promote accessibility to the services and facilities contained within the main towns and larger villages or facilitate the delivery of public transport.

The spatial approach to Central Oxfordshire and the remainder of the district:

The SA shows that focusing development solely on Wallingford, Thame and Henley would have a positive effect in relation to improving accessibility to services and facilities, minimising pollution and improving travel choice and reducing the need to travel. However, the benefits of this generally apply to the occupants of the new housing only. Focusing a proportion of new development in the larger villages would also help to support the viability of existing services in these villages and provide some affordable housing.

These findings have influenced our decision on our preferred option. Helping the viability of village services and providing affordable housing by allocating some housing are important considerations and on balance we have chosen to allocate the

majority of the housing in the main towns and a smaller proportion in the larger villages.

We considered whether to carry forward the Central Oxfordshire sub-region in our strategy compared to alternatives to this (i.e. proportional growth over the district's towns and villages but still allocating the majority in towns). The SA showed that the proportional growth approach would mean the general balance between market towns and villages would be maintained and better supports the development of a strong network of settlements. It also showed that the proportional growth approach helps with community cohesion. Consultation so far suggests the community understands more clearly proportional growth and would advocate this approach. This informed our choice in favour of the proportional growth approach.

Proportion of split for new housing between the towns and the larger villages

The SA tests different proportions of development in towns as opposed to villages. These figures do need to be treated with care because they are notional and not related to the suitability and availability of sites, but provide a basis of assessing the effects. Concentrating 80 percent of development in Wallingford, Thame and Henley scores more positively in relation to improving accessibility to services and facilities and reducing harm to the environment and minimising pollution. Concentrating a higher proportion (40 percent) in the larger villages (and 60% in the towns) would result in more housing and more positive effects in relation to maintaining the viability of services.

These results have informed our decision making in choosing our preferred option. However, it is also evident that the ability to deliver housing and the availability of suitable sites also needs to be considered. In our preferred options document we have amended our approach to distributing housing by giving numbers for specific sites and places rather than a proportional split. Since the SA of the Issues and Options we have been carrying out more site assessment work to inform our strategy which is more realistic than a notional proportion.

The level of development in the smaller villages

The SA shows that allowing more housing in the smaller villages rather than focusing on towns and larger villages would have significantly greater negative effects on accessibility to services, minimising pollution and improving travel choice and reducing the need to travel. It would also have negative effects on maintaining and improving health, well being and cohesion because it would not ensure that people were in close proximity to services and facilities.

In light of this, our proposed approach does not include allocating land for housing in the smaller and other villages. However, it is recognised that a small amount of development in the smaller and other villages may support existing services within them. Our preferred approach therefore includes allowing only infill development in the smaller and other villages. This approach strikes a balance between restricting development in unsustainable locations and supporting smaller and other villages to maintain any existing services they may have.

The provision of affordable housing

Although not identifying any 'significant' effect, the SA shows that requiring more than 40 percent provision of affordable housing scored more positively in relation to providing for housing need and improving health and well being. However, decisions need to be based on sustainability, viability and deliverability. Our preferred approach

therefore is to seek 40 percent provision on all sites subject to viability.
Employment Options – selecting the preferred options
The amount of employment land
<p>The SA shows that allocating an additional 2.5ha of employment land (Option B) to reduce the level of out commuting scores positively. However, care should be taken so that this does not result in increased in commuting. Providing for predicted employment growth using past trends would result in a small increase in out commuting.</p> <p>Option C to allocate further employment land to increase the number of high tech jobs in the district also scores positively. However, our strategy can achieve an increase in the number of high tech jobs without necessitating a further increase in the allocation of further employment land. The notion of Option C has therefore been carried forward but this will be accommodated within the 20ha of new employment land to be allocated. Our preferred approach therefore is a combination of Options A, B and C.</p>
The distribution of employment land
<p>The SA shows that there are benefits to both allocating employment land within the main towns and providing a small proportion within the larger villages as well. The former promotes accessibility to employment while the latter would contribute towards maintaining and enhancing the rural economy.</p> <p>In light of this, our preferred option is for most employment land to be located within the four main towns but also to allow the allocation of some small sites in the larger villages.</p>
The housing allocations for the four main towns – selecting the preferred options
<p>The results of the issues and options SA appraisal gave a broad brush assessment of the possible directions of growth. This has been used as a basis for assessing these sites but we have also needed to carry out a much more detailed appraisal to include issues such as access to the site and distance to services and facilities such as schools, shops, employment sites and health, recreation and leisure facilities.</p>
Didcot
<p>The SA and the detailed site assessments showed that Options B, C, D and F can be regarded as low priorities due to their impact on the landscape, the AONB and issues with accessing the site. The assessment reveals that Option E offers slightly higher levels of accessibility to services and facilities by public transport than Option A. However, it would involve development within an important gap that separates Didcot and East and West Hagbourne and the development of higher grade agricultural land.</p> <p>There are also delivery issues associated with Option E as the site is dependent upon the completion of the Great Western Park development before development of the site could commence. This would delay the provision of new housing at Didcot.</p> <p>An option to split the housing between Options A (1,450 houses) and E west (450 houses) was also assessed. Through this option, part of the allocation would benefit from the greater levels of accessibility to public transport. However, new houses to the south of Didcot would be remote from the new infrastructure to be provided on the</p>

northern site (i.e. schools). Splitting the allocation would also result in development within an important gap between Didcot and West Hagbourne and the development of higher grade agricultural land. There remains the issue that this site could not be developed until the Great Western Park scheme has been built. Whilst these 450 houses are not linked to our New Growth Point commitment, it is still advantageous to select a site where the delivery of housing is not contingent upon the completion of another site.

In light of this, our preferred option is Option A.

Henley

The SA initially assessed three different options for urban extensions to Henley (Options A, B and C). A further option was later considered (Option E - land and Gillott's Field) but this has now been registered by the County Council as a village green which precludes it from development. The SA also assessed a site at Highlands Farm, Site D, although this has not been formally proposed as an Option.

No one Option emerged as performing significantly better than the others. All sites are in close proximity to the town centre of Henley with Option B being closest to the railway station. All options would result in the loss of countryside although Option B scores more negatively as it would result in the loss of woodland used informally as open space. Option B would also result in the development of high grade agricultural land.

Site D generally scores negatively as it is located furthest from the town centre services and facilities, would be difficult to integrate into the existing built form of Henley, would involve development within the AONB and the loss of employment land.

None of these options have been carried forward as preferred options. The preferred approach is therefore to identify land for 400 houses at Henley on a number of smaller sites through the Site Allocations Document.

Thame

Whilst all options are close to services and facilities in Thame, Options A and B score negatively due to the barrier effect of the A4129 and B4012 respectively. For Option C Thames Park Business Centre may act as a barrier to integration and community cohesion. All of the options would result in the loss of greenfield land and would have an impact on the landscape. However, for Options A, B and F the detrimental impact on the landscape would be greater. Options A and D would result in the loss of grade 2 agricultural land.

The detailed site assessment shows that none of the sites perform well in relation to all of the categories and in some cases there is no significant difference. However, we have not carried out further analysis on Option E as much of the area consists of the playing fields at Lord Williams School. The area further south which is not playing fields would be detached from the built up area of Thame. Option D does have advantages over the other sites in terms of accessibility and being close to services and facilities and was our preferred option at the preferred options stage.

Through testing other options for our housing distribution we reappraised the housing sites for a lower allocation. The lower housing allocation meant that issues such as the impact on the landscape may change. The findings of the SA identified the need

for a further landscape assessment to measure this. This work has since been completed and helped inform the site selection. The lower numbers did not significantly affect the findings of the original SA for the higher numbers. However, of importance is the fact the effect of the flood zone site F would not be as great. The SA also highlights that the lower housing allocation could cause problems for infrastructure delivery and reduce the amount of infrastructure provided in Thame.

Changes post Examination in Public:

The Inspector concluded after the Core Strategy Exploratory Meeting in May 2011 that the reliance on unallocated sites in years 11 to 15 would not be consistent with national guidance. He invited us to address his concerns and review the sustainability appraisal.

Additional options were looked at for Thame to increase the allocation to 775 dwellings. The options were to allocate the whole 775 on one site, or to allocate 600 or 530 dwellings on a greenfield neighbourhood and identify site(s) for a further 175 or 245 homes through the Site Allocations DPD (possibly on previously developed land). As other sites considered earlier had previously been discounted, only Sites D and F were tested again.

Whilst both sites D and F are close to services and facilities in Thame, Site F is closer to a bus stop on a premium route so is better positioned to encourage a modal shift to the use of public transport. Increased use of public transport will have the benefit that it will assist in increasing the frequency of services on the route making public transport a more attractive option. Site D would be likely to result in more traffic going through the town centre and on Thame Park Road, this would have an adverse effect on the safety and environment of these areas. Both D and F would result in the loss of greenfield land and would have an impact on the landscape, the evidence shows that Site F would have a greater detrimental impact on the landscape. The impact could be lessened with a lower density development leaving land available for structural landscaping and careful site design. The option to split the allocation at Thame leaving some homes to be allocated in the Site Allocations DPD could help achieve this. When considering putting the whole allocation of 775 on either site D or F, the SA showed that neither site was capable of accommodating this level of development at an appropriate density. It could also result in using more greenfield land.

The new options tested did not significantly affect the findings of the original SA for the lower housing number (530 homes). This revised option for 600 homes would still enable site F to be developed entirely within the flood zone 1 area. The use of SUDS will ensure that the risk of increasing flooding in the area is minimised and would be similar for both sites D and F.

An additional test was carried out to see the effect of different size housing allocations for Thame. The SA highlighted positive and negative impacts of higher and lower allocations. The SA acknowledged that a higher allocation could have a greater positive impact on Objective 1 (supplying decent homes for people to live in) and Objective 13 (efficient use of land) whereas a lower allocation could have a greater positive impact on Objective 7 (conservation and enhancement of biodiversity) and Objective 8 (protection and enhancement of open spaces). On balance the preferred option was 775 dwellings.

The findings of the SA did not arrive at a clear recommendation and in this case has

not been the deciding factor. The full reasoning and evidence for our site choice can be found in the Thame background paper accompanying the submission version of the core strategy.

Splitting the housing allocation between sites

Through the process of determining the allocation at Thame (for the higher allocation i.e. 700 houses) we looked at whether there was any merit in splitting the allocation between one or more sites.

Splitting development between sites can be an option particularly if one site is not capable of accommodating the total amount of development earmarked to a settlement. In terms of the capacity of the possible sites around Thame, all sites would be capable of accommodating the total 700 dwellings so there is no obvious reason to consider a split site.

Splitting the development was suggested by some residents responding to the preferred options consultation, but has only been proposed by landowners/developers at the South of Thame. This relates to the eastern part of site D and site C to form an urban extension to the South. In terms of sustainability this would not have any advantages over development just on site D because the most sustainable part of D in terms of access to services and facilities is from the eastern part of D not the western. Furthermore, this would include the negative effects of Site C identified in the SA relating to the barrier effect of the B4012 between the site and the rest of the community.

In terms of infrastructure we have not received any information to indicate there would be a preference for a split site.

Wallingford

Individual Options

The results of the SA show that Options C and D can be considered a low priority. Both sites are separated from the centre of Wallingford by the Hithercroft Industrial Estate which would act as a barrier to community cohesion and integration and may discourage walking and cycling from the site to the town centre.

The SA shows that for Options A, B and E all three sites showed broadly similar overall characteristics. In respect of the significant effects all scored or contributed positively towards providing new homes, improving access to health, education and community facilities, and reducing the risk of flooding. All scored negatively in respect of protecting open space and reducing development pressure on the countryside. Options A and B scored more highly in respect of improving travel choice and accessibility and reducing vehicle emissions. All three Options would result in the loss of agricultural land, and although all had mineral deposits, only Option A has workable quantities.

Through testing other options for our housing distribution we reappraised the housing sites for a lower allocation. The lower housing allocation meant that issues such as impact on landscape may change. The findings of the SA identified the need for a further landscape assessment to measure this. This work has since been completed and helped inform the site selection. The lower numbers did not significantly affect the findings of the original SA for the higher number. The key effect was the impact on the landscape.

The SA highlights that the lower housing allocation could cause problems for infrastructure delivery and reduce the amount of infrastructure provided in Wallingford.

Changes post Examination in Public:

Following the Core Strategy Examination in Public Exploratory Meeting, the Inspector concluded that there were soundness issues with our reliance on an allowance for unallocated sites in the housing numbers. To help address this, further testing was carried out for Wallingford comparing the strategic site options A, B, C, D and E at a higher level of 555 rather than 400 dwellings. The findings were the similar to previous tests explained in paragraph one and two of this section.

An additional test was carried out to explore the effect of different levels of housing allocations for Wallingford (at 400, 555 and 750 dwellings). The SA highlighted positive and negative impacts of the higher and lower allocations. The SA acknowledged that a higher allocation (750 dwellings) could have a greater positive impact on Objective 1 (supplying a decent homes for people to live in) and Objective 13 (efficient use of land), whereas a lower allocation (400 dwelling) could have a greater positive impact on Objective 7 (conservation and enhancement of biodiversity) and Objective 8 (protection and enhancement of open spaces). On balance the preferred option was 555 homes.

Split housing allocation between two sites

As part of the appraisal of the different options for Wallingford we also assessed the effects of splitting the housing allocation between different combinations of sites. Options C and D were discounted from this given the identified barriers to community and integration with these sites. Consequently, splitting the allocation between Options A and B, Options A and E and Options B and E were assessed.

The effects of splitting the allocation between two sites results in similar effects to allocating all the houses on one site. However, there are some differences of note.

Option A has the advantage that it is closest to the secondary school. Splitting this option with another site reduces this advantage, particularly with Option E which is the furthest away from the school.

Furthermore, a new primary school is required which would potentially be located on one site. Splitting the housing allocation could result in one of the two sites being further away from this new primary school when compared to all the houses being located on one site. This effect could be most pronounced with using Option E in combination with another site.

All Options still score negatively against Objective 8 (protect open spaces and the countryside) as they result in the development of green field land. Option A has the potential for a detrimental impact on the AONB while Option E has the potential to detrimentally affect the landscape character of the Winterbrook area. The combination of using both Options A and E would incur both of these detrimental impacts. Splitting the allocation between Options B and E could potentially reduce the impact on the landscape character of the Winterbrook area, while a split between Options A and B could potentially reduce the impact on the AONB.

The findings of the SA do not present a clear winner, although Option E can be

regarded as less favorable to Option A and B given the poor links to the area north of Bradford Brook and impact development would have on the landscape. The merits and demerits of Options A and B are fairly closely balanced, and therefore, an 'on balance' decision needs to be made. After considering all of the factors, Option B is the preferred choice.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The SA shows that Option A allows greater opportunity for strategic decisions to be taken and allows greater freedom to locate sites in a sustainable location. Due to this, Option A scores well in relation to objectives where location is a major factor as it seeks to locate new sites close to existing settlements with a range of facilities. This in turn promotes accessibility, reduces the need to travel by car and promotes good links to the wider community.

The prescriptive approach of Option B scores relatively poorly as the opportunity to take strategic decisions on site location is lost and along with any potential benefits. This has informed our preferred strategy which is based on Option A.

Quality development – selecting the preferred options

Renewable energy as part of new development

The effects predicted for the two options are very similar. Option B of requiring a fixed percentage (i.e. 10%, 15% or 20%) scores slightly more positively as only development that meets the required target would receive planning permission.

However, this approach is very inflexible. There will be occasions where developments genuinely cannot meet the required target due to technical or site constraints. It is more practical to allow these developments to continue provided they fully justify why the required target cannot be met. This approach also means that we could only set a target that we were confident that all developments could meet. Our evidence also shows the costs of achieving a certain percentage reduction in CO₂ emissions varies considerably depending upon the type of renewable energy technologies that can be used. The type of renewable energy that can be used is determined by the scale and nature of the development. Some developments will be able to achieve a higher percentage i.e. 20% for a similar cost to that of a lower percentage on another development. We should capitalise on this and require the higher percentage where it is viable. Our preferred choice is therefore Option A.

Standards for the Code for Sustainable Homes

Option B scores least positively as the benefits of higher Code levels would be realised later than Option A and C. Whilst Option A would result in the benefits of Code Level 4 being realised the soonest, our evidence base demonstrates that it is only for larger developments that the requirement for Code Level 4 in advance of 2013 can be justified. Our preferred approach is therefore for Option C.

The significant effects of our preferred strategy

- xiv. Table G below provides a summary of the significant positive and negative effects predicted for the Core Strategy preferred options against the relevant sustainability objectives. Full details of the effects and cumulative effects are available in Section 4 and 5 and in Appendix 2, 2a and 2b of the main report. Table H provides a summary of the significant positive and negative

effects predicted for the Core Strategy preferred options against the relevant sustainability objectives plus the effects of the changes made by the Inspector and council following the Examination in Public hearings. The only change was the major positive effect for objective 18 under the rural strategy.

Table G: Significant positive and negative effects of the preferred options of the Core Strategy

Provide decent homes	Safe places	Improve accessibility	Health and well-being	Minimise pollution	Travel choice	Biodiversity	Protect open spaces	Historic environment	Climate change	Reduce flooding	Minimise waste	Land use	Stable employment	Strong economy	Skilled workforce	Buoyant tourism	Community involvement
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Overall strategy																	
P		P			P	P+N	N		P	P				P			
Movement strategy																	
		P+N		P	P												
Employment strategy – amount of employment land																	
P													P	P			
Employment strategy – distribution of employment land																	
		P			P	P+?	N					N	P	P			
Housing strategy – amount of housing																	
P							N					N	P	P			
Housing strategy – distribution of housing																	
		P	P	P+N	P	P+N	N		P			N					
Didcot greenfield neighbourhood																	
		P		P	P		N			P		N					
Thame greenfield neighbourhood																	
P		P		P	P		N			P		N					
Wallingford greenfield neighbourhood																	
P		P		P	P		N			P		N					
Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople																	
P		P	P		P							P					P
Retail strategy																	
	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		P			P	P	P		P	P
Infrastructure strategy																	
P	P	P	P	P	P												
Environment strategy																	
				P			P	P		P							
Quality development strategy – renewable energy as part of new development																	
				P					P		P						
Quality development strategy – Standards for the Code for Sustainable Homes																	
P			P	P		P			P		P						
Green Infrastructure Strategy																	
P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P								P
Rural communities strategy																	
P		N	P	N	N									P			

Key: P = significant positive effect
 N = significant negative effect
 P+N = both significant positive and negative effect
 P=? = both significant positive and uncertain effect

Table H: Significant positive and negative effects including the Inspector's recommended changes (text in bold)

Provide decent homes	Safe places	Improve accessibility	Health and well-being	Minimise pollution	Travel choice	Biodiversity	Protect open spaces	Historic environment	Climate change	Reduce flooding	Minimise waste	Land use	Stable employment	Strong economy	Skilled workforce	Buoyant tourism	Community involvement	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Overall strategy (including draft changes 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3)																		
P		P			P	P+N	N		P	P				P				
Movement strategy																		
		P+N		P	P													
Employment strategy – amount of employment land																		
P													P	P				
Employment strategy – distribution of employment land																		
		P			P	P+?	N					N	P	P				
Housing strategy – amount of housing																		
P							N					N	P	P				
Housing strategy – distribution of housing (including draft changes 2.2 and 2.3)																		
P		P	P	P+N	P	P+N	N		P	P		N		P				
SOSDA draft change 2.1																		
P							P+N						P					
Change to Para final sentence of Para 7.16 (2.4)																		
P							N					N						
Change to Para 7.31																		
P																		
Didcot greenfield neighbourhood																		
P		P		P	P		N			P		N						
Thame 775 new homes on sites to be selected by Neighbourhood Plan (draft changes 5.1 and 5.2)																		
P+N		P?		P?	P?		N?			P?		N?						
Wallingford greenfield neighbourhood (allocation to south of Wallingford)																		
P		P		P	P		N			P		N						
Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople																		
P		P	P		P								P				P	
Retail strategy																		
	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		P				P	P	P		P	P
Infrastructure strategy																		
P	P	P	P	P	P													
Environment strategy																		
				P			P	P		P								
Quality development strategy – renewable energy as part of new development																		
				P					P		P							
Quality development strategy – Standards for the Code for Sustainable Homes																		
P			P	P		P			P		P							
Green Infrastructure Strategy																		
P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P								P	
Rural communities strategy																		
P		N	P	N	N									P			P	

Key: P = significant positive effect
N = significant negative effect
P+N = both significant positive and negative effect

Mitigation measures

- xv. Where significant negative effects have been identified, we need to consider ways of avoiding or mitigating these impacts. These are set out in the tables

below.

Overall Strategy	
Negative Effect	Mitigation
Loss of greenfield land and agricultural land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoiding loss altogether is not achievable given number of houses to build Brown field sites are allocated where appropriate e.g. Didcot. Detailed landscape assessments have and will be used to inform any site allocation
Henley and some of the larger villages border areas important for their biodiversity. This may impact upon biodiversity (depending upon which sites are selected for development).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use biodiversity impact assessments to inform the site allocation process (as part of the Site Allocation DPD)

Movement strategy	
Negative Effect	Mitigation
Some rural areas will remain reliant upon car travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoiding this effect completely is not feasible in a rural district The strategy considers the provision of small scale parking facilities at bus stops on Premium bus route network The strategy promotes use of community transport schemes e.g. dial a ride

Employment strategy	
Negative Effect	Mitigation
Development of greenfield land and agricultural land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategy promotes the protection and redevelopment of existing employment sites, converting existing buildings to employment use and working from home The strategy requires a high quality of design to reduce impact on the landscape

Housing strategy	
Negative Effect	Mitigation
Loss of greenfield land and agricultural land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above for overall strategy
Some rural areas will remain reliant upon car travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above for movement strategy
More vehicles will use the road network within the main towns. This may affect air quality, particularly for Wallingford and Henley which have air quality issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimise opportunities for walking and cycling within the towns. Take account of the relevant air quality action plans
Henley and some of the larger villages border Conservation Target areas. This may impact upon biodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above for overall strategy

Didcot greenfield neighbourhood	
Negative Effect	Mitigation
Loss of greenfield land and impact on the landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of greenfield cannot be prevented given scale of housing required • Brownfield sites are allocated where appropriate e.g. Vauxhall Barracks, extension to Orchard Centre • Detailed landscape assessments have been used to inform the site selection process. This will also inform master planning of the site.

Thame greenfield neighbourhood	
Negative Effect	Mitigation
Loss of greenfield land and impact on the landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of green field / agricultural land cannot be prevented given scale of housing required • Detailed landscape assessment has been used to inform the site selection process. This will also inform master planning of the site.
Loss of agricultural land	

Wallingford greenfield neighbourhood	
Negative Effect	Mitigation
Loss of greenfield land and impact on the landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of green field / agricultural land cannot be prevented given scale of housing required • Detailed landscape assessment has been used to inform the site selection process. This will also inform master planning of the site.
Loss of agricultural land	

Rural communities	
Negative Effect	Mitigation
New houses in rural areas will not have good access to services and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy CSR3 facilitates delivery of rural transport initiatives • Strategy considers provision small scale parking facilities at bus stops on Premium bus route network

Mitigating the adverse effects of the strategy including the council and inspector’s recommended changes:

Where significant negative effects have been identified for the strategy as a result of the inspector / council changes following the Examination in Public hearings, we need to consider ways of avoiding or mitigating these effects.

Topic 2 - The South of Oxford Strategic Development Area (SOSDA) - mitigating adverse effects	
Negative Effect	Mitigation
The proposal would more than likely result in the development of greenfield land. The loss of greenfield land can only be prevented by an alternative strategy to only develop brownfield land. This is not possible for an allocation the size of SOSDA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this case it would not be possible to mitigate the adverse effect.

Topic 2 - The distribution of housing development - mitigating adverse effects	
Negative Effect	Mitigation
Not possible to provide all facilities in villages, even in the larger ones.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of small scale parking facilities adjacent to bus stops on the Premium bus routes (where appropriate).
Any impact on Henley and Wallingford Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimising opportunities for walking and cycling within the town and taking account of the relevant air quality action plans.
Some development close to conservation target areas (Henley and some larger villages).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation target areas should be avoided and biodiversity assessments used to inform the site allocation process.
Loss of greenfield land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can not be fully mitigated but detailed landscape assessments should be used to inform any site allocations.

Topic 5 - Thame Neighbourhood Plan - mitigating adverse effects	
Negative Effect	Mitigation
As neighbourhood plan would not be in control of Local Planning Authority there is no guarantee that the houses would be delivered with the plan period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contingency reserve site for Thame in core strategy to come forward if site allocations are not made by a certain date.
Thame Neighbourhood Plan likely to result in the loss of some green field land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can not be fully mitigated but detailed landscape assessments should be used to inform any site allocations.
Varying grades of agricultural land quality around Thame. Any impact would depend on site chosen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is unlikely that the loss of agricultural could be mitigated but selecting sites with lower quality agricultural land would help to mitigate this negative effect.

Topic 6 - New location for Wallingford Greenfield Neighbourhood (South of the town) - mitigating adverse effects	
Negative Effect	Mitigation
Consultants advised against development of site in landscape terms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact on intrusion into the Countryside can be lessened by providing a landscape buffer on the edge of the development. New policy on Wallingford Greenfield Neighbourhood requires sensitive treatment to the boundaries of the site and for Bradford's Brook Corridor. This could go some way to reducing the impact but cannot overcome the loss of the highly distinctive landscape.
Site is grades 2/3a agricultural land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss cannot be directly mitigated but development should be built to a density that makes optimum of the land available while taking account of surrounding character.

Significant effects of the Core Strategy policies

- xvi. The Core Strategy contains a series of policies that are intended to deliver the strategies of the different topic areas. In general, the policies are a direct reflection of the individual strategies.
- xvii. As a result of this, the effect of the individual policies against the SA objectives are generally the same as that for the preferred strategies set out above. There is therefore, no need to detail the effects of each policy against the SA objectives. The individual assessment of each submission policy against the SA objectives is displayed at Appendix 3 of the main report.
- xviii. Where the predicted significant effects of a submission policy have not already been identified through the preferred strategy, these are presented in Table I below. For these policies, either positive or neutral effects were predicted against the sustainability objectives. No negative effects have been identified.

Table I. Significant effects of the Core Strategy Policies (including inspector changes - effect in bold)

Provide decent homes	Safe places	Improve accessibility	Health and well-being	Minimise pollution	Travel choice	Biodiversity	Protect open spaces	Historic environment	Climate change	Reduce flooding	Minimise waste	Land use	Stable employment	Strong economy	Skilled workforce	Buoyant tourism	Community involvement
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
CSH2 - Density																	
P					P			P				P					
CSEM1 – Supporting a Successful Economy																	
													P	P	P	P	
CSH3 – Affordable Housing																	
P			P														
CSH4 – Meeting Housing Needs																	
P			P									P					
CSQ1 – Renewable Energy																	
				P					P		P						
CSQ3 – Design																	
P	P	P	P		P		P	P									
CSQ4 – Green Field Neighbourhoods																	
P	P	P	P		P		P				P						
CSDID1 – The central area of Didcot																	
P	P	P	P		P		P				P						
CSDID2 – Land to the east of the Orchard Centre																	
P	P	P			P		P					P	P	P	P		
CSHEN1 – Strategy for Henley																	
P	P	P			P		P					P	P	P	P	P	
CSTHA1 – A Strategy for Thames																	
P	P	P			P		P					P	P	P	P	P	
CSWAL1 Strategy for Wallingford																	
P	P	P			P		P					P	P	P	P	P	
CSEN Historic Environment																	
								P									
CSC1 Delivery and Contingency																	
P																	

Key: P = significant positive effect
 N = significant negative effect
 P+N = both significant positive and negative effect

Cumulative effects of the Core Strategy

- xix. In addition to assessing the effects of the individual topic areas and policies against the SA objectives, it is also important to assess the combined or cumulative effects of the strategy as a whole against the individual SA objectives.
- xx. Table G shows that there are five SA objectives which have more than one significant negative effect predicted against them. These are objectives 3, 5, 7, 8 and 13.
- xxi. For objective 3, the same effect has been identified as part of the overall movement strategy and then within the rural communities strategy. The effect is that some rural areas will remain reliant on travel by car. As this is the same effect it does not represent a cumulative impact.

- xxii. For objective 5, the strategies to locate new housing in the towns and larger villages and within some of the smaller villages will both result in a need to travel to the towns, with resultant exhaust emissions from cars. However, the amount of new development that will take place within the smaller villages will be limited in number and the vehicle journeys associated with this will be distributed throughout the district as opposed to concentrated in a particular area. Therefore, the cumulative affects in relation to air pollution is not significantly greater than that already identified. The promotion of community transport schemes and the provision of small scale parking facilities at bus stops on Premium bus route network will mitigate this effect.
- xxiii. For objective 7, there is the potential for a detrimental impact on biodiversity through the overall and employment strategy and the housing distribution strategy. This is because development would be close Conservation Target Areas. However, these effects relate to the different spatial scales of the strategy and the combination of these effects is no greater than that already predicted through the overall strategy. Avoiding the Conservation Target Areas and using biodiversity assessments to inform the site allocations process will mitigate this effect.
- xxiv. For objective 8 there are seven significant negative effects predicted relating to the loss of greenfield land. However, the majority of these relate to the different spatial scales of the core strategy, i.e. the overall strategy, the distribution of housing throughout the district and the large housing allocation within the main towns. This does not therefore, reflect a cumulative impact. There is, however, the combined effect of the housing and employment land allocations to consider. The proportion of greenfield land required for housing is significantly greater than that for employment land. Therefore, the combined effect is not that much greater than that for the housing requirements alone. This also applies to objective 13 and the combined effect of the loss of agricultural land through housing and employment allocations.
- xxv. Table H shows there were no major changes to these results when the council and Inspectors recommended changes were included.
- xxvi. In addition to assessing the combined impact of the 'significant' effects of the preferred strategies it is also important to consider the combined impact of the 'non-significant' effects. For example, there may be several non-significant effects identified that when combined create a significant effect against a particular SA objective. Table J below provides a summary of the non-significant effects. There are three non-significant effects predicted against Objective7. These relate to potential impact on biodiversity through the housing allocations for towns and some of the villages. However, the sites identified for the towns had no biodiversity related issues that would preclude development of the site. Any potential impact of sites within some of the villages can be avoided or mitigated through the use of biodiversity assessments as part of the site allocation or planning application process. Therefore, the combination of these effects does create a significant issue.
- xxvii. Table K below shows there were no major changes to these results when the council and Inspectors recommended changes were included.

xxviii. The cumulative ‘positive’ effects of the preferred options have also been considered. These are shown at Appendix 4 of the main report. For each SA objective the current situation or baseline information is shown alongside the positive impacts on this situation of the core strategy. The impact upon this of other plans and policies is also considered. The analysis indicates that the positive effects identified will not be adversely affected by other plans (principally national guidance, neighbouring authority LDF’s). In contrast, these plans and policies generally support the positive effects.

Table J: Non-significant positive and negative effects of the Core Strategy

Provide decent homes	Safe places	Improve accessibility	Health and well-being	Minimise pollution	Travel choice	Biodiversity	Protect open spaces	Historic environment	Climate change	Reduce flooding	Minimise waste	Land use	Stable employment	Strong economy	Skilled workforce	Buoyant tourism	Community involvement
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Overall strategy																	
	p																
Movement strategy																	
			p+n												p	p	
Employment strategy – amount of employment land																	
			p	p	p										p		
Employment strategy – distribution of employment land																	
p	p														p		
Housing strategy – amount of housing																	
			p														p
Housing strategy – distribution of housing																	
p						n											
Didcot greenfield neighbourhood																	
						n											
Thame greenfield neighbourhood																	
						n											
Wallingford greenfield neighbourhood																	
Gypsy’s and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople																	
	p			p													
Retail strategy																	
Infrastructure strategy																	
Environment strategy																	
n														n		p	
Quality development strategy																	
											p						
Green Infrastructure and biodiversity Strategy																	
Rural communities strategy																	
p	p					n	n					n				p	

Key: P = significant positive effect
 N = significant negative effect
 P+N = both significant positive and negative effect

Table K: Non-significant positive and negative effects of the Core Strategy (including inspector changes)

Provide decent homes	Safe places	Improve accessibility	Health and well-being	Minimise pollution	Travel choice	Biodiversity	Protect open spaces	Historic environment	Climate change	Reduce flooding	Minimise waste	Land use	Stable employment	Strong economy	Skilled workforce	Buoyant tourism	Community involvement
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Overall strategy (including draft changes 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3)																	
	p																
Movement strategy																	
			p+n												p	p	
Employment strategy – amount of employment land																	
			p	p	p										p		
Employment strategy – distribution of employment land																	
p	p														p		
Housing strategy – amount of housing																	
			p														p
Housing strategy – distribution of housing (including draft changes 2.2 and 2.3)																	
p	p				n												
SOSDA draft change 2.1																	
Change to Para final sentence of Para 7.16 (2.4)																	
Didcot greenfield neighbourhood																	
						n											
Thame 775 new homes on sites to be selected by Neighbourhood Plan (draft changes 5.1 and 5.2)																	
			n														
Wallingford greenfield neighbourhood																	
Gypsy's and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople																	
	p			p													
Retail strategy																	
Infrastructure strategy																	
Environment strategy																	
n														n		p	
Quality development strategy																	
											p						
Green Infrastructure and biodiversity Strategy																	
Rural communities strategy																	
p	p					n	n					n				p	

Stages C and D – Consulting on the Sustainability Appraisal Report

- xxix. We prepared a sustainability appraisal report to accompany the Preferred Options document of our Core Strategy. In accordance with the Government’s guidelines for Sustainability Appraisal, we consulted on the report as part of the consultation for our Core Strategy preferred options.
- xxx. This updated appraisal takes account of amendments and additions made to the preferred options document and provides a full appraisal of the Core Strategy policies.

Stage E – Monitoring

- xxxi. Having predicted the effects of the core strategy against the sustainability objectives, it is important to check or ‘monitor’ whether these effects actually take place. More importantly, it is important to know about any negative effects which may arise which we did not predict.
- xxxii. A formal monitoring process will help to ensure that any problems arising can be identified at an early stage allowing appropriate action to be taken. It will also provide useful evidence for making more accurate predictions in the future.
- xxxiii. We have prepared a monitoring framework to monitor the significant effects we have predicted. This is set out at Appendix 5 of the main report. Some of the effects can be monitored using the indicators in our Annual Monitoring Report and others can be monitored using the framework we have developed for the Core Strategy policies. Where this is the case, these indicators have transferred into the SA monitoring framework. For the rest of the effects, we have generated new indicators and these will be added to the AMR.
- xxxiv. There are a few effects for which appropriate data is not available to monitor the effect. These are highlighted in Table 14 of the main report along with the reasons why they cannot be monitored.

Appendix 1 Glossary

Term in full	Abbreviation	Explanation
Local Development Framework	LDF	A portfolio of documents that cover a wide range of topics relating to the economic, social and environmental needs of the area.
Initial Sustainability Report		A report that accompanies our issues and options document, and shows the results of sustainability appraisal for the broad options.
Formal Sustainability Report		A report that will accompany our preferred options document that will show the results of the more detailed sustainability appraisal at site level.
Issues and Options		One of the early stages in the production of Core Strategy where we suggest options for future development in South Oxfordshire and discuss the issues and problems that need to be addressed. We invite people to tell us what they think.
Preferred Options		A stage in the production of the Core Strategy where we indicate our preferences for development.
Core Strategy		The document setting out the main principles and spatial strategy of the LDF.
South East Plan		This is the regional spatial strategy for the South East of England and covers South Oxfordshire.
South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011	Local plan	Plan prepared by South Oxfordshire District Council under the old planning system to guide development in the district. This covers the period up to 2011.
Spatial Strategy		A strategy for the future development of the District which identifies broad locations for various forms of development, key principles and strategic level policies governing development and land use.
Spatial Vision		A vision that focuses on what the area will be like in the future taking account of the spatial issues that exist within the district.
Strategic objectives		The overarching objectives of the core strategy that will help in delivering the Core Strategy vision.
Sustainability Appraisal	SA	A process of appraising plans and policies for their social, economic and environmental effects.
Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report	SA Scoping Report	A document explaining the process of sustainability appraisal and how we are going to carry it out.
Sustainability objectives		Within our SA Scoping Report we identify 18 objectives outlining what we want to achieve in South Oxfordshire. They cover social, economic and environmental matters and we use them to test the LDF documents we produce.
Unallocated Sites		Unallocated sites are housing sites that come forward which are not allocated in the development plan. These include both greenfield land and previously developed land. Predicted delivery rates are based on past trends.
The Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016	Structure plan	Plan prepared by Oxfordshire County Council under the old planning system to guide development in the County. This will be replaced by the South East Plan.