

South Oxfordshire Local Plan update

January 2019

In a district council meeting about the draft South Oxfordshire Local Plan in May 2018, councillors requested that officers reassess all of the main sites in the district that are capable of forming a strategic allocation and prepare an updated version of the plan for public consultation.

We have completed the review and on 20 December 2018, South Oxfordshire District Councillors voted to approve the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034 for publication and its subsequent submission to the Planning Inspectorate for examination.

We have now launched a six-week publicity period, formally referred to as the “Regulation 19 publicity period”. Further information on the publicity period is provided on our website and in our guidance note, available at www.southoxon.gov.uk/newlocalplan. This update provides a summary of the key changes to the plan.

THE PLAN PERIOD

The local plan needs to have a lifespan of 15 years from the date of adoption. We now aim to adopt the plan by the end of 2019, so we have extended the life of the plan to run until 2034 instead of 2033.

The six local authorities in Oxfordshire have committed to providing 100,000 homes as part of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal with the government. We plan to meet 775 homes a year for South Oxfordshire’s need during the plan period and a further 4,950 homes towards Oxford City’s unmet housing needs. This updated version of the local plan includes an extra 775 homes as the plan is running a year longer.

THE UPDATED PLAN

Since the May 2018 Council meeting, we have been reassessing all available housing sites capable of delivering a strategic level of development. We have also been reassessing sites that had been considered for earlier drafts of the plan but weren’t included, as well as sites that hadn’t previously been considered. Additional evidence has been commissioned to support the site selection process, which is available at www.southoxon.gov.uk/newlocalplan.

That work has now fed into the newest draft of the Local Plan. The assessment has confirmed the inclusion of the main housing sites that were in the previous plan, including Chalgrove Airfield and the land near Culham, Berinsfield, the Oxford Brookes campus at Wheatley and those allocations carried forward from the Core Strategy and Local Plan 2011, along with three additional strategic housing allocations.

By including the extra sites, the council aims to make the plan more robust and give it the best possible chance of being approved by a planning inspector. This should ease concerns about any individual housing sites not being delivered as anticipated.

This means the Local Plan will plan for at least **22,775** homes during the plan period 2011-2034.

HOUSING ALLOCATION SITES

The new sites added to the plan are at Grenoble Road, Bayswater Brook and Northfield, all of which are close to Oxford. The plan acknowledges the contribution these sites could make to supporting the city's unmet housing need. Not all of the sites we have identified will be complete by the end of the plan period, and some will deliver beyond this time. We know that development doesn't always come forward as quickly as we have previously anticipated, so we have taken a conservative approach to the amount of homes that we expect to see being built on each site in future years.

Strategic site	Delivered during plan period up to 2034	Beyond 2034	Total number of homes
Grenoble Road	1700	1300	3,000
Culham	1,850	1650	3,500
Berinsfield	1600	100	1,700
Wheatley	300	0	300
Northfield	1800	0	1,800
Chalgrove	2,025	975	3,000
North of Bayswater Brook	1100	0	1,100
Total	10,375	4,025	14,400

Housing by settlements

The tables below set out the housing required by settlement type, as classified in the Local Plan's Settlement Assessment Hierarchy. This is in addition to the completions, permissions and sites carried forward from the adopted Core Strategy, which are:

Completions 31/03/18	4,364*
Commitments	11,362*

*Includes provision for around 6,500 new homes at Didcot.

Market towns (requirement; 3,873 based on Core Strategy + 15% growth)

Settlement	Target for homes	Homes that have already been built or have permission	Outstanding housing requirement for Neighbourhood Plans
Henley	1,285	1,129	156
Thame	1,518	1,155	363
Wallingford	1,070	1,431	0

Larger villages* (requirement; 3,991 based on Core Strategy + 15% growth)

Settlement	Target for homes	Homes that have already been built or have permission	Outstanding housing requirement for Neighbourhood Plans
Benson	383	854	0
Chinnor	594	796	0
Cholsey	612	585	27
Crowmarsh Gifford	312	570	0
Goring-on- Thames	329	96	233
Sonning Common	377	269	108
Watlington	262	305	0
Woodcote	225	94	131

* Larger villages with strategic housing allocations in the local plan are not required to plan for further growth, these are Berinsfield, Chalgrove, and Wheatley. The Local Plan also directly allocates housing growth in Nettlebed for 46 dwellings.

Smaller villages

Small villages are no longer expected to contribute towards housing supply. This policy does still support making an appropriate housing allocation(s) through neighbourhood planning if the village wishes to progress a neighbourhood plan and is supported by robust evidence. This is expected to be around 5-10% increase in homes still, and these are expected to make contributions to the district housing need through windfall and infill.

Other villages

There has been no change for other villages from the previous version of the Local Plan. Limited development may come forward for single dwellings, infill and conversions.

REVIEW

After the plan has been adopted, we will monitor the level of new housing being delivered, and will carry out a review within five years, taking into account the most up-to-date evidence available at that time.

HOW THE PLAN WILL ENSURE THE EFFICIENT USE OF LAND

A new housing density policy has been included which requires a minimum net density per hectare, depending on location. Here are the requirements:

Location	Dwellings per Hectare
Major Centre and Sustainable Transport Hubs (Didcot, Oxford, Reading)	70dph
Market Towns	50dph
Larger Villages	45dph
Smaller Villages	40dph
Other Villages	35dph

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The council has updated its affordable housing policy as follows:

- Contributions for affordable housing will now be sought on developments with a net gain of 10 or more dwellings, or a combined gross floorspace of more than 1000 square metres (gross internal area), this replaces the previous threshold of a net gain of 11 or more dwellings.
- The level of affordable housing provision stays the same (40%) except in the case of housing sites on the edge of Oxford (including specific Strategic sites) where a 50% provision is required.
- On-site contributions for affordable housing from developments in the area of outstanding natural beauty will now be sought on developments with a net gain of five or more dwellings. Previously only financial contribution sought.

CHANGES TO THE GREEN BELT

To ensure the Green Belt continues to serve its key functions, it will be protected from harmful development. Development will be restricted to those limited types of development which are deemed appropriate by the NPPF, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated

The council is proposing changes to the Green Belt through this Local Plan at the following locations;

Strategic Housing Sites; Grenoble Road, Culham, Berinsfield, Oxford Brooks University Wheatley, Northfield and North of Bayswater Brook.

Additionally, the council is supporting Wheatley Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to make a further amendment to the Green Belt. The neighbourhood plan will need to be reviewed on adoption of the Local Plan to ensure that the removed land is allocated for mixed use development in their NDP.

EMPLOYMENT

South Oxfordshire's employment requirement is 37.5 hectares between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2034. The employment strategy remains largely unchanged, with a continued focus on the existing employment sites in our towns, business parks and on the proposed strategic housing sites. Land continues to be directly identified through the Local Plan for economic growth.

Neighbourhood plans in Henley, Thame, Wallingford and Crowmarsh Gifford are still expected to plan for employment growth. However, the policy has been amended to take account for non-delivery of employment sites through the relevant plans. In the event of non-allocation 'planning applications for employment will be supported provided that proposals comply with the overall employment distribution strategy'.

INFRASTRUCTURE

A number of infrastructure interventions are needed to support and mitigate the impact of the development and growth proposed within the plan. The Local Plan makes clear that planning permission will be granted for developments where the infrastructure and services required to meet the needs of the new development is already in place, or will be provided to an agreed timescale.

OXFORD TO CAMBRIDGE CORRIDOR

The Local Plan will recognise that the key infrastructure schemes, namely the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway and East-West Rail, are currently in the development stage, and their impacts on South Oxfordshire are currently not known. In particular, the decision on a route for the Expressway around Oxford is not due until 2020. Whilst there is some uncertainty on these matters, the council will continue to work positively with others on the development of this infrastructure, and understanding potential impacts, including linkages with development proposed in this plan.