

## South Oxfordshire District Council

### Assessment of Five Year Housing Land Supply, April 2014

1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to *“identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements”*, including an appropriate buffer<sup>1</sup>.
2. The NPPF states that:  
*“Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites.”*<sup>2</sup>
3. This paper sets out South Oxfordshire District Council’s housing land supply position as at April 2014. In summary:
  - Didcot has 3.4 years of deliverable housing land supply if previous under delivery of housing is addressed evenly over the remaining plan period and an additional 20% buffer is applied;
  - The Rest of the District has 7.2 years of deliverable housing land supply if an additional 5% buffer is applied.

### Calculation of five year housing land requirement

4. The adopted Local Plan (South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, December 2012) identified a housing requirement of 11,487 homes over the 2006-27 period. Of this total requirement, 6,300 homes were ring fenced to the Didcot housing area (Didcot), with the remaining 5,187 homes distributed to the Rest of the District. The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy Inspector Mr Roy Foster indicated in his report:  
*“There has been debate in some contexts about whether or not the SEP figure for Didcot is, or should be, ‘ringfenced’, but I consider it appropriate to treat it as such. Success in the long held aspiration for comprehensive transformation of Didcot will continue to need long-term certainty, determination and commitment, all of which would be undermined if some part of the growth were to be siphoned off elsewhere.”*
5. Guidance on the assessment of housing land suggests *“local planning authorities should aim to deal with any undersupply within the first 5 years of the plan period where possible...”*<sup>3</sup> However, in the context of Didcot, this is not a reasonable approach given that the allocations are large housing sites forming urban extensions

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, para.47

<sup>2</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, para.49

<sup>3</sup> National Planning Policy Guidance, para.35

to Didcot. The complexity of planning applications and the need to involve a number of landowners and statutory agencies and to organise major infrastructure delivery mean that allocations will take longer to implement than smaller schemes. South Oxfordshire District Council believes there are real benefits in these large sites which will be seen once these initial complexities are resolved. Such sites provide a positive approach to growth and place making, and certainty over longer term delivery of housing needs and responsiveness to market requirements. Therefore the calculation of Didcot's five year land supply follows the approach set out when the Core Strategy was examined, with under-delivery of housing spread evenly over the remaining plan period. Table 1 below calculates the five year housing land requirement at Didcot and the Rest of the District.

Table 1 - Calculation of five year housing land requirement (without NPPF buffers) at April 2014

		Didcot	Rest of the District	Calculations
A.	<b>Requirement over plan period</b> (1 Apr 2006 – 31 Mar 2029)	6,300	5,187	
B.	<b>Annual average requirement over period</b> (1 Apr 2006 – 31 Mar 2029)	300	247	A / 21
C.	<b>Homes completed</b> (1 Apr 2006 – 31 Mar 2014)	770	2,063	
D.	<b>Homes remaining to provide</b> (1 Apr 2014 – 31 Mar 2027)	5,530	3,124	A - C
E.	<b>Number of remaining years</b> (1 Apr 2014 – 31 Mar 2027)	13		
F.	<b>Five year housing land requirement excl. NPPF buffer</b> (1 Apr 2014 – 31 Mar 2019)	2,127	1,202	((A - C) / E) * 5

6. The NPPF indicates a buffer must be included in the assessment of the 5 year housing land supply, this buffer should normally be 5% of the total 5 year housing land requirement but where there has been a persistent record of under delivery, the buffer should be 20% of the total 5 year housing land requirement.

Table 2 - Homes completed over 2006-14<sup>4</sup>

	Didcot				Rest of the District			
	Yearly completions	Accumulated completions	Accumulated requirements	Accumulated total*	Yearly completions	Accumulated completions	Accumulated requirements	Accumulated total*
2006/07	18	18	300	-282	150	150	247	-97
2007/08	56	74	600	-526	456	606	494	+112
2008/09	26	100	900	-800	227	833	741	+92
2009/10	36	136	1,200	-1,064	155	988	988	0
2010/11	61	197	1,500	-1,303	150	1,138	1,235	-97
2011/12	125	322	1,800	-1,478	383	1,521	1,482	+39
2012/13	213	535	2,100	-1,565	263	1,784	1,729	+55
2013/14	235	770	2,400	-1,630	279	2,063	1,976	+87
<b>Total</b>	<b>770</b>				<b>2,063</b>			

<sup>4</sup> Covering the period of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (adopted 2006) and Core Strategy (adopted 2012)

Note: \* Accumulated total is the sum of completions against the annual average requirement of 300 homes for Didcot and 247 homes for rest of the district.

7. Looking at the plan period so far, between April 2006 and March 2014, South Oxfordshire has delivered 770 homes in Didcot and 2,063 homes in the Rest of the District. This is equivalent to a housing shortfall of 1,630 homes in Didcot. There is no housing shortfall for the Rest of the District, where over the last three years housing delivery has exceeded the annual requirement. Table 2 shows the number of homes delivered in Didcot and the Rest of the District over the 2006-14 period.
8. In accordance with the NPPF, the 5 year housing land requirement at Didcot will incur an additional requirement of 20%, while the Rest of the District will only have an additional requirement of 5%.

Table 3 - Calculation of five year housing land requirement with NPPF buffers at April 2014

	Didcot	Rest of District
Housing land requirement incl. NPPF buffer requirement	2,552	1,262

9. Applying the respective methods and the NPPF buffer requirements:
  - Didcot has a five year housing land requirement of 2,552 homes if an additional 20% buffer is applied;
  - The Rest of the District has a five year housing land requirement of 1,262 homes if an additional 5% buffer is applied.

### **Existing supply of housing land**

10. In accordance with national policy, only sites considered to be deliverable within the next five years are included as part of the deliverable supply<sup>5</sup>. Assessment of the district's housing land supply indicates over the 2014-19 period, there is a deliverable supply of 1,724 homes in Didcot and 1,826 homes in the Rest of the District.
11. Only those sites with an extant planning permission, a resolution to grant planning permission (subject to s106 agreement) or those which have been allocated through the development plan (incl. sites in the adopted Core Strategy and sites in Neighbourhood Plans that have been formally "made") were considered as part of the deliverable supply for this year's assessment.
12. To consider the deliverability of sites for 10 or more homes (large sites) within the next five years, the Council has contacted relevant agents and developers to obtain their delivery projections for the sites, including the phasing of development where appropriate. To ensure the identified supply aligns with government's expectation

<sup>5</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, footnote 11

on deliverability, sites highlighted as economically unviable or with severe delivery constraints have been discounted from the deliverable supply.

13. Previous projections have been used for sites where an estimate was not available at the time of this analysis (around 3% of deliverable supply in Didcot (Land at Park Rd, GWP) and 2% of deliverable supply in the Rest of the District (Townlands Hospital site, Henley).
14. Housing sites for 9 or less homes (small sites) with an extant planning permission are considered to be deliverable within the next five years. To ensure the eventual supply is not dependent on the delivery of these sites, the assessment assumes only 90% of these sites will come forward in the next five years.
15. National policy suggests a “windfall allowance” may be justified in the five year supply of housing land if the local planning authority has compelling evidence<sup>6</sup>. In order to prevent delays to the publication of this paper, the Council have proceeded without this, but a windfall allowance will be made in future assessments of housing land supply.
16. Recent guidance on housing land availability assessment suggests local planning authorities should count housing provided for older people, including residential institutions in Use Class C2 against their housing requirement, as well as all forms of student accommodation. Currently, only self-contained residential uses in the C3 use class have been considered as part of the housing land supply. Again an allowance will be made for C2 residential developments in future assessments of housing land supply.
17. The government has changed permitted development rights to allow more flexibility for buildings to be converted to new uses, including some to residential use, without the need for planning permission. Again, these conversions to residential development have not been included in this assessment but will be included in future assessments of housing land supply.

**Table 4 – Supply of housing land over 2014-19**

	<b>Didcot</b>	<b>Rest of the district</b>
Small sites with extant permission*	59	358
Large sites under construction	855	104
Large sites with extant permission or resolution	Nil	488
Large sites allocated in development plan (under discussions)	810	876
Windfall allowance	n/a	n/a
C2 uses	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,724</b>	<b>1,826</b>

Note: \* figures represent 90% of housing commitment from small sites.

<sup>6</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, para.48

### Assessment of five year housing land supply

18. Following the assessments made in this paper, as at April 2014, a five year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated in Didcot, however, the requirement is met in the Rest of the District.
- Didcot has 3.4 years of deliverable housing land supply if an additional 20% buffer is applied;
  - The Rest of the District has 7.2 years of deliverable housing land supply if an additional 5% buffer is applied.

Table 5 – Assessment of five year housing land supply at April 2014

	Didcot	Rest of District
Housing land supply incl. NPPF buffer requirement	3.4	7.2

Note: The projections do not include allowances for windfalls, C2 developments and PD conversions to residential uses.

19. Using information in the latest housing trajectory we can provide an illustrative projection for April 2015 based on the figures supplied so far this year, this shows:
- Didcot will have an improved supply with at least 4.0 years of deliverable housing land supply if an additional 20% buffer is applied.
  - The Rest of the District will maintain its 5 year land supply and will have at least 6.6 years of deliverable housing land supply if an additional 5% buffer is applied.

Table 6 - Projection of five year housing land supply at April 2015

	Didcot	Rest of District
Housing land supply incl. NPPF buffer requirement	4.0	6.6

Note: The projections do not include allowances for windfalls, C2 developments and PD conversions to residential uses.

### Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the review of the Local Plan

20. National guidance indicates the starting point for calculating the five year housing supply should be based on housing requirement figures in up to date adopted Local Plans.

*“Considerable weight should be given to the housing requirement figures in adopted Local Plans, which have successfully passed through the examination process, unless significant new evidence comes to light. It should be borne in mind that evidence which dates back several years, such as that drawn from revoked regional strategies may not adequately reflect current needs...”*

*Where evidence in Local Plans has become outdated and policies in emerging plans are not yet capable of carrying sufficient weight, information provided in the latest full assessment of housing needs should be considered. But the weight given to*

*these assessments should take account of the fact they have not been tested or moderated against relevant constraints.”<sup>7</sup>*

21. The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy was adopted in December 2012. A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has been prepared jointly by all the local authorities in Oxfordshire and the document was completed in April 2014. The SHMA identifies a range of Objectively Assessed Need figures for each district and for the county as a whole to 2031. The Council will consider any additional housing requirement arising from this recent update of the SHMA evidence through a review of the Core Strategy called the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. This will include work required under the duty to cooperate with relevant adjoining authorities. The new housing requirement will be established through a plan making process which will provide the opportunity for consultation and testing of the range of figures presented in the SHMA. This includes checking for significant impacts on the environment, significant impacts on services or critical infrastructure, and for the risks of market saturation and deliverability issues. The new housing requirement will be tested through independent examination of the plan.
22. A position statement on the implementation of the SHMA findings is available on the Council’s website:  
<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-studies/shma-position-statement>
23. The consultation on the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 Issues and Scope is available on the Council’s website.

### **Addressing the housing shortfall in Didcot**

24. To deliver the level of growth put forward in the adopted Core Strategy, Didcot is reliant on the timely progress and delivery of several strategic housing sites allocated in the area. As highlighted in previous housing supply position statements, past under-delivery coupled with the 20% NPPF buffer requirement has resulted in a significant shortfall of housing against the area’s five year housing requirement.
25. The concentration of housing development in Didcot is part of an integral strategy to support on-going regeneration efforts in the town and underpins a wider sustainable approach towards economic growth, place making and delivery of large scale infrastructure projects in the Science Vale area (as set out in the adopted Core Strategy). The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership has received confirmation of funding from government for major projects in this area including:
  - A Centre for Applied Superconductivity at Harwell
  - Science Vale cycle network improvements

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<sup>7</sup> National Planning Policy Guidance, para.30

- Didcot station car park expansion which will add to the station forecourt and transport hub work already commenced

These transformational projects will benefit local businesses, encourage enhanced housing delivery in Didcot and Science Vale and will encourage further public and private investment in the area.

26. Clear positive steps have been taken by the Council to bring forward large housing sites in Didcot. Working with relevant agents and house builders, the Council remains committed to its efforts to bring forward the commencement and delivery of strategic housing sites in the area, including overcoming any delays to site delivery. The Council is working on a joint Science Vale Area Action Plan (AAP) with Vale of White Horse District Council which will focus on housing delivery, including the master planning of strategic housing sites and key infrastructure, ensuring development in the area (including Didcot) can come forward without delay.
27. The review of the adopted Core Strategy (the Local Plan 2031) has already commenced and will extend the plan period to 2031 to coincide with the housing requirement identified in the SHMA evidence. This will effectively “reset” any under-delivery of homes at Didcot at the review of the Local Plan.





Appendix B

Housing Area	Site Name	Site Type	Secured full planning permission	Site controlled by house builder	Delivery constraint (other than planning)	Economically viable	Started construction	Notes
Didcot	Great Western Park	Under construction	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The site is currently under construction with 546 homes delivered at Mar 2014. The agent confirmed housing delivery is expected to be around 340 homes pa for the entire site - a reduced figure of 171 homes pa was used in the assessment to reflect the fact that a proportion of the future delivery will be on land within the Vale of White Horse district (total of 794 homes). There is currently concern regarding the discharge of sewage for new homes (as raised by Thames Water). However, this is not expected to have an impact on the projected delivery of homes for the site.
Didcot	Didcot Greenfield Neighbourhood	Existing Allocation / On going discussion	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	The overall number of homes proposed for the site has been reduced from 2,030 homes to 1,880 homes. Subject to planning, expected to start on site Mar 2016 with a delivery rate of 150-200 homes p.a.
Didcot	Ladygrove East	Existing Allocation / On going discussion	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Subject to planning and securing a house builder, expected to start on site 2015/16 with a delivery rate of around 65 homes pa. The agent highlighted transport / highway requirements identified through scoping could impact on the viability of the scheme.
Didcot	Land at Park Rd - GWP	Existing Allocation / On going discussion	No	Yes	No	No	No	Previous projections have been used - estimate not available at the time of this paper.
Didcot	Orchard Centre Phase 2	Existing Allocation / On going discussion	No	No	No	Yes	No	Subject to planning and securing a house builder, expected to start on site 2018/19 with a delivery rate of 100 homes p.a.
South	Icknield Rd, Goring	Completion	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Scheme now completed.
South	Chinnor Cement Works	Under construction	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	The site is currently under construction with 165 homes delivered at Mar 2014. All remaining homes (13 units) is expected to be delivered in 2014/15.
South	Fairmile Hospital, Cholsey	Under construction	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	The site is currently under construction with 268 homes delivered at Mar 2014. All remaining homes (86 homes) is expected to be delivered within the next two years 2014-16.
South	17 Thame Park Rd (Memec)	Under construction	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	The site is currently under construction with 34 homes delivered at Mar 2014. All remaining homes (1 units) is expected to be delivered in 2014/15.
South	Icknield Pl, Goring	Full permission	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Expected start on site within 2014/15 with a delivery rate of around 20 homes p.a.
South	Market Place Mews, Henley	Full permission	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Expected start on site Feb 2015, with all 14 units delivered within 12 months. The acquisition of land (Council owned) is necessary to delivery.
South	Townlands Hospital, Henley	Full permission	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Previous projections have been used - estimate not available at the time of this paper.
South	CABI Wallingford	Outline permission	No	No	No	Yes	No	Subject to planning and securing a house builder, expected to start on site Apr 2016, with a delivery rate of around 40 homes p.a.
South	Thame Neighbourhood Plan - Site D, Land off Jane Morbey Rd	Outline permission	No	No	No	Yes	No	Subject to planning and securing a house builder, expected to start on site Sep 2015, with a delivery rate of around 60 homes p.a.
South	158 Hithercroft, Habitat Site	Subject to s106	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Subject to planning, expected to start on site Aug 2014, with a delivery rate of around 60 homes p.a.
South	Mongewell Park (Carmel College)	Existing Allocation / On going discussion	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Subject to planning, expected to start on site Spring / Summer 2014, with a delivery rate of around 50 homes p.a.
South	Wallingford Greenfield Neighbourhood, Slade End Farm (Site B)	Existing Allocation / On going discussion	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Subject to planning, expected to start on site by Spring / Summer 2014, with a delivery rate of around 70 homes p.a.
South	Thame Neighbourhood Plan - site C	Existing Allocation / On going discussion	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Subject to planning, expected to start on site by Jan 2015, with a delivery rate of around 60 homes p.a. Land for around 79 homes are controlled by a house builder.
South	Thame Neighbourhood Plan - site F	Existing Allocation / On going discussion	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Subject to planning, expected to start on site by 1Q 2015, with a delivery rate of 50-60 homes p.a.
South	Thame Neighbourhood Plan - The Elms	Existing Allocation / On going discussion	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Subject to planning, expected to start on site by 1Q 2015, with a delivery rate of 15-30 homes p.a.