

South Oxfordshire LOCAL PLAN 2033

SECOND PREFERRED OPTIONS

STAGE FOUR OF THE PROCESS

MARCH 2017



Please share
your opinions
& help shape our
South Oxfordshire

www.southoxon.gov.uk/newlocalplan

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Foreword

by John Cotton

As we move closer to a final version of our new Local Plan, your response to this consultation is crucial. We have listened to what you said in previous consultations and used that to narrow down the options for delivering homes and jobs in our district in the next few years.

I know that many are concerned about the impact on their lives of new houses being built near them. However, I also talk to people who are equally worried about the prospects of homes for their children if we don't address the shortfalls that we face. This plan attempts to balance those tensions.

What I hope you will find particularly striking about the plan is our desire to let more of the decisions be made by communities for themselves. South Oxfordshire has been in the vanguard of neighbourhood planning and, with your backing, our proposals can keep us there. We will read and consider all responses sent to us.



John Cotton

Leader of the Council and Cabinet member for corporate strategy, and strategic policy (including the local plan)



1 INTRODUCTION

Have your say on development in South Oxfordshire

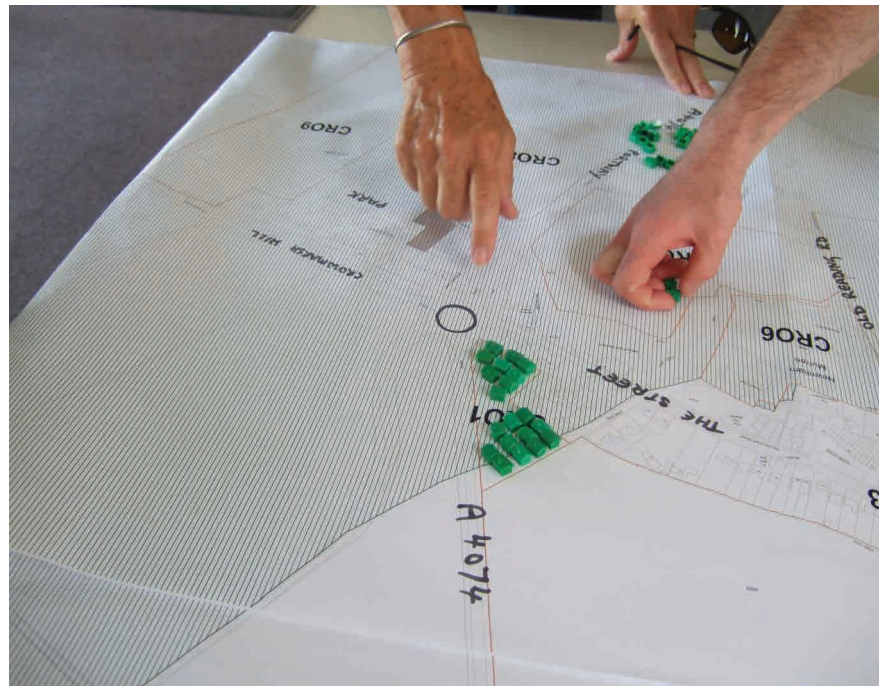
- 1.1 South Oxfordshire District Council is continuing work on the Local Plan which will shape the future of our District. We are committed to involving our communities in preparing the new plan, and we would now like your views.

What is the Local Plan for?

- 1.2 Planning has a key role in enabling us to meet the challenges that the District faces whilst protecting what we value about the District, and also builds on opportunities to make it an even better place.
- 1.3 The Local Plan sets out how development will be planned and delivered across South Oxfordshire to 2033. It sets out our vision, shows how we have developed a strategy which responds to that vision and how we will deliver it working in partnership with everyone with a stake in the future of the District. It also includes policies that are used when the Council is determining planning applications.
- 1.4 The Local Plan sets out policies for change and includes a strategy for delivering growth. It identifies appropriate areas and sites for development, such as new homes, offices, shops and community facilities. It sets out how valuable historic and natural environments will be protected and enhanced. The policies in this plan will be used to help make decisions on planning applications in the District. It also identifies circumstances where development will not be appropriate.
- 1.5 In preparing the new plan we are:
- Exploring how much land is likely to be needed for different uses
 - Identifying the right areas and sites to make sure that we have a healthy supply of developable land
 - Working with our neighbouring councils and the County Council, expert advisors (such as the Environment Agency and Natural England) and infrastructure providers (such as Thames Water) to look at how the impacts of development and growth can be managed across South Oxfordshire and beyond

- Supporting parish and town councils who are working on community-led plans and Neighbourhood Development Plans; and
- Listening to our residents, businesses and communities.

The plan will guide development of the District, in strategic terms, over the length of the plan period



What have we done to date?

- 1.6 We have previously consulted at the following stages
 - Issues and Scope – June 2014
 - Refined Options – February 2015
 - Preferred Options – June 2016
- 1.7 The first two stages of consultation were based on a plan that ran until 2031. We are required to ensure that, once the plan is adopted, it has a life of 15 years from the date of adoption so that it provides an effective plan for future development.
- 1.8 Our work programme indicates that the plan is likely to be adopted in 2018, therefore the plan must run to at least 2033.
- 1.9 The June 2016 Preferred Options version of the Local Plan did not contain all of the policies which would be used in the determination of planning applications.

What will be in the new Local Plan?

- 1.10 The plan will guide development of the District, in strategic terms, over the length of the plan period. It will provide the basis for growth, through setting out the distribution of new housing, employment and retail development and it will also provide the framework for protecting the District's important natural and built environment.
- 1.11 The plan will cover the whole of South Oxfordshire, and we will continue to work with our neighbours to plan for cross-boundary issues, such as how to accommodate the unmet housing needs of Oxford and where new strategic transport and utilities infrastructure is needed.
- 1.12 Whilst the Local Plan will provide the broad strategic framework for growth, much of the detail, such as the specific sites to be allocated for housing, will be finalised at the local level, through Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs).

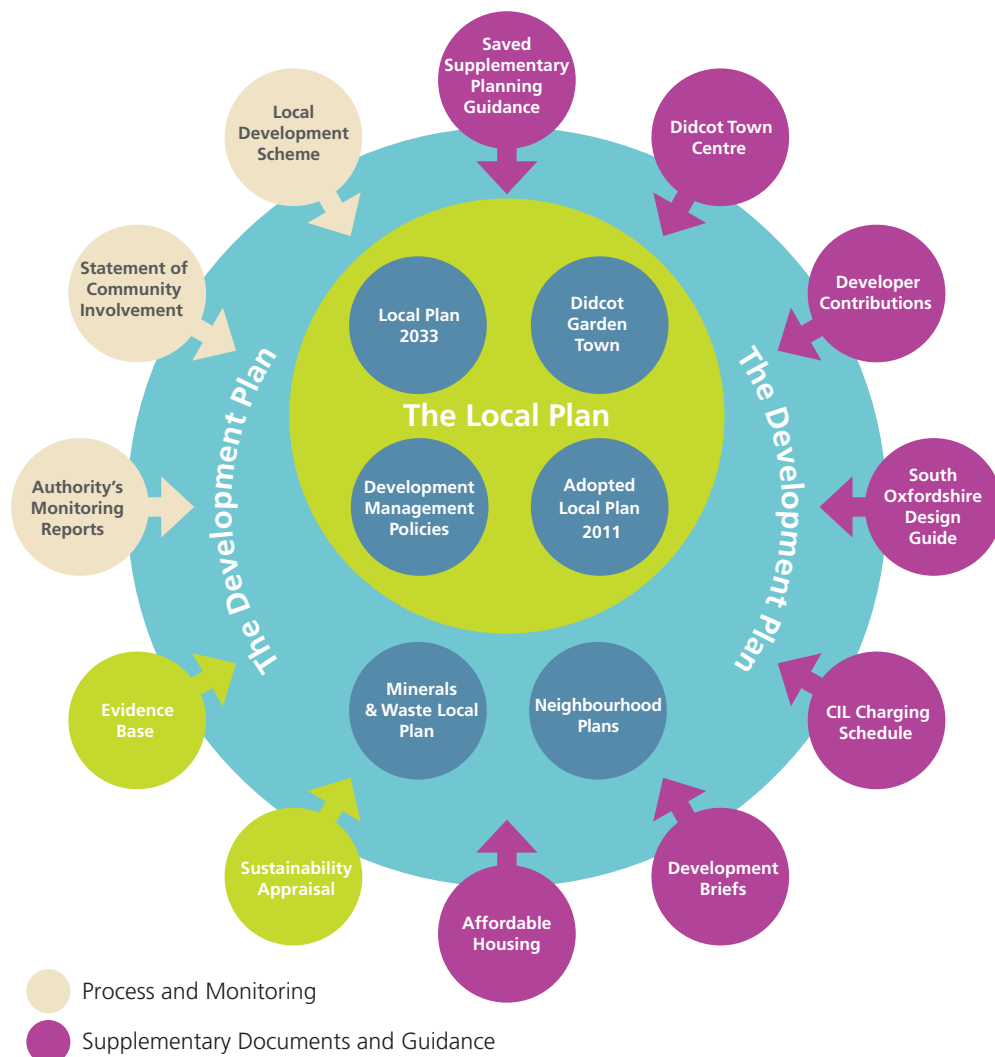
Why are we preparing a new Local Plan?

- 1.13 In April 2014, the councils across Oxfordshire published a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), and this identified that South Oxfordshire needs additional housing beyond that which is planned for in the existing Core Strategy.
- 1.14 As well as this, Oxford City Council indicated that they would have difficulties in meeting their identified housing need entirely within the city boundary and that other districts across the county could be asked to consider taking some of this "unmet housing need".
- 1.15 In response we decided that we need to review our existing plan and consider how we can plan for additional growth in the most advantageous **and positive** way. This Preferred Options document is the latest stage in that process.
- 1.16 By preparing a new Local Plan now we will ensure that we can plan where, how and when new development takes place, and that we can plan for all needs in the best way.

The Development Plan

1.17 The South Oxfordshire development plan is the starting point in making decisions on planning applications. All planning applications will be determined in accordance with the "Development Plan" unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan comprises:

- The existing Core Strategy (including the "saved policies" of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011) until it is replaced by the Local Plan 2033
- "Made" (adopted) Neighbourhood Development Plans prepared by local communities
- Any Development Planning Documents relating to minerals and waste prepared by Oxfordshire County Council.



Neighbourhood Development Plans

- 1.18 In South Oxfordshire, Neighbourhood Development Plans can be prepared by either town or parish councils, or a neighbourhood forum. Once “made” (adopted) they form part of the development plan. They set out in more detail how a community wishes to see its area develop. Where Neighbourhood Development Plans are prepared, they must be in general conformity with the Local Plan.
- 1.19 The Council will continue to support communities who wish to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans. Details of how the Council can help with the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans are set out on the Council’s website.



Neighbourhood Development Plans form part of the development plan

What we have done so far

- 1.20 This second Preferred Options document is the fourth stage in the process of preparing the Local Plan.
- 1.21 The process started in June and July 2014, when we held a Local Plan Issues and Scope public consultation, which was the first public stage of preparing the new Local Plan. It asked a number of questions about how we could approach planning for additional housing, where business and job growth could be located, and how we can improve transport, infrastructure, shopping and community facilities. You can see the consultation document on the Council’s website at www.southoxon.gov.uk/issuesandscope.

The Plan Preparation Process



- 1.22 We received nearly 4,000 comments from the Issues and Scope consultation, from almost 800 individuals and organisations. Our Issues and Scope Consultation Report is available at www.southoxon.gov.uk/issuesandscope and this provides a detailed summary of the main themes arising from the responses.
- 1.23 The comments received informed the more detailed Refined Options consultation, which was held between 19 February and 2 April 2015. This was effectively a part two of the Issues and Scope work, which helped us refine the wide range of issues in the previous consultation before moving to this more formal Preferred Options stage. The consultation document can be seen on the website at www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2032/local-plan-2032-consultati.
- 1.24 Over 3,200 responses were received from 750 individuals and organisations. The Refined Options Consultation Report provides a detailed summary of the main themes, and can be found at www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2015%2006%2001%20FINAL%20LP2031%20Refined%20Options%20Consultation%20Report%20+%20cover_0.pdf. The responses received from this second consultation have informed the first Preferred Options document.
- 1.25 The third stage in the process was a Preferred Options version of the Local Plan. Consultation on this document was undertaken between June and August 2016. This stage of the Local Plan preparation set out our preferred approach in respect of a number of issues. The first Preferred Options version of the Local Plan did not include any development management policies. The consultation document can be seen on the website at the following location www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/SODC%20LP2032%20preferred%20options%20low-res.pdf.



Submission

Examination

Adoption


- 1.26 7,893 comments were received in response to this consultation stage from 1,331 individuals and organisations. The Preferred Options consultation report provides a summary of these issues and our response to them. The consultation responses covered a number of areas of support and objection to the emerging Local Plan. There was support for the emerging spatial strategy and distribution, though others considered that development should have a greater focus at Didcot and also at Oxford. Some of the responses received were unclear as to why so many homes were being proposed, though there were representations from the development industry which argued that the Local Plan did not deliver enough new homes. Some respondents considered the rural areas should help to deliver more housing, whilst others indicated that there was insufficient infrastructure to support this. Common themes included planning for infrastructure and ensuring that roads could accommodate the increase in traffic. Site specific issues were raised in relation to proposed development at Chalgrove and also suggestions were made as to other locations where development could be located, such as at Culham.


- 1.27 The preparation of this second Preferred Options Report has been informed by the previous consultation stages and from the development of the evidence base to support and justify the policies and allocations contained within this document.


- 1.28 Public consultation is, however, only one method by which we collect evidence and information to help us prepare our new Local Plan. We have also carried out or commissioned a range of other studies to provide us with a comprehensive picture of the opportunities and constraints in the District. Completed studies are available on the evidence page of our website www.southoxon.gov.uk/evidence.

The Preferred Options consultation report provides a summary of these issues and our response to them



 Studies which set out requirements – these provide evidence of the level of need we should plan for, including for housing, employment, shopping and leisure.

 Studies which look at the suitability of sites and places for development – these provide information about which places might be most appropriate for development.

 Studies which look at the impacts of development – these provide information about how development will affect roads, water supply and so on, and what might need to be done to deal with these impacts.

 Public consultation – this plan will go through at least five stages of public consultation (of which this is the third) and a public examination before it can be adopted as the development plan for the District.

2 THE SECOND PREFERRED OPTIONS DOCUMENT

- 2.1 This document shows our preferred options to be included in the Local Plan. This is, however, a consultation document and asks for your comments on our proposals and for your ideas for further shaping the Local Plan.
- 2.2 This second Preferred Options document is not a full draft Local Plan, but it contains much of the detail that will be required at the next stage, our Proposed Submission Document. This will be issued in late 2017.
- 2.3 We are not, however, preparing some components that will be required at this stage, for example a full Policies Map to cover the whole District or detailed appendices and topic papers. These will, however, accompany the Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan.

What does the Preferred Options document do?

- 2.4 The second Preferred Options document builds on the first three consultation stages of the Local Plan process. It takes account of the comments and ideas received. It also takes account of the growing evidence base that the Council has produced which provides information on a wide range of background topics and issues. We have then used this wealth of information, evidence and comment to produce a more detailed set of proposals which indicate the Council's preferred levels of growth, where this should broadly be located and the range of policies that will be required to guide and shape this development and protect our natural and built environment.
- 2.5 The second Preferred Options document contains:
 - A vision for South Oxfordshire in 2033;
 - Objectives and a strategy for showing how we will meet these;
 - Distribution of sites for development where these are needed; and
 - Policies which will be used to assess planning proposals and applications.

How can you take part?

- 2.6 The Local Plan will be a plan for everyone with an interest in South Oxfordshire, but particularly residents, businesses and the local communities. It is therefore essential that we get the views and thoughts of as many of these groups as possible, and that these help to inform the next stage of the process, the Publication document.

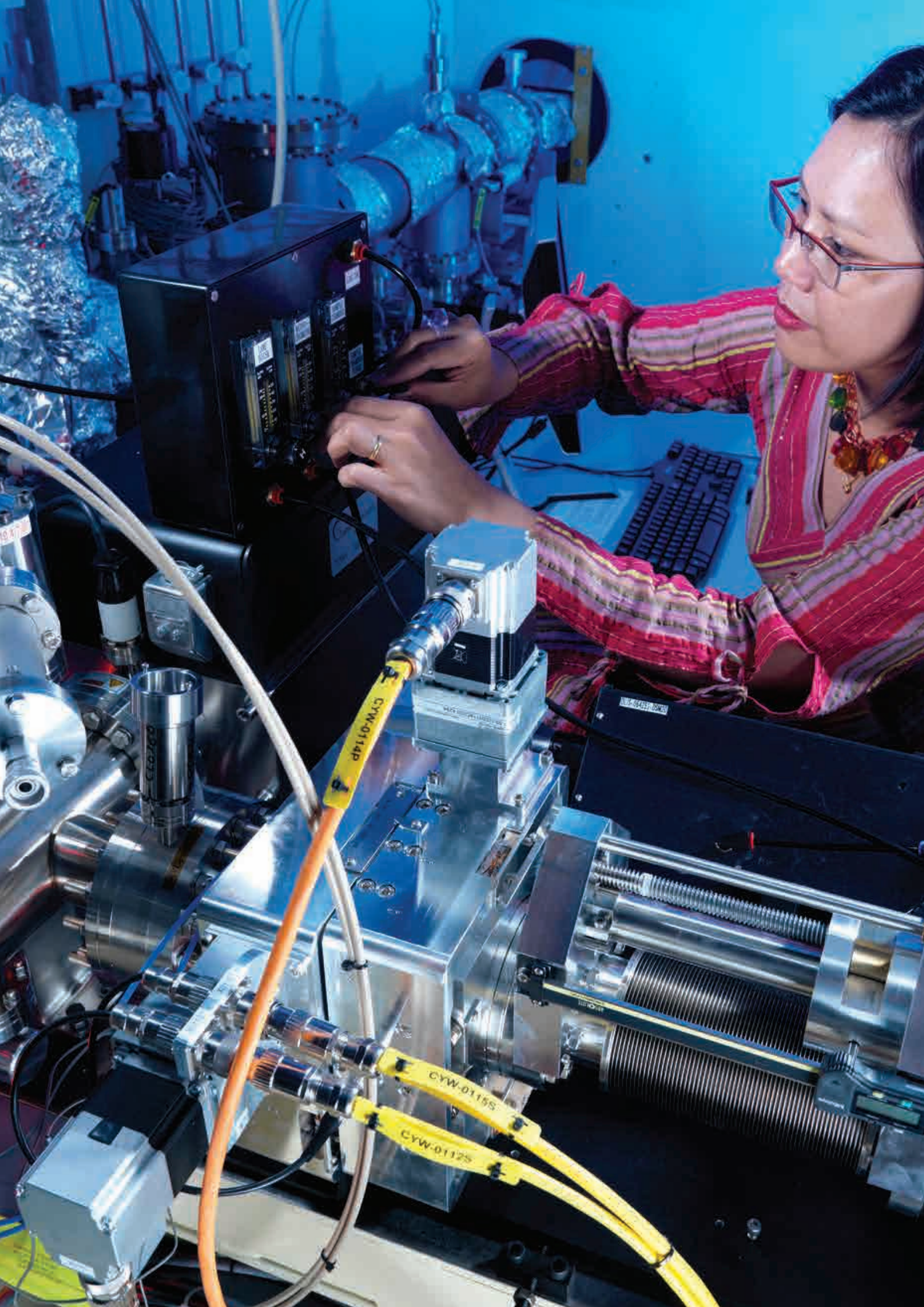
- 2.7 To help achieve this, we are undertaking extensive public consultation and engagement over a 7-week period between 29 March 2017 and 17 May 2017.
- 2.8 We will be holding a series of “roadshow” events across the District during the consultation period. Full details of the consultation programme can be found at the Council’s website www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/emerging-local-plan.

What happens next?

Once the Preferred Options stage is completed, and the Council wishes to progress the Local Plan towards adoption

- 2.9 The development of the Local Plan follows a number of different stages which are defined by legislation (see page 12). The legal requirements are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 2.10 The three consultation exercises to date, and the consultation embarked upon for this document, have been undertaken under Regulation 18 of the legislation. This Regulation enables the Council to undertake one or more consultation on matters that it considers appropriate – i.e. the form of the consultation is not prescribed in law. We have therefore undertaken the three stages so far under this Regulation.
- 2.11 This version of the Local Plan contains development management policies to be used in the determination of planning applications
- 2.12 Once the Preferred Options stage is completed, and the Council wishes to progress the Local Plan towards adoption, then it will publish a Proposed Submission version of the Plan (Regulation 19). At this stage, we will again notify all appropriate parties, which will include those we have consulted in the process to date.
- 2.13 The appropriate parties are then able to make formal representation on the Proposed Submission Document. This will be the “Draft Local Plan.” Any person may make representations to a local planning authority about a local plan which the local planning authority propose to submit to the Secretary of State.
- 2.14 It is currently expected that the Regulation 19 stage (the Proposed Submission Document) will be reached in Autumn 2017.
- 2.15 Once the Council has consulted upon its Proposed Submission Document, the Council will then formally submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State. It is anticipated that this will be achieved towards the end of 2017.

- 2.16 All representations received will be considered by an independent Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). Having considered all representations, the Inspector will then conduct a formal independent examination into the Local Plan. The Inspector will make recommendations in respect of the Local Plan and, for the Plan to proceed to adoption, the Inspector must find the Local Plan to be “sound.” It is anticipated that the examination is likely to be conducted in the spring of 2018.
- 2.17 Once a Local Plan is found to be “sound”, it can proceed to adoption. In the case of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, this is expected to be in the summer of 2018.



3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 South Oxfordshire is a beautiful and prosperous place with many strengths: its natural environment, picturesque towns and villages, and a buoyant and successful economy. There are challenges in ensuring that we plan for development in a way that protects and enhances all that is special about our District. In our vision for 2033 we set out how we see the District evolving whilst building on our strengths.
- 3.2 A set of strategic objectives define what the Local Plan 2033 will focus on to deliver our stated vision. Our strategy is an evolution of that developed for the Core Strategy 2012, as we believe it is still appropriate and sustainable, and it reflects valued input from the community.

Our Vision for 2033

3.3 South Oxfordshire will remain a beautiful and prosperous place to live. It will be an attractive place for people to work and spend their leisure time.

- 3.4 By meeting our housing and employment need and the creation of new, sustainable and vibrant places, we will have provided enough homes and jobs for those wishing to live and work here. By planning for housing in our four towns of Didcot, Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford and in our villages, we will have ensured that all our communities thrive and that everyone has access to services within a short distance. New development meets the highest standards of design with necessary associated infrastructure.
- 3.5 We will continue direct development to the towns and larger villages. We will also strengthen the heart of the District by allocating new development at three strategic locations. This growth will support employment opportunities and deliver regeneration and infrastructure.
- 3.6 Science Vale¹ will have continued to grow as a world-renowned science, research and innovation led hub that attracts business and creates job opportunities, and delivers housing growth. Didcot will be a flourishing Garden Town, being both the gateway to and the heart of Science Vale. Roads and rail links will have been improved and pedestrian and cycle networks will have made it easier for people to get around, in particular to major employment sites.

¹ Science Vale is an area in Southern Oxfordshire, crossing the border of South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. It is one of the most successful science clusters in the UK. This activity is concentrated around the three centres for science at Harwell Campus, Culham Science Centre, and Milton Park, but is supported by a number of important settlements including Didcot, Wantage and Grove.

- 3.7 Through careful management of the Oxford Green Belt we will have protected the important setting of Oxford whilst also making appropriate provision for housing, business growth and urban and rural regeneration. The North Wessex Downs and Chilterns Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and enhanced, whilst also allowing for appropriate and sustainable growth in places. Our rich and varied history is celebrated, protected and enhanced for the benefit of residents and visitors.

Our rich and varied history is celebrated, protected and enhanced for the benefit of residents and visitors



- 3.8 We will plan for new development at three strategic locations; Chalgrove, Culham and Berinsfield.
- 3.9 We will exceed people's high expectations in terms of healthy living, sustainable travel and the design of buildings, homes and public spaces. Everyone will have access to high quality leisure, retail and cultural facilities which will also attract visitors. South Oxfordshire will be a top tourist destination, helping our towns and villages to remain vibrant and prosperous. Communities will thrive, and through neighbourhood planning and community engagement, they will have their say on how their local area is shaped.

Strategic Objectives

3.10 Our Strategic Objectives are underpinned by the three strands of the National Planning Policy Framework:

- Social
- Economic
- Environmental

Objective 1 - Settlements

- OBJ 1.1** Support the settlement hierarchy, the growth and development of Didcot Garden Town, the delivery of new development in the heart of the District, the growth of our market towns and the vitality of our villages.
- OBJ 1.2** Support rural communities and “their way of life”, recognising that this is what attracts people to the District.
- OBJ 1.3** Meet identified housing needs by delivering high-quality, sustainable, attractive places for people to live and work.
- OBJ 1.4** Focus growth in Science Vale through delivering homes and jobs, retail and leisure facilities and enhanced transport infrastructure.



Objective 2 - Housing

- OBJ 2.1** Deliver a wide range of housing options to cater for the housing needs of our community (self-build, older person's accommodation).
- OBJ 2.2** Support the regeneration of housing and facilities to strengthen communities, and address identified poverty and social exclusion.
- OBJ 2.3** Support meeting the economic and housing needs of the county as a whole, reflecting the special character of South Oxfordshire.

Objective 3 - Economy

- OBJ 3.1** Improve employment opportunities and employment land provision, providing high quality local jobs to help retain more of its skilled residents in the local workforce.
- OBJ 3.2** Support business growth, especially in locations close to existing business areas, transport connections and broadband provision and which provide the opportunity to reduce commuting distances.
- OBJ 3.3** Ensure economic and housing growth are balanced, to support sustainable journeys to work.
- OBJ 3.4** Support the retail and service sectors as well as low and high-tech industries.
- OBJ 3.5** Create the conditions whereby world-renowned and cutting edge industries choose to locate and grow their businesses here, contributing to a strong and successful economy, in line with the Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire.
- OBJ 3.6** Inspire the next generation of workers by planning for high quality education facilities.
- OBJ 3.7** Encourage tourism by protecting our built and natural assets, such as the Thames, and providing services and facilities for visitors.

Objective 4 - Infrastructure

- OBJ 4.1** Ensure that essential infrastructure is delivered to support our existing residents and services as well as growth.
- OBJ 4.2** Make sustainable transport an attractive and viable choice for people, whilst recognising that car travel and parking provision will continue to be important in this rural District.

Objective 5 - Design

- OBJ 5.1** Deliver high quality, innovative, well designed and locally distinctive developments in sustainable locations.

- OBJ 5.2** Support development that respects the scale and character of our towns and villages, enhancing the special character of our historic settlements and the surrounding countryside.

Objective 6 - Community

- OBJ 6.1** Champion neighbourhood planning, empowering local communities to direct development within their area and provide support to ensure Neighbourhood Development Plans are deliverable, achievable and sustainable.
- OBJ 6.2** Provide access to high quality leisure, recreation, cultural, community and health facilities.
- OBJ 6.3** Ensure all communities have access to the services and facilities they value, supporting the health and wellbeing of everyone.

Objective 7 - Natural and Built environment

- OBJ 7.1** Protect and enhance the natural environment, including biodiversity, the landscape, green infrastructure and our waterways, placing particular importance on the value of the Oxford Green Belt, our two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the River Thames.
- OBJ 7.2** Conserve and enhance our rich and varied historic assets and their settings, celebrating these as some of our strongest attributes.

Objective 8 - Climate change

- OBJ 8.2** Minimise carbon emissions and other pollution such as water, air, noise and light, and increase our resilience to the likely impact of climate change, especially flooding.



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ENTY ONE

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4 OUR SPATIAL STRATEGY

Introduction

- 4.1 The Local Plan updates the spatial strategy set out in the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy adopted in December 2012, to ensure that we meet the requirement set out in national policy to meet our housing needs. The strategy sets out how we will deliver the vision and objectives set out in Chapter 3. It identifies the roles that Science Vale, including Didcot Garden Town and Culham, the market towns, the villages and the countryside will play in the future. It shows where new homes will be built, where opportunities to provide new jobs will be created, and where infrastructure and services will be required. It shows how we will work in partnership to deliver the strategy with those responsible for key services, including healthcare, education, transport, water supply and community safety and with others such as affordable housing providers.
- 4.2 Local planning authorities have a responsibility to plan positively and work collaboratively. We cannot plan in isolation, and South Oxfordshire has been working with, and continues to work with the other Oxfordshire authorities, supported by the Oxfordshire Growth Board, Local Enterprise Partnership, key stakeholders, our parish and town councils and infrastructure providers.
- 4.3 The plan seeks to meet needs identified for South Oxfordshire as well as some of the needs arising from our neighbour Oxford City. At present a joint work programme with the other Oxfordshire authorities² is still progressing on the scale of Oxford City's unmet needs and how they can best be met.
- 4.4 All allocations made in the core strategy are retained and new allocations are made to meet additional housing requirements identified in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2014. The strategy has been updated to help address the key challenges facing the District now and to make best use of available opportunities.
- 4.5 Significant weight is attached to ensuring our strategy delivers sustainable development supporting the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development set out in national policy.

² Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council

The Strategy

Drawing on a combined approach to the distribution of new housing development enables a series of benefits to be delivered through the Local Plan

- 4.6 Historically, growth in South Oxfordshire has been largely focussed upon Didcot and the market towns of Thames, Wallingford and Henley on Thames. Other than Wallingford, these towns are located towards the boundary of our District and the continued focus on the periphery of the District has led to a reduction in development to support the investment in services and infrastructure within the heart of South Oxfordshire.
- 4.7 The issues and options version of the Local Plan presented a series of potential options for the distribution of development within the District.
- i) Core Strategy approach
 - ii) Science vale and "sustainable settlements"
 - iii) All in Science Vale
 - iv) All in single new settlement
 - v) Dispersal
 - vi) Next to neighbouring major urban areas (Reading/Oxford)
 - vii) Raising densities (from 25dph)
 - viii) Locating development in settlements where it could help fund projects.
- 4.8 Each of these options have been consulted upon and tested through the Sustainability Appraisal work. The preferred option for the Council is a blend of some of these options rather than favouring any one scenario in isolation. The strategy draws together the Core Strategy approach with development at Science Vale. It is also complemented by the identification of new settlements and the location of development to fund regeneration. Drawing on a combined approach to the distribution of new housing development enables a series of benefits to be delivered through the Local Plan.
- 4.9 Our preferred strategy supports the delivery of new housing and economic growth and translates our vision and objectives under inter-related spatial themes to:
- Support a strong network of vibrant settlements including the regeneration of town centres, making the whole District more sustainable, recognising the rural nature of South Oxfordshire and the impact of nearby major centres
 - Support a movement strategy that strengthens connections to key places and enables initiatives to prosper, allows a choice of transport modes and manages traffic to improve environmental quality
 - Create a thriving economy in urban and rural areas with a range of work opportunities including more high value jobs and enable the up-skilling of our workforce to support existing and new firms



- Deliver sufficient new homes to meet the needs of our communities and economy supported by appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities
- Maintain and enhance the built and natural environment and ensure good quality developments and change.

4.10 The Local Plan seeks to build upon the existing settlement hierarchy and actively create a pattern of development central to the area. It identifies strategic levels of growth at three locations connecting through the central area of the District at Culham, Chalgrove and Berinsfield.

Strengthening the heart of South Oxfordshire

Policy STRAT1 The Overall Strategy

Proposals for development in South Oxfordshire should be consistent with the overall strategy of:

- Focusing major new development in Science Vale including Didcot Garden Town and Culham so that this area can play an enhanced role in providing homes, jobs and services with improved transport connectivity
- Providing for major development at Chalgrove and Berinsfield, including necessary infrastructure and community facilities
- Supporting and enhancing the economic and social dependencies between our towns and villages
- Supporting the roles of Henley, Thame and Wallingford by maintaining and improving the attractiveness of their town centres through measures that include environmental improvements and mixed-use developments and by providing new homes, jobs, services and infrastructure
- Supporting and enhancing the roles of the larger villages Benson, Berinsfield, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Goring, Nettlebed, Sonning Common, Watlington, Wheatley and Woodcote as local service centres
- Supporting other villages by allowing for limited amounts of housing and employment to help secure the provision and retention of services
- Protecting and enhancing the countryside and particularly those areas within the AONBs and Oxford Green Belt by ensuring that outside towns and villages any change relates to very specific needs such as those of the agricultural industry or enhancement of the environment.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 & 7.

4.11 Understanding the nature of our towns and villages and how they inter-relate and link with places outside the District is a vital part of our strategy. Movement patterns are complex and vary with the purpose of the journey. Some key services such as main hospitals and regional shopping centres will continue to be provided outside the District, particularly in Oxford and Reading.

- 4.12 The strategy can influence how services and employment are accessed and where new development is located within the District. It can support and influence where and how service providers deliver their services and encourage different and improved ways of delivery.
- 4.13 South Oxfordshire has around 140 settlements, although some are just isolated groups of houses with no community facilities. These vary considerably in size and character reflecting their natural setting and historical development. The settlements in the District have been categorised by the services and facilities they offer and a hierarchy of policies has been established on this basis. We looked at these against a range of criteria on employment opportunities, schools, health services, recreation and leisure opportunities, shops accessibility and population to prepare a settlement assessment and hierarchy³. Villages have been categorised as being either “larger villages”, with a wide range of services and facilities in sustainable locations, and “smaller villages” that have a more limited range of services. There is a clear distinction between the villages in the settlement hierarchy but will be directing development through this plan to the most sustainable locations. We are directing development to the larger villages to support the spatial strategy and will support those Neighbourhood Development Plan groups who wish to promote development in the smaller villages. In addition, there are “other villages” which lie at the bottom of the settlement hierarchy, being hamlets or very small settlements with very limited or no services. Our strategy reflects the status of settlements in this assessment.
- 4.14 Our vision and objectives for South Oxfordshire recognise the rural nature of our District and the importance of our rural settlements in contributing to what makes South Oxfordshire such a beautiful and prosperous place to live. Our strategy for the Local Plan is to continue to ensure that all our communities thrive and that everyone has access to services within a short distance. This is achieved through our network of settlements and the settlement hierarchy, which ensures development takes place within the more sustainable locations of the District.

South
Oxfordshire
has around 140
settlements

Meeting our housing and employment needs

- 4.15 National Planning Policy is clear that local planning authorities should ensure that they meet the full, Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN) for market and affordable housing in the Housing Market Area (HMA). The Housing Market Area within which South Oxfordshire sits is defined as the County of Oxfordshire.

³ Settlement Assessment Background Paper, South Oxfordshire June 2016
Settlement Assessment Background Paper, South Oxfordshire June 2016

We anticipate that the adoption of this Local Plan will be towards the end of 2018 as set out in the published Local Development Scheme

- 4.16 In 2014, together with the other Oxfordshire authorities, and using Government guidance, we prepared a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to understand how many new homes we need to provide. The SHMA looked at both the expected growth in population, the anticipated economic growth between 2011 and 2031 and the need to support affordable housing provision.
- 4.17 In South Oxfordshire, the evidence considers that the provision of 750 dwellings a year would support economic growth. This is primarily to meet the needs of our existing businesses wishing to expand and to allow for new business formation at similar rates to the past. A proportion of this provision would also meet the need for affordable housing in the District.
- 4.18 However, based on these assessments, the SHMA made recommendations in terms of a housing range that we should be planning for which recognised that the affordable housing evidence provided a basis for considering higher housing provision. This was presented in the form of a range which identifies a total need for between 14,500 and 16,500 homes for South Oxfordshire over the twenty-year period 2011-2031. This would equate to an annual provision of between 725-825 new homes.
- 4.19 We anticipate that the adoption of this Local Plan will be towards the end of 2018 as set out in the published Local Development Scheme. Government guidance requires Local Plans to have a time span of 15 years from the point of adoption, so it is proposed that the annual requirement for housing is rolled on for the additional two years, thereby giving us an overall OAN for South Oxfordshire up to 2033 of 17,050-18,150.
- 4.20 We will make provision for 17,050 new homes to be delivered to meet the District's own needs during the plan period (2011 to 2033). This equates to 775 homes a year, which reflects the midpoint of the recommended range in the SHMA. This is considered to be an appropriate response to meeting our housing needs. Not only does this go beyond the committed economic growth housing requirement for South Oxfordshire, but also provides an uplift to deliver affordable housing identified in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).
- 4.21 We commissioned a study, referred to as the Employment Land Review, which assesses the amount and potential location of future requirements for employment land. This study identifies a need for between 16 and 25 hectares of employment land (in addition to the approximate figure of about 5 hectares that is already allocated in Didcot and Wallingford) to 2031. We have identified broad locations for around 20 hectares of employment land in the adopted core strategy:
- i) At Culham Science Centre
 - ii) At Didcot, albeit in the Vale of White Horse

- iii) At Thame, as allocated in their NDP
- iv) At Wallingford, at the Hithercroft industrial estate; and
- v) At the larger villages to be identified in NDP.

Therefore we will need to allocate at least another 5 hectares of land. Taking the commitments, core strategy provision and additional requirements together totals 30 hectares of land.

4.22 Between 6 and 7 hectares of the total requirement is needed for offices, with strongest demand likely to be at Culham, with some demand in Henley, Thame and Wallingford. Some demand could be met at Didcot which has not previously been a popular office location. The study supports our allocation of a substantial amount of floorspace at Culham Science Centre and suggests the remainder should be allocated in the Didcot station area and Monument Business Park in Chalgrove with the residual floorspace provided in Henley, Thame and Wallingford town centres. There is a need for some smaller and flexible offices which could well be provided in our market towns.

4.23 Between 10.5 and 17.7 hectares of the total requirement is needed for industry and warehousing, the main areas of demand are in Science Vale at Culham and Didcot. Wallingford and Thame are also areas of demand.

4.24 In order to allow employment opportunities to flourish, this plan will identify a provision for at least 30 hectares of employment land over the plan period, including the safeguarding of 5 hectares of employment land. We recognise that some of our ambitious plans will continue to deliver after 2033 so land will be identified in this plan that may also continue to be built out after this plan period.

Policy STRAT2 The Need for New Development in South Oxfordshire

During the plan period, provision will be made to meet the need for at least 17,050 new homes and 30 hectares of employment land. This is to be delivered in accordance with the spatial strategy which seeks to strengthen the heart of South Oxfordshire.

The appropriate level of new housing and employment will be monitored and a review undertaken five years following the adoption of the Local Plan and periodically thereafter, taking into account the most up-to-date evidence available at that time.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 2 & 3.

Wider Housing Market Area

Through the South Oxfordshire Local Plan it is proposed to make provision for additional homes to help meet Oxford City's needs

- 4.25 Oxford City Council has identified that they will have difficulty in meeting their own identified housing needs and the City Council have asked the other Oxfordshire authorities to assist in the provision of housing. South Oxfordshire District Council has worked closely with all the authorities in Oxfordshire under the Duty to Cooperate to identify the scale of unmet need and how Oxford City's housing requirement should be distributed across the county.
- 4.26 The preparation of the Oxford City Local Plan is at a relatively early stage and adoption is not anticipated until 2019. At this point in time, it is not possible to accurately identify the precise extent of Oxford City's unmet need. The SHMA recommends a range of 24,000 – 32,000 new homes for Oxford city. There exists a working assumption of the unmet housing need for the city of 15,000 new homes. This is to be shared between the remaining four districts, and we have previously consulted upon a quarter share, to help towards meeting some of this unmet need which equates to 3,750 new homes.
- 4.27 Through the South Oxfordshire Local Plan it is proposed to make provision for additional homes to help meet Oxford City's needs. We propose to make Duty to Cooperate contributions towards Oxford City from the point of adoption of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, rather than delay to 2021. Duty to Cooperate contributions will be made from the surplus achieved by the delivery of development in excess of our annual housing target. Acknowledging our existing backlog and five year supply position, we will contribute 50% of the surplus in our housing supply for the monitoring periods 2019/20 and 2020/21. In the following years of the plan period, notwithstanding potential changes to the level of unmet need, we will make contributions of at least 250 homes a year. This stepped approach to Duty to Cooperate contributions reflects our own housing delivery trajectory which peaks as the strategic allocations commence and achieve their optimum build out rates.
- 4.28 We will continue to work with the other districts in the Housing Market Area to support and plan for unmet housing needs and other strategic matters, recognising the different stages of plan making which have been reached.
- 4.29 It is recognised that there is significant uncertainty regarding the precise level of unmet need which Oxford City may find on the conclusion and adoption of their own Local Plan. We will review our Local Plan once Oxford City have adopted their plan to address their examined unmet need and ensure that our plan responds positively to this. We consider that this is the most appropriate and responsible manner in which to plan for additional homes until the full extent is known.

Policy STRAT3 The unmet housing requirements from Oxford City

During the plan period, provision will be made to help meet part of Oxford City's unmet housing need for around 3,750 new homes. This is to be delivered in accordance with the spatial strategy which seeks to strengthen the heart of South Oxfordshire and is not identified at any one site or location.

The housing contributions will be made from the point of adoption of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan onwards on an annual basis. 50% of the surplus in South Oxfordshire's housing supply will be contributed for the monitoring periods 2019/20 and 2020/21. Contributions of at least 250 homes a year will be made in the remaining years of the plan period.

The appropriate level of unmet housing need for Oxford City will be monitored and a partial review of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan undertaken on adoption of the Local Plan for Oxford City, taking into account the most up-to-date evidence available at that time.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1 & 2.

Didcot and Science Vale

- 4.30 Science Vale is already an international location for science and technology. From this strong starting point, we need to capitalise on Science Vale's opportunity to provide an even better environment for business to flourish. Science Vale is one of the most successful science clusters in the UK. This activity is concentrated around the three centres for science at Harwell Campus, Culham Science Centre and Milton Park, but is supported by a number of important settlements. Didcot is at the heart of Science Vale – it makes the first and leaves the last impression on anyone travelling to Science Vale from elsewhere in the UK or from across the globe and it provides the ideal opportunity to act both as a gateway and a hub.
- 4.31 Our vision for Science Vale in 2033 is grounded in continuing this story of economic success and channelling this prosperity into improved social and environmental wellbeing: the area will consist of thriving communities that have benefited from sustainable growth and the successful delivery of major infrastructure.

4.32 One of the priorities for Science Vale is to provide an environment in which science led business can flourish. Part of this is ensuring that we have an attractive and diverse housing offer, set in an area with good transport and communications networks, links to university research, “big science”, the space sector and cutting edge technology. Clustering development in one area gives a critical mass of economic, social and cultural activity to support the delivery of infrastructure and sustain vibrant town centres. Although some of the land is in the Oxford Green Belt and some in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, overall Science Vale is less constrained for planning purposes than much of South Oxfordshire. It also has well established road and rail networks, which are already the subject of investment and improvement.

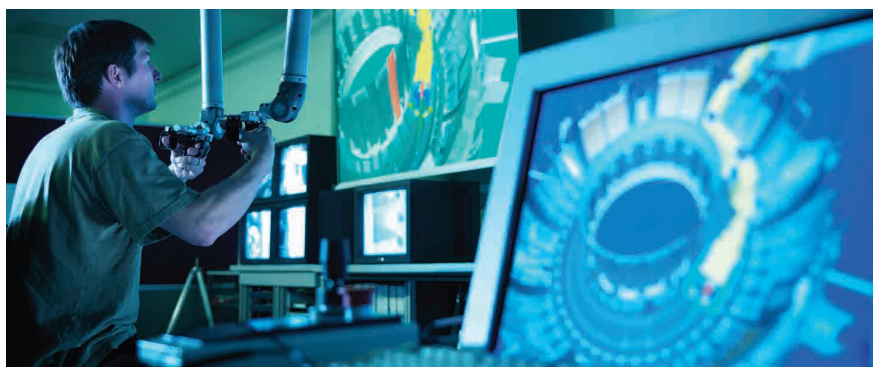
4.33 Didcot is the gateway to Science Vale. It connects Science Vale with the rest of the UK through direct train services to Oxford, London, and Bristol. Yet the economic and social links between Didcot and the rest of Science Vale remain weak. An important part of our strategy for Science Vale is to improve and strengthen its relationship with Didcot, and realise Didcot’s full potential as a thriving and attractive location to live, work and visit. We will do this by providing the homes, jobs, skills, and infrastructure needed to turn Didcot into a successful and sustainable town in its own right, and a vital part of a thriving Science Vale.

The Strategy for Science Vale

4.34 Our strategic approach for Science Vale:

- Excellent design embedded in development throughout Science Vale
- A coordinated approach to new development in Science Vale through an urban design framework
- Protection for the distinctive character and heritage of Science Vale’s market towns, villages and countryside
- A range of new homes, to balance the new jobs
- Opportunities for people to build their own homes in appropriate locations
- Didcot transformed into a well serviced and well connected high quality urban hub, including new social infrastructure (such as schools and medical facilities and a new leisure centre) to support the growing population
- A “step change” in travel choices away from car travel towards public transport, cycling and walking with Didcot at the heart of a fully connected Science Vale
- Didcot’s role as a major rail interchange strengthened, including aspirations for rail services direct from Grove and Wantage

- New innovative housing to be provided linked to the existing Culham Science Centre
- Culham railway station to be improved and transformed into a focal point for the new community
- A cycle strategy for Science Vale that enables people to reliably travel between their homes and their jobs by means other than the private car linking Didcot with the key employment centres at Culham Science Centre, Milton Park, and Harwell
- Improved access onto the A34 and to the M40
- Aspirations for Superfast Broadband across all of Science Vale by 2033.



Didcot Garden Town

- 4.35 In December 2015, the Government announced that Didcot would become a Garden Town delivering 15,050 homes and 20,000 high-tech jobs in the greater Didcot area. Garden Towns are locally-led and ambitious proposals for new communities that work as self-sustaining places and should have high quality and good design embedded from the outset⁴.
- 4.36 The designation of Didcot as a Garden Town is an exciting opportunity. Both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are working closely together and in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and other key stakeholders to develop a joined up vision and delivery strategy for the area.
- 4.37 It is important the area realises its potential as a thriving and attractive location to live, work and visit and in particular to provide a high quality service centre at the heart of Science Vale. This will allow Science Vale's international reputation for science and technology to support continued and accelerated growth of businesses in these sectors.
- 4.38 The Garden Town initiative will help to shape growth already identified through the Local Plan for housing, employment and infrastructure.

⁴ DCLG 2016. Locally-led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities.



- 4.39 To support the successful implementation of the Garden Town initiative, six high level principles have been developed to help shape development proposals that come forward. Proposals for development within the Garden Town Masterplan Area will be expected to demonstrate how they comply with these principles in accordance with policy STRAT4.

STRAT4: Didcot Garden Town

Proposals for development within the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan Area will be expected to demonstrate how they positively contribute to the achievement of the Didcot Garden Town Principles as set out in Appendix 6.

This policy contributes towards achieving objective 1,2,3,4,5,6, 7 & 8.

- 4.40 More detailed planning policy, including a masterplan, is currently being developed for the Didcot Garden Town area in line with the Garden Town Principles set out here. Garden Town policy will support the long-term achievement of the sustainable Garden Town vision and principles through: engaging with local people and businesses; forming part of a strategic and integrated investment plan; maximising social and environmental opportunities; and supporting long-term sustainability goals.
- 4.41 Additional planning policy for the Garden Town will complement and support the Local Plan. Garden Town policy is likely to come forward as an additional planning document for the Garden Town Area: possibly as a Development Planning Document (such as an Area Action Plan) or as a Supplementary Planning Document. Because Didcot spans both the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Council areas, the Garden Town planning policy document will be developed in joint working and adopted by both Councils.

Strengthening the Heart of the District

STRAT5 Strategic Allocations

New development will be provided within Strategic Allocations in order to deliver the scale and distribution of development set out in Policies STRAT1, STRAT2, STRAT3 and STRAT4.

Development proposals should enable a comprehensive scheme to be delivered across the developable area within each Strategic Allocation. Developers must ensure that the sites provide an appropriate scale and mix of uses, in suitable locations, to create sustainable developments that support and complement the role of existing settlements and communities.

Proposals must be accompanied by a comprehensive masterplan for the entire Strategic Allocation. This should demonstrate how new development will integrate with and complement its surroundings in an appropriate manner.

Proposals must ensure that infrastructure is provided. Developers must engage with relevant infrastructure providers to ensure the implementation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Proposals for development at Strategic Allocations must be accompanied by a health impact assessment.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

- 4.42 Culham Science Centre (CSC) is owned by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) and is located within "Science Vale". The site hosts the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy which includes the Joint European Torus (JET) project. It is the leading UK centre for fusion research and technology and is of international importance. The site also hosts a number of related businesses. The UKAEA aims to redevelop the CSC buildings within the next five years as the current stock is outdated. Although the European fusion project (ITER) is being moved to France, the JET facility will continue to operate for some time

and it is possible that Culham may be selected for further facilities linked to fusion research.

- 4.43 We recognise the key role of the CSC site and support and encourage its redevelopment. The site is proposed to be inset from the Green Belt. The Council will work with the owners of the site to agree a masterplan that will consider the future of the whole site. This approach to Culham is consistent with the objective to increase the number of high quality jobs in the District.
- 4.44 We will continue to support the redevelopment and intensification of the Culham Science Centre for research and science based business. At the adjacent "No. 1 site" we will plan for a mixed use development including the retention of employment land but with improved premises. On land to the west of the railway there is an opportunity to provide significant development in a sustainable location. We propose development here that will have access to employment opportunities and public transport at the railway station. We envisage a community at the heart of Science Vale that can make the most of advancing technologies such as clean heat and power generation and autonomous vehicles. This development will include a variety of services and facilities to support a new community including schools and health care and will help enable the Council to realise its ambitions to deliver much needed road infrastructure in the area.
- 4.45 We propose to inset Culham Science Centre and land adjacent to it from the Green Belt. The site is at the outer edge of the Green Belt. This location is also at a distance from the special historic setting of the City of Oxford and does not make a significant contribution towards the purposes of including land in the Green Belt to check the unrestricted sprawl of Oxford City. The exceptional circumstances justifying a review of the Green Belt in this area because:
- The Science Centre and the No.1 site were previously identified as "major development sites in the Green Belt" and there is significant development on the two sites and the land surrounding them is suburban in nature
 - The additional land provides an opportunity to deliver housing adjacent to one of the major employers in southern Oxfordshire
 - Development here would make the most of a sustainable transport opportunity at the railway station
 - Development in this location is at the heart of Science Vale and support the delivery of significant strategic infrastructure
 - The definable boundaries avoid coalescence with other settlements.
- 4.46 We support the development and delivery of a new Thames road crossing between Culham and Didcot Garden Town, as identified in Policy TRANS1. This crossing is required to support development proposed in the emerging

South Oxfordshire Local Plan and allocated in the Local Plan for the Vale of White Horse and supported by the Local Transport Plan by 2031. We recognise that there is a significant amount of work to be undertaken in terms of more detailed transport modelling and transport assessment studies before this crossing can be realised. We propose a limit to the number of homes to be constructed at Culham until this further work is undertaken and the delivery mechanism for this infrastructure can be identified. We will continue to monitor this position.

STRAT6 - Culham Science Centre

Green Belt inset area: 71 hectares

Developable area: 75 hectares

Proposals for the redevelopment and intensification of the Culham Science Centre will be supported where this does not have an unacceptable visual impact. Opportunities that support job growth and appropriate diversification or enterprise “clustering” will be explored to compliment the wider development proposed in the area. In order to deliver any potential proposal, we will work proactively with the UK Atomic energy Authority and development partners to create an agreed masterplan that facilitates this growth.

The Culham Science Centre is proposed to be removed from the Green Belt and inset as shown in the Green Belt Inset Plan (Appendix 4) to enable this development to be brought forward.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1 & 3.



STRAT7 - Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre

Green Belt inset area: 242 hectares Developable area: 189 hectares

Land within the developable area identified adjacent to Culham Science Centre, will be developed to deliver approximately 3,500 new homes, a net increase of 2 hectares of employment land, 12 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and supporting services and facilities.

The strategic allocation will be expected to deliver:

- i) A scheme in accordance with an agreed comprehensive masterplan, including a full integrated water management plan
- ii) The retention of 10 hectares of employment land with at least a further 2 hectares of employment land
- iii) A layout and form that respects the setting of the Listed Buildings and Registered Park within and beyond the site,
- iv) A comprehensive survey of below ground archaeology with appropriate mitigation
- v) Appropriate vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access including safe and attractive connections with nearby communities
- vi) High quality public transport facilities and connections within and adjacent to the site
- vii) Appropriate landscaping and an integrated network of green infrastructure, throughout the site and in particular along the boundaries of the strategic allocation which allows limited through views
- viii) High quality public transport facilities and connections within and adjacent to the site
- ix) Where feasible, opportunities for district heating and low carbon on site energy generation

The number of homes to be built on the site in advance of the implementation of the Culham Bridge will not exceed 750.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 3, 5 & 6.

Land at Berinsfield

4.47 The village of Berinsfield is currently entirely within the Green Belt. We propose to inset Berinsfield from the Green Belt as exceptional circumstances exist that justify this alteration to the Green Belt boundary. These are as follows:

- Areas of Berinsfield need regeneration and the current Green Belt policy is inhibiting this
- The mix of housing in Berinsfield is more unbalanced than in other parts of the District. Releasing land for development could help to rebalance the mix and provide further opportunities for employment and service provision; and
- Berinsfield is a local service centre and some further development would be consistent with the overall spatial strategy of this plan
- This location is also at a distance from the special historic setting of the city of Oxford and does not make a significant contribution towards the purposes of including land in the Green Belt to check the unrestricted sprawl of Oxford City.

4.48 We consider that delivering both growth and regeneration together at Berinsfield promotes a sustainable pattern of development that cannot be achieved by developing elsewhere in the District.

STRAT8 – Land at Berinsfield

Land within the developable area identified at Berinsfield, will be developed to deliver up to 2,100 new homes that will deliver the regeneration of Berinsfield village and the necessary community aspirations for infrastructure.

Proposals to develop land at Berinsfield will be expected to deliver:

- A scheme in accordance with an agreed comprehensive masterplan and strategy for the regeneration of Berinsfield**
- The entire cost of the necessary regeneration package identified for the regeneration of Berinsfield, including social, sporting, housing and public services infrastructure**
- A scheme that takes no greater land area than is necessary to deliver the required regeneration**
- Appropriate landscaping and an integrated network of green infrastructure**
- Appropriate vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access**
- High quality public transport facilities and connections within and adjacent to the site.**

Planning permission will only be granted where the items set out at points (i) to (vi) above have been secured. Land at Berinsfield is proposed to be removed from the Green Belt and inset as a settlement as shown in the Green Belt Inset Plan (Appendix 4) to enable this development to be brought forward.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 3, 5 & 6.

A number of studies have been undertaken by the Council which indicate that Berinsfield would benefit from investment and regeneration

- 4.49 The expansion of Berinsfield is considered acceptable only if it will lead directly to the implementation of the masterplan for the regeneration of the village and the funding of the entire cost of the regeneration package identified by the Council through the Community Investment Scheme. The regeneration of Berinsfield has strong community support and seeks to achieve a unique solution which could not otherwise be realised.
- 4.50 A number of studies have been undertaken by the Council which indicate that Berinsfield would benefit from investment and regeneration. This is to be supported by further work commissioned by the Council to explore potential options for the regeneration of Berinsfield. This further work will identify the required regeneration package and include a masterplan and delivery strategy. This is being jointly developed with the local community to provide locally required regeneration and infrastructure.
- 4.51 The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (Adopted 2012) explained the exceptional circumstances warranting a review of the Green Belt boundary at Berinsfield, which were supported by the Inspector at its examination. In line with the exceptional circumstances warranting the review, the examining Inspector considered that the review of the Green Belt boundary at Berinsfield should not be confined to drawing a tight boundary around the built up area.
- 4.52 The proposed release of Green Belt land, follows a study that undertook a detailed assessment of the settlement edge of Berinsfield in order to identify land that may no longer meet the five purposes of the Green Belt set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF. The study identified land to the east of Berinsfield as a potential area to be inset along with the village. However, it recognised that substantial planting would be required to the north, south and east of the land inset to contain the settlement edge.
- 4.53 The area to be released from the Green Belt provides clear and recognisable Green Belt boundaries at this location. These boundaries will enable sufficient land to accommodate up to 2,100 new homes to be delivered, though it is acknowledged that not all of this land will be required for development. The

ongoing work being undertaken by the Council's consultants will identify the particular constraints and areas where development would, and would not, be appropriately located. Any part of the developable area not required for development as part of the Berinsfield Community Investment Scheme will provide green infrastructure, including planting to contain the settlement edge.

- 4.54 Given that the existing village of Berinsfield will be inset from the Green Belt we also propose to allocate the important open space within the centre of the village. The area will be agreed through engagement with local people in the Berinsfield Community Investment Scheme masterplan and designated as Local Green Space to ensure that this vital community asset is retained.

Land at Chalgrove Airfield

- 4.55 Chalgrove Airfield is a former Second World War airfield located directly north of the village of Chalgrove, north east of the B480, approximately 11 miles to the east of central Oxford and approximately 5 miles south of junction 7 of the M40 motorway.
- 4.56 The airfield opened in 1943 and was closed in July 1946 when it was leased to the Martin-Baker company for development and testing of aircraft ejection seats. The site contains three runways and a perimeter track surrounded by security fencing, with managed grass across the rest of the site. Buildings including the war-time T-2 hangers are located to the east of the site. The site is currently used by Martin-Baker Ltd. Chalgrove Airfield has a CAA Ordinary Licence (Number P683) that allows flights for the public transport of passengers or for flying instruction as authorised by the licensee (Martin-Baker (Engineering) Limited). The site of the Monument Industrial Estate site to the southeast of the airfield was once part of the airfield.
- 4.57 The airfield is flat and largely free from constraints. The runway elements of the site constitute "previously developed land". There are no known archaeological or ecological constraints. "Chalgrove Field 1643", a registered historic battlefield, is located adjacent to the site to the east. The Martin Baker facility is located on part of this historic battlefield.
- 4.58 The site is located outside any flood zone, the AONB and the Green Belt. The site is centrally placed in South Oxfordshire.

STRAT9 - Land at Chalgrove Airfield

Whole site: 255 hectares Developable area: 107 hectares

Land within the developable area identified at Chalgrove Airfield, will be developed to deliver approximately 3,000 new homes, 5 hectares of employment land, 5 plots for travelling showpeople and supporting services and facilities.

The strategic allocation will be expected to deliver;

- i) A scheme in accordance with an agreed comprehensive masterplan, including full integrated water management plan**
- ii) A layout and form that respects the setting of the Listed Buildings and Registered Battlefield beyond the site,**
- iii) Appropriate vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access including safe and attractive connections with nearby communities**
- iv) High quality public transport facilities and connections within and adjacent to the site**
- v) Appropriate landscaping and an integrated network of green infrastructure**
- vi) Where feasible, opportunities for district heating and low carbon on site energy generation**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Land at Wheatley Campus

4.59 Oxford Brookes University are in the process of a refurbishment project at their Headington Campus in Oxford City. As part of this refurbishment, Oxford Brookes University intends to relocate the existing uses at the Wheatley Campus to the Headington Campus which would leave a vacant previously developed site in the Green Belt. The surrounding uses are predominantly residential and there is some scope to develop part of the site for residential development.

4.60 The existing village and built form of Wheatley is largely inset within the Green Belt. Wheatley Campus is entirely within the Green Belt, but notwithstanding this we recognise that:

- The Wheatley Campus site is a partially developed site in the Green Belt
- The existing use is relocating to an alternative location in Oxford City and the site will become redundant within the plan period
- The redevelopment of the site will provide residential development and help meet the housing needs identified
- There is an opportunity to plan positively for its future use.

4.61 The principle of redeveloping previously developed sites is set out in national policy. Proposals for redevelopment should not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

4.62 Land to the west of the site performs an important function in terms of providing a buffer between an existing Scheduled Monument and built form. Beyond the site is a Listed Building, which has views across the undeveloped land at the Wheatley Campus.

4.63 At least 300 new homes are expected to be delivered at this location, which largely reflects the existing pattern of built development. A large part of the wider site is subject to existing constraints associated with the listed building and Scheduled Monument. The existing playing fields should be retained and a wider community use should be explored through any planning application.

STRAT10 – Land at Wheatley Campus, Oxford Brookes University

Site area: 22 hectares Existing development footprint: 12 hectares

Land at Wheatley Campus, will be developed to deliver approximately 300 new homes. Proposals to develop land at Wheatley Campus will be expected to deliver:

- A scheme of an appropriate scale and layout in a form that respects the listed building and its setting**
- A layout and form which provides an appropriate buffer to protect the Scheduled Monument**
- The retention of the existing sports pitches in the north west of the site**
- High quality public transport facilities and connections within and adjacent the site**

- v) **Investigation and mitigation by the developer of any contamination within the site through agreed remediation techniques**
- vi) **A Noise Assessment including noise during construction and noise insulation of development**
- vii) **Appropriate vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access including safe and attractive connections with nearby communities**
- viii) **Appropriate landscaping, including buffers along the A40, and an integrated network of green infrastructure**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Henley-on-Thames

Introduction

4.64 Henley-on-Thames has a population of around 11,600. The town lies in the south-east of the District, adjoining Wokingham district in Berkshire and close to Reading. Henley's shopping centre is the largest of our market towns; it has local shops and services as well as high end shopping for visitors. Tourism, based on the town's riverside setting, its legacy of historic buildings and the festivals and events that take place, are important to the economy and vitality of Henley.

4.65 Henley's strengths include:

- An international reputation
- Its setting on the Thames and adjacent to the Chilterns AONB
- Well preserved historic features
- A good range of facilities for education, health and recreation
- A range of employment opportunities
- A range of good shops and restaurants
- A range of housing
- Being an important service centre for nearby areas in Oxfordshire and Berkshire
- Events that draw people to the town including markets, festivals and the annual regatta
- A good range and number of active voluntary groups.

Policy HEN1 – The Strategy for Henley

We will support development proposals which:

- i) Are in accordance with the Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Development Plan**
- ii) Maintain the quality of place**
- iii) Strengthen commerce in the town centre through retail-led, mixed-use development and identify additional retail and leisure floorspace**
- iv) Support housing and employment uses above shops**
- v) Enhance the town's environment**
- vi) Improve the attraction of Henley for visitors**
- vii) Improve accessibility, car parking, pedestrian and cycle links**
- viii) Improve the stock of commercial buildings and the environment of the employment areas**
- ix) Support Henley College and Gillotts School and meet their accommodation needs**
- x) Support development for all ages.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Thame

Introduction

4.66 Thame is a market town with a strong agricultural base, located on the north-east edge of our District adjacent to Aylesbury Vale district. It has a population of approximately 11,500 and is an important local service centre for nearby villages both in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Thame has close links with nearby larger towns like Aylesbury and High Wycombe for shopping, work, services and leisure facilities.

4.67 Thame's strengths include:

- Thame is a prosperous place to live, with higher than average household earnings for the District, and a higher proportion of people in managerial positions than the average for the District
- School children in Thame achieve higher levels of attainment at Key Stage 1 and 2 than on average in the District

- Journey distances are short however, with almost a third of residents travelling less than 2km to work, which is a higher proportion than for the District as a whole
- Employment centres, a primary school and a supermarket are all within an average of ten minutes' walk or public transport journey, with a further education institution, GP or secondary school within an average of twenty minutes' walk or public transport journey.

Policy TH1 – The Strategy for Thame

We will support development proposals which:

- i) Are in accordance with the Thame Neighbourhood Development Plan**
- ii) Maintain the quality of place**
- iii) Strengthen commerce in the town centre and identify sites suitable for future retail, leisure and community uses**
- iv) Support housing and employment uses above shops**
- v) Improve the attraction of Thame for visitors and businesses**
- vi) Improve accessibility, car parking, pedestrian and cycle links**
- vii) Support schemes which enhance the quality of the town's environment**
- viii) Support schemes which improve the stock of existing commercial buildings and the environment of the employment areas**
- ix) Allow housing on suitable infill and redevelopment sites; and**
- x) Support the schools, health and other service providers meet their accommodation needs, in particular the amalgamation of the secondary school onto a single site**
- xi) Provide for an appropriate housing mix which responds to the needs of the housing market.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Wallingford

Introduction

4.68 Wallingford is the smallest market town in the District, with a population of around 8,000. The town is located 6 miles east of Didcot. Our vision and objectives seek to enhance our market towns and build on the District's

economic success. Our strategy for Wallingford will develop the town's role as a local service centre, to complement rather than compete with Didcot, developing Wallingford's strengths.

- 4.69 Wallingford has a long history that is reflected in its urban form and open spaces. Wallingford Castle and the River Thames are of significance. The castle grounds remain an important green space and the town has many buildings and features of historical importance.
- 4.70 In more recent years Wallingford has grown mainly to the west. The Hithercroft Industrial Estate, the town's major employment area, in the south-west of the town. Wallingford is an important local service centre for the surrounding villages providing retail, educational, health, sports and leisure facilities.
- 4.71 The historic form of the town and its river crossings lead to issues of air quality in the centre. A bypass was built to the south and west of the town in the early 1990s.
- 4.72 Wallingford has a strong tourist draw. Its Thames side setting, local history and as the setting for a number of television programmes bring large numbers of visitors to the town each year. Trains are also still run along the railway branch line from Cholsey on many weekends by the Cholsey & Wallingford Railway Preservation Society.
- 4.73 Wallingford's strengths include:
- Its location by the River Thames and proximity to the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONB
 - Well preserved historic features including a compact medieval central area encircled by Saxon banks and ditches, the castle gardens and meadows and Wallingford Bridge
 - A good range of facilities in terms of schools, health and recreation
 - A range of employment opportunities and links with the concentration of environmental science organisations at nearby Crowmarsh Gifford
 - A number of independent shops and restaurants
 - A range of housing
 - A bypass taking through traffic out of the town
 - Hosting events which draw people to the town including markets, festivals and rowing events and
 - A number of active and successful voluntary groups.

4.74 Issues that need addressing in the town are:

- The declining retail function of the town centre
- The re-use of the former Waitrose store needs a permanent solution
- The potential of the town to attract visitors is not fully exploited
- Some facilities, for example some schools, are at capacity
- The need for affordable housing remains high despite recent new building
- The average overall rating of the Hithercroft Industrial Estate, the town's main employment area
- The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment showed there were areas for improvement
- There are local air quality problems
- A higher percentage of over 65s than the average for the District, county and South East
- To encourage use of the River Thames.

4.75 Wallingford are in the early stages of preparing their Neighbourhood Development Plan and expect to submit this document to South Oxfordshire District Council in Autumn 2017. Once the neighbourhood Development Plan has reached publication stage, we will place greater emphasis on its policies.

Policy WAL1 – The Strategy for Wallingford

We will support development proposals which:

- i) Maintain the quality of place**
- ii) Strengthen the town centre including supporting schemes which allow for the re-use or redevelopment of the former Waitrose site provided that a retail element and car parking is retained**
- iii) Support housing and employment uses above shops**
- iv) Support the market place as a focal hub**
- v) Support measures which improve the attraction of Wallingford for visitors with emphasis on the River Thames**
- vi) Improve accessibility, car parking, pedestrian and cycle links and local air quality**
- vii) Support schemes which enhance the town's natural and historic environment**
- viii) Safeguarding the Wallingford greenfield neighbourhood allocation for at least 555 new homes.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7.





5 DELIVERING NEW HOMES

5.1 One of our main objectives of this plan is to deliver new homes in places where people want to live and that they can afford. In chapter 4 we have set out where we think these houses will go in a sustainable and achievable manner. This chapter provides details of the houses built so far and provides a forecast of future house building in the District. This chapter also contains policy direction for neighbourhood development plans and a contingency if they fail to deliver, and policies for affordable housing, our preferred tenure mix and policies for infilling and extensions.

Sources of housing supply

- 5.2 There are a number of sources of housing supply which will ensure housing delivery across the plan period, and these include:
- Strategic allocations made in this plan
 - Retained core strategy allocations
 - Existing planning commitments
 - Small scale (non-strategic sites) to be identified through Neighbourhood Development Plans or identified in this plan
 - Sites not yet identified that will come forward through the development management process in accordance with the policies in this plan, known as windfalls.
- 5.3 The strategic allocations are central to the delivery of the Local Plan and to the achievement of our vision and objectives. As set out in our spatial strategy chapter we propose three large scale developments and a brown field



redevelopment opportunity all with the ambition to help strengthen the heart of South Oxfordshire. Together these sites have a potential capacity for around 8,900 new homes, however, we do not expect these to all be built before 2033 and therefore we are only counting 8,475 towards the plan target.

- 5.4 We have already made provision for around 12,000 new homes through allocations in our adopted Core Strategy, commitments in made Neighbourhood Development Plans and the granting of planning permissions. Some of these 12,000 new homes have been built since 2011.
- 5.5 The previously allocated sites of the Core Strategy will continue to be safeguard until their completion (some of these sites are currently under construction or complete, whilst others have yet to start) as below.

Table 5a: Previously allocated sites

Allocation	Net number of dwellings
Great Western Park	2,587
Ladygrove East	642
Vauxhall Barracks	300
North East Didcot	2,030
Orchard Centre Phase 2	300
Mongewell Park	166
Wallingford greenfield neighbourhood	555
Townlands Hospital, Henley	62

- 5.6 At the time of publication Neighbourhood Development Plans have been made at Henley and Harpsden, Thame, Sonning Common and Woodcote. The Council continues to support the creation of Neighbourhood Development Plans across the District. The made plans allocate new homes as follows:

Table 5b: Neighbourhood Development Plan allocations

Neighbourhood Development Plan	Net number of dwellings
Henley	500
Thame	775
Sonning Common	195 (+34)*
Woodcote	76

*to include reserve sites

- 5.7 Based on the SHMA evidence, to meet our own housing need we need to plan for approximately 5,050 additional new homes over the 2011—2033 period. We are also planning to help meet some of Oxford City's unmet housing need, therefore the total we will need to plan for is 8,800 new homes to 2033.



- 5.8 In total this equates to the provision of 20,800 new homes in the plan period. The expected sources of supply of housing is shown below:

Table 5c: Expected sources of housing supply

Supply of new homes to come forward 2011-2033	Net number of dwellings
Completions 2011-2016	2,647
Commitments as at 31 March 2016 – sites under construction, with planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission and allocations carried forward from the Core Strategy	9,369
New strategic allocations	8,475*
New Henley, Thame and Wallingford allocations	1,355
New allocations in the Larger Villages	1,122
Sites in the smaller villages (Neighbourhood Development Plans and infill sites) and windfall sites	500
Total	23,468

*strategic allocations continue to deliver beyond the plan period.

- 5.9 Within South Oxfordshire, new housing will be planned in order to deliver the scale and distribution of housing development set out in Chapter 4: Our Spatial Strategy. Whilst the overall level of development required to support the existing and future needs of South Oxfordshire, and a proportion to assist Oxford City's unmet needs amounts to 20,800 new homes, we are providing development to exceed this requirement. This provides additional flexibility to enable the management of our housing land supply trajectory going forwards and to respond to changing circumstances.

Policy H1 Delivering new homes

Housing development will be permitted at Strategic Allocations and on sites that are allocated by Neighbourhood Development Plans.

On sites that are not allocated, housing development and conversions to dwellings will be permitted on previously-developed land in and adjacent to the existing built-up areas of towns and larger villages. In other locations, the potential to develop previously developed land will be balanced against other policies of the Development Plan, particularly with reference to safe and sustainable access to services and facilities.

Housing development on other sites will only be permitted where:

- i) It is for affordable housing on a rural exception site in accordance with Policy H12, or
- ii) It is infilling within the existing built up areas of towns, larger, smaller and other villages as defined in the settlement hierarchy (shown in appendix 7), or
- iii) It is brought forward through a Community Right to Build Order, or
- iv) There are other specific exceptions/circumstances defined in a Neighbourhood Development Plans and/or Neighbourhood Development Orders, or
- v) It is a proposal involving the sensitive, adaptive re-use of vacant or redundant building(s) will be encouraged, subject to the requirements of other policies of the development plan.

Proposals that will bring empty housing back into residential use will also be encouraged.

We will support development which provides for the residential needs for all parts of our community, including Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and caravan dwellers. Proposals for new residential caravan and mobile home sites will be considered in accordance with the housing policies of the plan. Permission for single residential caravans or mobile homes will only be given in exceptional circumstances on a temporary and personal basis.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2,4, 6 & 7.

5.10 Infill development is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings.

Didcot

Policy H2 – New Housing in Didcot

At Didcot, provision will be made for at least 6,500* new homes between 2011 and 2033. This provision will be at the sites listed in table 5d.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 4, 6 & 7.

*Some of the dwellings proposed in policy H2 have already been completed since 2011 and some are on sites that have consent (including at outline or with a resolution to grant). Policy H2 safeguards sites that were allocated in previous development plans and introduces three new allocations.

5.11 The supply of sites to deliver the 6,500 homes is shown below. As outlined in policy STRAT4 we expect all development to be delivered following the principles of the Garden Town. Some of the sites in the centre of Didcot have the potential to deliver at a higher density than shown here – and hence these are indicative numbers – but this will be further explored through the work currently being undertaken on the delivery of the Garden Town.

Table 5d: Provision of homes at Didcot

Location	Indicative dwelling capacity
Safeguarded: Ladygrove East	642
Safeguarded: Didcot N E	2030
Safeguarded: Great Western Park	2587
Safeguarded: Vauxhall Barracks	300
Safeguarded: Orchard Centre Phase II	300
New: Didcot A	270
New: Gateway	300
New: Haddon Hill	74
Total	6,503

Policy H2i – Didcot A

Land at Didcot A is allocated for 270 new homes. Approximately 9.5 hectares in the District.

This site forms part of a larger site which is allocated in the Vale of White Horse Plan (Core Policy 16).

Policy H2ii – Didcot Gateway

Land at Didcot Gateway – south of the railway station – is allocated for a mixed use scheme including at least 300 new homes. Approximately 4 hectares.

Outline planning permission exists and we wish to safeguard this use.

Policy H2iii – Hadden Hill (Didcot)

Land at Hadden Hill (Didcot) is allocated for 74 new homes. Approximately 2.7 hectares.

Planning permission exists and we wish to safeguard this use.

Market Towns

5.12 In each of the towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford we propose the provision of an additional 15% growth of housing stock. This level of growth has been calculated on the basis of the housing stock existing as at 2011-the base date of the Local Plan. In previous consultations, we had considered 10% growth, but this was on top of Core Strategy allocations where these existed. The market towns have already collectively delivered 5% growth from the start of the plan period and we are planning positively for further growth over the remainder of the plan period. This will be delivered in accordance with the Policy H3. We expect the NDP, or review of the made NDP, for each settlement to provide allocations for these new homes.

- 5.13 If a Neighbourhood Development Plan does not progress within a specified time frame, the Council will, as the local planning authority, allocate sites for housing in those towns. To support this, the Council will use the published Strategic Land Availability Assessment to identify suitable, available and achievable sites. This would be done by working with the local community and parish council.
- 5.14 This 15% distribution process does not take into account of social, economic and environmental factors that may impact upon the ability of settlements to accommodate the amount of development that has been calculated. Similarly it does not take into account the availability of suitable and deliverable sites which may also impact on how much development a settlement may accommodate.
- 5.15 On the basis of 15% dwelling growth from 2011 and the requirements from the Core Strategy the following numbers of houses are expected to be built in the plan period. These numbers take into account existing commitments and completions and identifies the following remaining levels of development to be allocated.

Table 5e: Provision of homes at market towns

Location	Potential number of dwellings remaining to be delivered
Henley-on-Thames	677
Thame	452
Wallingford	226

Policy H3 – Housing in the towns of Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford

A minimum of 1,355 homes will be collectively delivered through Neighbourhood Development Plans in the following towns:

- **Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Larger Villages

- 5.16 We propose the provision of 15% growth in the larger villages. This level of growth has been calculated on the basis of the housing stock existing as at 2011-the base date of the Local Plan. In previous consultations, we had considered 10% growth, but this was on top of Core Strategy allocations where these existed. The larger villages have already collectively delivered 5% growth from the start of the plan period and we are planning positively for further growth over the remainder of the plan period. This will ensure that these places continue to grow and support the services and facilities that sustain them.
- 5.17 Development in the larger villages should be proportional, appropriate and dependent on existing infrastructure. It is considered that the most appropriate mechanism for allowing housing in villages is by preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan and allocating development should be allowed through that Neighbourhood Development Plan process. A degree of development in the villages will help to support local services and facilities and result in a more sustainable distribution of development that would have a more balanced impact on infrastructure.
- 5.18 It is considered that the most appropriate mechanism for allocating sites for new housing in the larger villages is through a Neighbourhood Development Plan. This level of growth will support local services and facilities and result in a sustainable and balanced distribution of development. We propose that where villages are in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan, the delivery of the houses allocated to these villages should be delivered through the Neighbourhood Development Plan. This enables, allowing communities to have their say on where development in their area will go.
- 5.19 If a Neighbourhood Development Plan does not progress within a specified time frame, the Council will, as the local planning authority, allocate sites for housing in those villages. To support this, the Council will use the published Strategic Land Availability Assessment to identify suitable, available and achievable sites. This would be done by working with the local community and parish council.
- 5.20 Where a village already has an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan which does not provide for their level of allocated housing development, this will need to be reviewed within the specified timeframe as set out in Policy H5.

5.21 For those villages not preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan (Nettlebed and Crowmarsh Gifford) the Council will allocate sites in these villages, and will continue to work with the local community and parish councils to achieve this.

5.22 There are currently 12 settlements classed as larger villages in the District. These are:

Table 5f: Larger villages

Benson	Cholsey	Sonning Common
Berinsfield	Crowmarsh Gifford	Watlington
Chalgrove	Goring	Wheatley
Chinnor	Nettlebed	Woodcote

5.23 Nine of these are either in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan, or already have a “made” plan. Our proposed strategy for housing distribution in the larger villages is for each settlement to grow proportionally by around 15 percent.

5.24 There are two larger villages that are not preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans where the Council will allocate sites for housing. At Berinsfield we are working closely with the community on an investment and regeneration scheme. It is expected that the other nine larger villages will allocate housing sites through their Neighbourhood Development Plans.

5.25 There are proposed strategic allocations at Berinsfield and Chalgrove and Wheatley, and we are not expecting each of these to deliver an additional 15% growth over and above what is already outlined at these locations. In addition, potential development in Berinsfield and Wheatley is restricted by the Green Belt and, at present, making changes to the Green Belt is beyond the remit of NDP. However, we do not want to suppress the appetite and hard work of the neighbourhood development plan groups in these communities and we will continue to support proposals made through robust and evidenced NDP.

5.26 In Benson and Chinnor a number of planning appeals have been allowed therefore meeting the 15% growth requirement. However, both communities may wish to consider safeguarding sites that have been given permission to benefit from the full weight of their NDP and to provide them with a robust baseline for monitoring.

5.27 This 15% distribution process does not take into account of social, economic and environmental factors that may impact upon the ability of settlements to accommodate the amount of development that has been calculated. Similarly

Some villages are highly constrained, for example by Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and flood zones

it does not take into account the availability of suitable and deliverable sites which may also impact on how much development a settlement may accommodate.

- 5.28 Some villages are constrained by factors such as Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and flood zones. In these villages a 15% growth may not be fully achievable. Other villages are unconstrained and can plan for more than 15% growth. The level of growth proposed should be evidenced within the Neighbourhood Development Plan with local communities helping to shape the development of their village.

Table 5g: Provision of homes in larger villages

Neighbourhood Planning Area	Local Plan 15% growth (dwellings)	Expected submission plan to LPA	Expected conclusion of consultation
Benson	0	May 2017	June 2017
Berinsfield	(274)		
Chalgrove	(236)	April 2017	May 2017
Chinnor	0	January 2017	March 2017
Cholsey	135	June 2017	July 2017
Crowmarsh Gifford	134		
Goring-on-Thames	251	May 2017	June 2017
Nettlebed	60		
Sonning Common	169	Made	Made
Watlington	238	July 2017	August 2017
Wheatley	(205)	April 2017	May 2017
Woodcote	135	Made	Made
Total			

- 5.29 We would expect the number of houses identified for each Larger Village in the 'Local Plan 15% growth' column of Table 5g to be built in the plan period. There are a number of communities with numbers shown in brackets. Residential development has been proposed at these locations in the Strategy Chapter of this Local Plan and we do not require that these Larger Villages will deliver additional development beyond this. We will support them to allocate further development sites should they so wish. These numbers take into account the existing commitments and completions and identifies the following remaining levels of development to be allocated at each Larger Village.

Policy H4 – Housing in Larger Villages

A minimum of 1,122 homes will be collectively delivered through Neighbourhood Development Plans and Local Plan site allocations at the Larger Villages.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Expected conclusion of examination	Expected date of referendum	Expected Plan made	Potential housing allocations
August 2017	October 2017	October 2017	355
July 2017	September 2017	September 2017	200
May 2017	July 2017	July 2017	0
September 2017	November 2017	November 2017	310
August 2017	October 2017	October 2017	90/105
Made	Made	October 2016 (actual)	195
October 2017	December 2017	December 2017	200 to 400
July 2017	September 2017	September 2017	0
Made	Made	May 2014 (actual)	76
			1,116 to 1,331

5.30 These villages have active Neighbourhood Development Plan groups and it is therefore expected that an appropriate level of housing will be provided for through the making of Neighbourhood Development Plans. Policy H4 does not include strategic allocations proposed in this Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Planning in Larger Villages

5.31 Our proposed devolution to Neighbourhood Development Plans an innovative approach and we must convince an independent Inspector at the subsequent Local Plan examination that this component of the proposed housing supply

is, in practice, likely to be delivered. We therefore need to have a policy in the plan that will operate as a contingency if a Neighbourhood Development Plan cannot or will not allocate the required level of housing.

- 5.32 The clearest mechanism to put in place is one whereby, in such circumstances, any planning applications that are submitted for housing in such Neighbourhood Development Plan areas will be treated favourably, provided that a range of criteria are met.

Policy H5 – Contingency Policy for Larger Villages

If a Neighbourhood Development Plan does not adequately progress with allocating sites (and has therefore proceeded to at least pre-submission stage) within 12 months of adoption of this Local Plan, planning applications for housing in the larger villages will be supported provided that:

- i) Proposals comply with the overall housing distribution strategy**
- ii) Proposals comply with the housing and other applicable policies in this plan.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Housing Allocations at Nettlebed

- 5.33 Nettlebed, although the smallest of our Larger Villages, forms an important part of the network of settlements in the western area of the District along the A4130. It has a reasonable range of services including a primary school, doctor's surgery, village hall, convenience shop and garage, post office and pub/restaurant. It is also on the bus route with an hourly service being halfway between Wallingford and Henley. The village has a small historic core centred on the High Street with more modern housing development to the north. Nettlebed is entirely within the AONB and much of the land to the north and east is common land.

- 5.34 The community have decided not to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan and subsequently we are allocating sites on their behalf.

Policy H6 - Land to the west of Priests Close, Nettlebed

Site area: 0.76 hectares

This allocation will be expected to deliver:

- i) A residential development of approximately 19 dwellings, representing an extension to the existing community**
- ii) A scheme of an appropriate scale and form including relevant landscaping to minimise the impact on the AONB**
- iii) Appropriate and safe means of access.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

5.35 Land to the west of Priests Close is a greenfield site on the edge of the village. The Landscape Capacity Assessment⁵ found that development on the land to the west of Priest Close had the potential to harm the landscape setting of the village and the AONB, as it would expand the settlement into the wider countryside. However, the site is not visually prominent and provides a more balanced development option in terms of integration with the existing community. The site includes land to the north to provide green space behind the existing houses in Priests Close.

Policy H7 – Joyce Grove, Nettlebed

Site area: 10.9 hectares

This allocation will be expected to deliver:

- i) A residential development of approximately 20 dwellings within the existing listed building and associated buildings**
- ii) A scheme of an appropriate scale and layout in a form that respects the listed building and its setting**
- iii) Appropriate and safe means of access.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

5.36 Joyce Grove comprises a substantial Grade II listed house and outbuildings within a parkland setting. Given this, it would not be suitable for new-build housing but it is considered that there is the potential to re-use and sympathetically convert existing buildings to provide some new homes. The site is currently occupied by Sue Ryder and operates as a hospice. It is a highly valued facility for southern Oxfordshire. We are aware that the building does

⁵ Landscape Capacity Assessment for site on the Edge of Larger Villages in South Oxfordshire (May 2014)

not currently meets their needs and they have been exploring options to relocate. At this point in time an appropriate alternative site has yet to be identified and this will be monitored in association with this policy.



Housing Allocations at Crowmarsh Gifford

5.37 Crowmarsh Gifford is also one of our smallest “larger villages”. It is located on the opposite bank of the River Thames from Wallingford, and it has its own separate village identity. It has a limited range of services and facilities (a shop, two pubs and a primary school) but benefits from being in easy reach of those in Wallingford. A notable feature is the collection of large employment sites along Benson Lane, consisting of the environmental science cluster in the grounds of the historic Howbery Park and along Benson Lane, and the Council offices (recently damaged in a serious fire). The high frequency bus service between Oxford and Reading runs through Crowmarsh Gifford, providing opportunities for sustainable travel.

5.38 The community have decided not to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan and subsequently we are allocating sites on their behalf.

Policy H8 – Land to the east of Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford

Site area: 7.35 hectares

This allocation will be expected to deliver:

- i) A residential development of approximately 150 dwellings, representing an extension to the existing community**
- ii) A scheme of an appropriate scale and form that respects the surrounding Grade II Listed Buildings and their settings, including relevant landscaping to minimise the impact on the AONB**
- iii) Appropriate and safe means of access.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

5.39 The Landscape Capacity Assessment considered land to the East of Benson Lane to only be visually prominent from the local area, as it is severed from the wider AONB by the A4074 and roadside planting. The south west of the site provides a good development option in terms of integration with the existing community and relates better to the built form of the village. Landscaping will be required in the east of the site to reduce any impact on the AONB. We have reduced the size of the site from that submitted to make it more appropriate scale in terms of the development needs of the village.

Policy H9 – Land to the south of Newnham Manor, Crowmarsh Gifford

Site area: 8.31 hectares

This allocation will be expected to deliver:

- i) A residential development of approximately 100 dwellings, representing an extension to the existing community**
- ii) A scheme of an appropriate scale and form including relevant landscaping to minimise the impact on the AONB**
- iii) Appropriate and safe means of access**
- iv) A new parking area to meet the needs of Crowmarsh Gifford C of E Primary School.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

5.40 The land south of Newnham Manor offers the opportunity to reuse a site close to the centre of the village, and assist the school by providing part of the site as new parking. It currently consists of a caravan site, a selection of mostly run down buildings, and a green field. Although in the AONB, the Landscape Capacity Assessment found the majority of the site to have limited landscape impacts because it is relatively contained and screened from wider views. This site offers the opportunity to reuse a site close to the centre of the village, and assist the school by providing part of the site as new parking.



Smaller villages

Policy H10 – Housing in Smaller Villages

A minimum of 500 new homes will be delivered in the smaller villages through Neighbourhood Development Plans, infill development, and/or small suitable sites of up to 10 dwellings.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2 & 3.

5.41 Smaller villages, as defined in the settlement hierarchy (appendix 7), are likely to deliver 5%-10% growth, based on the number of dwellings at the 2011 census, minus completions since 2011 and outstanding commitments. The provision of 500 homes should be viewed as a minimum level of growth and will be met through small sites of 10 homes or less, and infill development, and will not be allocated by the local planning authority. The relationship between the smaller villages and the larger villages and the District's towns will be important in the pattern and level of development to be delivered. Smaller villages will look to the larger villages and towns for a higher level of services and facilities and it is this relationship which will help to shape future development.

Other Villages

5.42 It is not generally expected that those settlements classified as "Other Villages" will be a significant source of housing supply. However, it is possible that some development proposals may come forward over the Plan period in these villages, such as single dwellings, infilling and conversions from other uses. Such proposals will be considered against the relevant policies in this Local Plan.

5.43 Some of the other villages may wish to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans and we will support them to bring these forward.

Affordable Housing

Policy H11 – Affordable Housing

On all sites where there is a net gain of 11 or more dwellings* the Council will require at least 40% of the dwellings to be affordable housing, subject to the viability of this provision on each site.

- **In cases where the 40% calculation provides a part dwelling a financial contribution will be sought equivalent to that part dwelling**
- **The tenure mix of the affordable housing will be 75% social rented and 25% shared ownership by the most up to date housing evidence**
- **With the exception of part dwellings, the affordable housing should be provided on site and the affordable housing should be mixed with the market housing**
- **The affordable housing should meet required standards and should be of a size and type which meets the requirements of those in housing need.**

*** Except in the AONB where a net gain of 6 or more dwellings the Council will require at least 40% of the dwellings to be affordable housing. In the AONB provision will be sought as a financial contribution with the amount to be the equivalent to the cost of providing the affordable dwellings on-site.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 4, & 6.

Our starting position for the provision of affordable housing is outlined in policy H11

5.44 Affordable housing includes social rented / affordable rented and intermediate housing that is available to households in the District whose needs are not met by the market. The cost must be low enough for eligible households to afford based on local incomes and house prices. The home should be restricted for use by future eligible households. If these restrictions are lifted, the subsidy should be recycled for alternative affordable housing in the District.

5.45 The exact amount of affordable housing on each site will be agreed through negotiation between developers and South Oxfordshire District Council, and policy H11 will be our starting position. The Council's housing strategy, and where relevant local housing needs surveys, will inform these negotiations. We will monitor the delivery of affordable housing through policy H11 and review

our housing strategy periodically to ensure that our aim to provide a healthy mix of houses is fulfilled.

Affordable Housing on Exception Sites

Policy H12 – Exception Sites

In exceptional circumstances, small-scale affordable housing schemes may be permitted within or adjoining villages, provided that:

- i) It can be demonstrated that all the proposed dwellings meet a particular local need that cannot be accommodated in any other way**
or
- ii) There are satisfactory arrangements to ensure that the benefits of the affordable housing can be enjoyed by subsequent as well as the initial occupants and that the dwellings remain available for local people**
or
- iii) There are no overriding amenity, environmental, design or highway objections.**

Preference will be given to sites where there are adequate local services and facilities.

Planning obligations will be sought before planning permission is issued to ensure that the above conditions are met.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 4, & 6.



- 5.46 The Council will seek to increase the stock of affordable housing by allowing proposals which would not otherwise be permitted. The Council will work closely with parish councils and local communities to progress these schemes. The involvement of landowners is also crucial. Some landowners are prepared to make available land at, or only slightly above, agricultural value, where it is understood that an exception to normal policy is being made and that planning permission would not be given for speculative housing development on that land. The Council will always support the sale of land to Registered Providers by agreement but, in circumstances where agreement cannot be reached, will consider the use of compulsory purchase powers.
- 5.47 The planning authority must be convinced of the need for affordable housing in a particular village and be satisfied that the housing provided would be available at a price which local people can afford. A detailed housing needs survey will be required to demonstrate the extent of the housing need arising from people with a local connection. This must be assessed by the Council prior to a planning application being submitted. Housing need is based on factors such as overcrowding, lack of or sharing of facilities, income, ill-health and disability. The following criteria will usually be used to define local connection:
- Applicant to have lived in the parish for 5 out of the last 8 years, or
 - Applicant's parent or child to be currently resident in the parish, and to have at least 10 years' continuous residence, or
 - Applicant has worked full time for 2 years in the parish, or equivalent in part time (this may include voluntary work), and there is evidence of continuing commitment to work in the parish.
- 5.48 Applicants must be on the housing register before they can be nominated for an exceptions site property. Where more applicants than vacancies exist, the dwellings will be allocated in accordance with the Council's Housing Allocations Policy. If there are insufficient applicants meeting these criteria, applicants meeting the local connection criteria for the immediately neighbouring parishes will be considered. In this case, applicants whose local connection is closer to the new properties may be given precedence over those who are more distant.
- 5.49 An essential feature of any scheme is that it would control not just the initial occupants of a property but ensure that the benefits of affordable provision pass to subsequent occupiers as well. A planning obligation will normally be required to ensure that the houses provided meet a local need, and that satisfactory arrangements are made to ensure that the benefits of affordable housing are enjoyed by subsequent as well as the initial occupants. Schemes will normally be managed by a Registered Provider.

Policy H13 – Meeting Housing Needs

A mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households will be sought on all new residential developments.

- **All affordable housing and at least 15% of market housing on sites of 10 dwellings or more should be designed to meet the standards of Part M (4) Category 2: accessible and adaptable dwellings (or any replacement standards)**
- **At least 5% of affordable housing dwellings should be designed to the standards of Part M (4) Category 3: wheelchair accessible dwellings**
- **On sites of 100 dwellings or more plots should be set aside to allow for at least 3% of market housing dwellings to be designed to the standards of Part M (4) Category 3: wheelchair accessible dwellings (or any replacement standards). The exact requirement should be based on evidence regarding current demand. The plots should be marketed for a period of 12 months to identify an appropriate buyer.**
- **All affordable housing and 1 and 2 bed market housing dwellings should be designed to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 4,5 & 6.

5.50 New homes need to be high quality, accessible and sustainable. The Government has created a new approach for the setting of technical standards for new housing. The Code for Sustainable Homes has been withdrawn and Local planning authorities can no longer set out any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to construction, internal layout or the performance of new dwellings although we can encourage them.

5.51 The new system comprises new additional optional Building Regulations (Part M) on water, access (including wheelchair access) and internal space. Together these are referred to as optional national technical standards. These new optional standards complement the existing set of Building Regulations, which are mandatory. Local planning authorities can choose whether to impose the additional optional national technical standards as their local standards. The additional technical standards should only be required through Local Plan policies if they address a clearly evidenced need and their impact on viability has been considered.



- 5.52 The government has also introduced a new nationally prescribed space standard. This space standard does not form part of the Building Regulations, but local planning authorities will be expected to apply the new national space standard instead of any local standard previously applied.
- 5.53 The Council's Housing Strategy presents evidence to support the need for improved accessibility and space standards in South Oxfordshire. The evidence shows that by 2039 over one quarter of the housing stock in South Oxfordshire will be occupied by people aged over 65. The vast majority of which will want to continue to live in their own homes. It is amongst these older age groups, particularly those over 75, that a need for housing which is accessible or adaptable is most likely to apply.
- 5.54 There are 17,500 people in South Oxfordshire living with a long term health problem or disability of which a quarter occupy social rented housing. Those aged 65+ account for more than half of all people with a long term health problem or disability. There are significant proportions of older people living with disabilities across all tenures of housing, however the proportion in the social rented sector is disproportionately high. On average, over the last four years, 185 adaptations have been made each year to properties within South Oxfordshire and the majority of these were to housing association properties.
- 5.55 The evidence shows there is a case in South Oxfordshire for building up a stock of accessible and adaptable homes, in line with Part M (4) Category 2: accessible and adaptable dwellings of Building Regulations, over the long term. The costs of delivering these homes will need to be considered through viability testing. This case is strongest with regard to the affordable sector. We need to ensure that the affordable housing stock is capable of meeting their needs. We have control over the occupancy of the affordable housing stock so can ensure, as far as possible, accessible and adapted homes are available to those with specific needs.

5.56 Very few wheelchair accessible properties are available in the District. In the last 5 years only 3 properties have been developed. There is evidence of some need for wheelchair accessible properties, in line with Part M (4) Category 3: wheelchair accessible dwellings of Building Regulations, within the affordable housing sector. The need for wheelchair accessible properties is relatively small (2.3%) in the market housing sector. Given that there is no allocation process in place and no guaranteed market it would seem unreasonable to require developers to build this type of housing speculatively. Therefore we are only requiring the provision of wheelchair accessible homes where a buyer can be secured. This would allow any additional build costs to be passed on to the buyer rather than impacting on the viability of the development. It also ensures that the features of the property match the individual needs of the buyer.

5.57 The price of space is high. As a result developers tend to build and buyers purchase and occupy smaller homes. The space available in homes in the affordable sector is particularly important because these homes are occupied more intensively than homes in the market sector. Houses are allocated on the minimum amount of space required and this has come under even more pressure since the introduction of the "under occupancy charge" which reduces benefit payments to working age people who are under occupying their homes. In comparison, in the market sector households have a greater tendency to buy and occupy homes according to their income and life stage and levels of under occupancy are often high. Overcrowding is more of an issue in the private rented sector, although there are not high levels of overcrowding in the District. It is where homes are fully occupied that it is important to ensure that the space available is sufficient to meet the family's needs.

5.58 In South Oxfordshire the majority of dwellings, on the market for sale, meet or exceed the new nationally described space standards. However, there is evidence that a significant proportion of smaller properties in the District, such as one and two bedroom properties, particularly new build properties⁶, fall below the new space standard. This is a concern given that these properties are more likely to be fully occupied, particularly if they are rented. There are also some areas in the District, Henley, Didcot and Chinnor, where properties appear more likely to fall below the new minimum space standards.

5.59 Policies to increase floor area in line with space standards are likely to result in higher prices for those dwellings and this could price some households out of the market for new homes. This will need to be considered through viability testing.

5.60 The Council will put in place a system to collect data on the Gross Internal Area of new build properties in addition to the number of bedrooms so that this can be monitored.

⁶ It is difficult to monitor the Gross Internal Area (GIA) of new build properties as this information is not regularly advertised.

Custom build and self-build

Policy H14 – Self-Build and Custom Housing

The Council will use its housing strategy and the evidence from the self-build register to identify appropriate locations for self-build and custom build projects. Specific sites will be identified through Neighbourhood Development Plans.

On strategic allocations the Council will seek 2% of the proportion of the developable plots to be set aside for self-build and custom build. This will be subject to the need shown on the register and the viability of individual sites.

The Council will support proposals for self-build and custom build projects within settlements subject to there being no conflict with other policies in the Development Plan.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 2, 5 & 7.

5.61 Building your own home could be a more affordable way for many people to become home owners. The Council strongly supports initiatives that provides opportunities for people to design and/or build their own home. The two types of projects can be described as follows:

- **Custom build:** The eventual occupiers take on a “project management” role, coordinating the services of designers, architects, planners and construction staff. They may get actively involved in some aspects, but generally physical involvement is kept to a minimum.
- **Self-build:** The occupiers take on an active role, procuring, designing and building their own home. They may outsource elements of the project, where their skills or time do not allow it. This option is generally cheaper than custom build, as “sweat equity” reduces the cost of the project.

5.62 The Council has a register where people can indicate their interest in custom and self-build opportunities at www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/application-advice/general-planning-advice/custom-and-self

Where there is evidence for a need for these types of plots, the Council expects them to be provided as a proportion of the overall supply of dwellings on larger sites. This will be reflected in the emerging housing strategy.

5.63 At the time of writing there are about 200 people registered as interested in self and custom build homes in South Oxfordshire. We will support the delivery of this type of home in appropriate locations, but to create some certainty in delivery the 2% plot requirement in policy H14 comes from dividing the 9,700 homes planned for on our strategic sites by the current identified need.

Specialist Accommodation for Older People

Policy H15 – Specialist Housing for Older People

The Council will use its housing strategy to identify appropriate locations for specialist accommodation for older people. Specific sites will be identified through neighbourhood development plans.

On larger strategic sites the Council will seek a proportion of the dwellings to be specifically built to meet the needs of older people. This will be subject to the local need identified and the viability of individual sites.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1,2, 4,5 & 6.

5.64 Housing and health are inextricably linked, and the value of living in a suitable home in a sustainable location becomes even more important as people get older. Being able to continue living independently for as long as possible may require some level of support which could be provided through adaptations to the home or receiving social care visits at home. However, other options can include moving to a more suitable property – perhaps a smaller home with no stairs - or to a home which is provided as part of a specialist housing scheme such as “Close Care’, Extra Care Housing or other form of retirement housing. Providing options for people to “downsize” to smaller or specialist housing can help free up family housing.

5.65 Our design policies encourage the provision of housing that specifically caters for the needs of all people or can be adapted for them in line with the “accessible and adaptable” standards in Building Regulations Part M. However, as part of our emerging Housing Strategy we will consider identifying locations of particular need for the provision of specifically designed houses.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

5.66 The overall scale of need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in the District is small in comparison to wider housing needs, but we have a responsibility to address these needs. It is important that we develop a fair and effective strategy to meet these needs, particularly through the identification of land for pitches.

Policy H16: Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The provision of pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and plots for Travelling Showpeople will be delivered through:

- **Safeguarding existing sites**
- **Extending existing sites, where possible, to meet the needs of existing residents and their families**
- **As part of the following site allocations:**
 - **5 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers at Pearith Farm, Didcot**
 - **5 plots for Travelling Showpeople at Chalgrove Airfield**
 - **12 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers at Culham**

Proposals for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, will be permitted where it has been demonstrated that the following criteria have been met.

- i) **There is a proven need for the development and/or the capacity of the site can be justified to meet needs for further gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople sites, or extensions to existing sites**
- ii) **The site is not located within the Oxford Green Belt**
- iii) **Proposals on sites in areas of sensitive landscape will be considered in accordance with Policy ENV1. In all other locations the proposal will not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the landscape and the amenity of neighbouring properties, and is sensitively designed to mitigate any impact on its surroundings**
- iv) **The site has safe and satisfactory vehicular and pedestrian access to the surrounding principal highway network, and can be provided with safe electricity, mains drinking water, sewage connections and waste disposal facilities**

- v) **No significant barriers to development exist in terms of flooding, poor drainage, poor ground stability or proximity to other hazardous land or installation where other forms of housing would not be suitable.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 2, 4, 5 & 6.

Policy H17: Safeguarding Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites

Proposals that result in the loss of a site for residential use by gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople will not be permitted unless:

- i) **Suitable alternative provision is made for the use on a site elsewhere in the locality, or**
- ii) **It has been determined that the site is no longer needed for this use.**

Appropriate, detailed and robust evidence will be required to satisfy the above criteria. The Council will require the independent assessment of this evidence.

Planning conditions or legal obligations may be necessary to ensure that any replacement sites are provided. Any replacement site should normally be available before the original site is lost.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 2, 4, 5 & 6.

5.67 Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople are defined as persons that are leading or have led a nomadic life. Travelling showpeople differ from other gypsies and travellers as their employment and travel centres upon holding fairs, circuses or shows across the country. Therefore, different terminology is used when referring to their residential needs. Gypsy and traveller households tend to reside on a residential "pitch" within a traveller "site" whereas travelling showpeople tend to reside on mixed-use "plots" within a travelling showpeople "yard".

5.68 We are required to set pitch and plot targets for travellers which address their accommodation needs. We identify these needs by undertaking a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA),

which identifies how many additional permanent traveller pitches will have to be delivered during the plan period. The Council is currently updating its GTAA to reflect recent changes to national guidance set out in "Planning Policy for Traveller Sites" (2015) (PPTS). The most significant of these changes was to the planning definition of a "Gypsy" or "Traveller". Gypsies and Travellers who have stopped travelling permanently due to ill health or old age have now been removed from this definition. The changes also make it much more difficult for Gypsies and Travellers to get planning permission for pitches located in the Green Belt or open countryside. Given this, it is likely that the GTAA being prepared will identify a lower need for traveller accommodation in the District. However, the Council will still be required to address the accommodation needs of the gypsies and travellers that no longer meet the definition, known as "Caravan Dwellers". Caravan Dwellers are considered in Policy H1 above.

- 5.69 Our extant GTAA update (2014), prepared jointly with Oxford City Council and Vale of White Horse District Council identified a need for 19 additional permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches to be delivered to 2031. For the Travelling Show People community, the assessment identified that 5 plots are needed within the District during the same period.
- 5.70 This study also sought to identify appropriate sites for travellers. A number of the recommendations made were to intensify existing traveller sites, which the Council support. The study identified the greenfield neighbourhood at Didcot as a site with potential and the priority set out in Core Strategy Policy CSH5 to deliver a new site in this location has been carried forward in this plan at Pearith Farm, Didcot. The remaining sites recommended by the study as sites with potential or future potential have not been taken forward. This is because they are needed for infrastructure improvements, have been identified for a different use in a Neighbourhood Development Plan, are in the Green Belt or have been identified as potential waste management sites.
- 5.71 Policy H16 above, therefore, allocates the remaining provision of new traveller sites to our strategic sites at Chalgrove and Culham where the needs of the travellers can be considered at the outset of the design process and properly integrated into the design of the development.
- 5.72 We will continue to monitor the need for and supply of Traveller pitches and plots within the District.

Infill development

Policy H18 – Infill Development

Proposals for housing on sites within the built-up areas of the towns and villages will be permitted provided that:

- i) An important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view spoilt**
- ii) If the proposal constitutes backland development, it would not create problems of privacy and access and would not extend the built limits of the settlement**
- iii) It does not conflict with other policies in the Development plan.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 2, 4, 5 & 6.

5.73 Sites for housing development which are not specifically identified in either this Local Plan or, where applicable, Neighbourhood Development Plans, may also come forward for development within the plan period. Indeed, such sites represent an important source of housing supply. Policy H18 addresses this type of development. It sets out the criteria against which such housing proposals will be judged.

5.74 The policy does not mean that every space within the settlements will be developed. Many open spaces, both public and private, are important for recreational, wildlife or amenity reasons or are vital to an area's character, and proposals for the development of such spaces will be resisted. Care will be taken to ensure that the cumulative effects of development would not damage the character and amenity of the surrounding area. Some residential areas have large houses set in extensive grounds and further residential development of such spaces will not normally be permitted if it would spoil the spacious character of the area. In appropriate locations the Council will encourage higher-density development and will seek innovative design solutions to ensure that adequate space and privacy levels are achieved. The Council will also ensure that development can have an adequate access, be serviced by other infrastructure and would not cause problems to neighbours.

5.75 The development of large back gardens or land behind an existing residential frontage may be acceptable in principle if it meets the criteria in the above policy. However, such development will not normally be permitted if it creates problems of privacy and access.

Subdivision of Dwellings and Multiple Occupation

Policy H19 - Sub-division and Conversion to Multiple Occupation

The sub-division of dwellings and conversions to multiple occupation will be permitted provided that the development:

- i) Would not harm the amenity of the occupants of nearby properties**
- ii) Is appropriate in terms of the size of the property and the proposed internal layout, access, private amenity space and car parking provision**
- iii) Would not adversely affect the character of the building or the surrounding residential area; and**
- iv) Would not result in environmental or highway objections.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 2, 4, 5 & 6.

5.76 The sub-division of larger properties into flats can add to the stock of smaller and less expensive dwellings, more of which will be required over the coming decade to accommodate the growth in smaller households. Houses in multiple occupation have a number of residents living in them as separate households and they provide a useful and relatively affordable form of accommodation for single people. However, subdivision and conversion to multiple occupation will not be permitted if it would result in access problems, over development, lack of garden space, lack of car parking space and a general alteration to the character of the property and the residential character of the area, either on its own or cumulatively. The introduction of large areas of hard surfaces for car parking in gardens will be resisted where it would be detrimental to the character of the area.

Replacement Dwellings

Policy H20 – Replacement Dwellings

Proposals for the replacement of an existing dwelling located outside the built-up limits of settlements will be permitted provided that:

- i) The residential use of the existing dwelling has not been abandoned**
- ii) The existing dwelling is permanent and is not the result of a temporary permission**
- iii) Where the dwelling is listed, or of historic, visual or architectural merit or interest, repair and restoration is to be fully explored before replacement is entertained**
- iv) Within the Green Belt the proposed replacement dwelling is not materially larger than the original* dwelling**
- v) The proposed replacement dwelling is in accordance with the relevant policies of the adopted development plan including in relation to providing high quality and inclusive design, SuDS, protected species, local landscape features and protects the amenity of occupants of nearby properties; and**
- vi) The proposal can demonstrate that satisfactory vehicular access and parking arrangements and adequate amenity areas are retained for the replacement dwelling.**

***"Original" means the volume as existing on July 1st 1948, or if constructed after that date, as originally built. Garages and outbuildings will not be included in this calculation.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

5.77 A replacement dwelling will normally only be permitted in accordance with the criteria in the above policy. In the case of listed buildings, where we have a duty to ensure their protection and maintenance, the restoration of the original building is the prime objective. Other non-listed but attractive buildings should be retained and restored wherever possible because of the contribution they make to the character of the District.

5.78 We are mindful of the need to retain the District's stock of smaller and less expensive dwellings to help offset the demand created by the trend towards smaller households.

- 5.79 In the Green Belt, replacement dwellings should not be materially larger than the dwellings they replace. We will, therefore, normally only grant planning permission for the replacement of dwellings within the Green Belt which are not materially greater in volume than the original dwelling, taking into account any permitted development rights which remain unused. Not materially greater in volume means that, in addition to any unused permitted development rights, an increase of up to, but no more than, 10 percent in volume may be acceptable provided that the overall impact would not be any greater than the existing dwelling on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area. Where the existing dwelling has garage accommodation which is to be demolished, applications for the replacement dwelling should also include replacement garage accommodation or the volume of the replacement dwelling should be reduced commensurately.
- 5.80 Where planning permission is granted for a replacement dwelling with a volume which is inclusive of permitted development rights, we will impose a condition removing permitted development rights for extensions/additions to the new house. Where applications are submitted to extend replacement dwellings, we will take into account the size of the original dwelling. In all cases, we will seek to ensure that the new dwelling does not have a greater impact on the character of the site and its surroundings than the existing dwelling due to its scale, size, form or materials used. In the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, we will ensure that any proposals for replacement dwellings conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.

Extensions to Dwellings

Policy H21 – Extensions to Dwellings

Extensions to dwellings or the erection and extension of ancillary buildings within the curtilage of a dwelling, will be permitted provided that:

- i) In the Green Belt, outside the limits of the larger and smaller villages the proposed extension or alteration does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original* dwelling or ancillary building**
- ii) Adequate and satisfactory parking and amenity areas are provided for the extended dwelling, and the proposal does not conflict with other policies in the Development Plan.**

***"Original" means the volume as existing on July 1st 1948, or if constructed after that date, as originally built. Garages and outbuildings will not be included in this calculation.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

5.81 Planning permission is not always required for house extensions but where it is needed the above policy will apply. Householders contemplating alterations or extensions to their home should check with the Council to see whether planning permission is required and have regard to the Council's Design Guide.

Accommodation in town centres

Policy H22 – Loss of Existing Residential Accommodation in Town Centres

The loss of existing residential accommodation in the town centres will not be permitted other than in accordance with the relevant policies of this plan, except in cases of upper floor accommodation where an independent access does not exist and cannot be provided, or in cases where there are insurmountable environmental factors which militate against continued residential use. The loss of private gardens, which could affect the residential amenity of the occupants of existing dwellings will also be resisted.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

- 5.82 It is particularly important to retain residential accommodation in the town centres to maintain a balance between uses and to allow easy access to services. The Council will allow a change of use in the exceptional circumstances described in the policy. With regard to environmental factors, however, there will be few locations in the four South Oxfordshire towns where noise, fumes or other forms of nuisance will be such as to render premises unsuitable for living accommodation. The Council will be guided in this matter by advice from its environmental health service. The amenity afforded by a private garden is often an important factor in keeping town centre flats and houses in residential use. The Council will, therefore, resist development that would destroy such gardens.



6 EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY

Introduction

- 6.1 South Oxfordshire is predominantly a prosperous and attractive District in which to live and work. A sustainable society requires that people have a place to work and a place to live within a healthy community in a good environment. This plan seeks to ensure that the right balance is maintained between economic, social and environmental factors in order to achieve sustainable development.
- 6.2 Oxfordshire has one of the most substantial, distinctive and important clusters of research-based, high-value businesses in Europe, including scientific research and development, higher education, health, car manufacture and motorsports, and publishing. Oxfordshire is uniquely placed with sectors poised for growth including medicine and life sciences (bio-technology for example), advanced engineering (cryogenics, space, advanced materials), information technology and publishing and, environmental technologies⁷.
- 6.3 South Oxfordshire lies within the economically buoyant Thames Valley area between Oxford and Reading, with a proliferation of important high technology, science and research industries. The western part of the District lies within "Science Vale", the location of a particularly high density of science and high-technology activities centred around Harwell Oxford, Culham Science Centre and Milton Park (one of Europe's largest business parks) and containing both the Science Vale Oxford and Didcot Growth Accelerator Enterprise Zones.
- 6.4 The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) published a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) in March 2014 setting out an ambition for accelerated economic growth for Oxfordshire. The plan seeks to meet the needs of our science and knowledge-rich economy, placing Oxfordshire at the forefront of the UK's global growth ambitions. In January 2014 the "Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal" was made between the Government, Oxfordshire County Council, the local authorities in Oxfordshire, University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University, and OxLEP on what the region will do to support economic growth. The City Deal advises that despite a wealth of assets in the area, Oxford City and Oxfordshire have underperformed, not reaching their full potential when compared with other internationally renowned areas around world-class universities. City Deal partners are committed to dealing with these issues as a priority in the SEP and Local Growth Deal bid, and to bring together

⁷ Oxfordshire Skills Strategy to 2020: Building a responsive skills support system

For many SMEs, the quality of life and work/life balance represents the key reason for locating and operating within the District

local resources to make investment where it is needed to create the right conditions to develop, grow and retain dynamic businesses.

- 6.5 The four towns are the main employment centres. The rural areas are characterised by a large number of small firms and some major international research institutions. The largest employment centre outside the towns is Culham Science Centre which specialises in fusion research and hosts related enterprises. Monument Business Park at Chalgrove provides an important range of business and premises. There is also an important cluster of environmental science companies and research institutions in Crowmarsh Gifford and Wallingford.
- 6.6 South Oxfordshire has a higher than average number of economically active people at 89.5% compared with a national average of 77.8% as of December 2015. The number of economically active people increased from 71,500 in January 2011 to 79,000 in December 2015. Unemployment fell from 4.1% to 2.4% over the same period⁸. The Council will continue to encourage and support the local economy and develop a balance between jobs and housing.
- 6.7 The majority of workers employed in South Oxfordshire are employed in the service industries, a third of which are within financial and other business services, which is above the national average. The second largest sector is Public Administration, Education and Health. South Oxfordshire has a slightly higher than average number of micro-businesses that employ up to 9 people.
- 6.8 South Oxfordshire has a higher than average number of people employed at Manager, Directors or Senior Officials level. South Oxfordshire's residents are highly-qualified, again above the national average.
- 6.9 Employers take a very positive view of South Oxfordshire as a place to do business. Key strengths highlighted by employers include its central geographic location bringing them in close proximity to customers, suppliers and other businesses alongside good transport links and the fact that it is a thriving and prosperous area⁹. For many SMEs, the quality of life and work/life balance represents the key reason for locating and operating within the District¹⁰.
- 6.10 In 2015 the income of residents living in the District is higher than people working within the District. This means that people living within the District are earning higher incomes by commuting to work outside of the District, mostly in the surrounding areas of Science Vale, Reading and Oxford and also by commuting to London. This situation implies that the area suffers from a leakage of highly skilled residents to employment elsewhere.

⁸ ONS annual population survey (numbers are for those aged 16 and over, % are for those of aged 16-64)

⁹ Oxfordshire Employers Skills Study 2010, Oxfordshire Economic Partnership

¹⁰ Draft SME Business and Innovation Strategy 2017 (NLP)

Economic Forecasts

- 6.11 South Oxfordshire's Employment Land Review (ELR) published in 2015 reports that within South Oxfordshire employment land comprised approximately:
- 40.7 hectares (234,100m²) of gross office floorspace (use class B1a), and
 - 265.1 hectares of gross industrial land
 - Approximately a third of this industrial land is light industrial type (B1c) or general industrial (B2), with the majority characterised by warehousing and distribution use (B8).
- 6.12 The 2015 ELR makes recommendations for the potential locations and approximate amounts of office, research and development (B1a/b) space:
- Culham (Cluster C1): 3.3 hectares (19,000m²)
 - Central Didcot (Cluster C2-C4): 2.6 hectares (15,000m²)
 - Monument Business Park - Chalgrove (Cluster C9): 0.7 hectares (4,000m²)
 - With a remainder of 0.3 hectares (2,000 m²) met in the town centres of Henley-on-Thames, Wallingford (including Crowmarsh Gifford) and Thame.
- 6.13 The 2015 ELR also makes recommendations for the potential locations and approximate amounts industrial land (B1c/B2/B8):
- Crowmarsh Industrial Cluster (Cluster C7): 2.5 hectares
 - Culham (Cluster C1): Approximately 1.3 hectares
 - Hithercroft Industrial Estate - Wallingford (Cluster C6): 1.9 hectares
 - London Road Industrial Estate - Wheatley (Cluster C16): 0.4 hectares
 - Monument Business Park - Chalgrove (Cluster C9): 2.5 hectares
 - Southmead Industrial Estate - Didcot (Cluster C3): 2.9 hectares
 - Thame Industrial Cluster (Cluster C11): 1.6 hectares
 - With a remainder of 6.3 hectares provided at new sites at the four main towns.

Strategy

- 6.14 We aim to ensure that residents have the opportunity to find skilled, higher paid jobs within the District, ensure that we retain and provide a skilled workforce and that there are more opportunities for people to work locally. We wish to continue to support the development of the high-tech economy and support sustainable economic growth through supporting new business formation, supporting existing businesses and welcoming new companies into the District. We aim to give people the opportunity to work at or nearer their home and reduce long distance out-commuting. We aim to support the provision of jobs for the increased population of the District and flexible

business space that fulfils demand. We will encourage key economic sectors that can add value to the local economy, along with support for existing businesses and education providers.

- 6.15 We aim to support employment development by planning new housing close to employment development and by working with partners to improve skills and economic activity amongst residents. We recognise that a wider economic strategy will deal with other aspects of this aim. Flexibility is key to respond to changing economic circumstances by having enough land available that is capable of being developed and well-served by infrastructure. We also need to make sure that there are a variety of sites for large and small businesses, for innovation and for skills development, all of which links to the knowledge-based economy.
- 6.16 Our strategy makes a strong link between the housing growth in Didcot and the business growth needs of Science Vale, including at Harwell Oxford¹¹ and Milton Park outside the District (within Vale of White Horse District). The Council has worked with the Vale of White Horse District Council to plan for enough B-class jobs to cater for Didcot's increased population. Core Policy 6 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 (adopted) identifies 218 hectares of land for future employment development across the Vale of White Horse District. 28 hectares of employment land are allocated at Milton Park within the Vale, of which 6.5 hectares is to meet the cross boundary employment land needs of Didcot within South Oxfordshire.
- 6.17 Our support of developments at the Culham Science Centre will present opportunities for significantly more employment through the provision of permanent buildings and intensification of uses. However, we recognise that there may be the need for redevelopment of some buildings for industries that tend to provide a lower density of employment.
- 6.18 As part of our development aspirations adjacent to the Culham Science Centre we are planning for the redevelopment of the "number one" site between the Culham Science Centre and the railway station. We expect the 10 hectares of employment land there to be retained, although not necessarily in its current configuration, and for opportunities to increase the overall amount of employment land to be explored.
- 6.19 We are in the process of reviewing our employment land requirements. Our current data does not forecast future need across the whole plan period and we are also updating our monitoring of gains and losses of employment land since 2011. The policy below reflects what our data is telling us now, and will be updated prior to the next stage of the Local Plan.

¹¹ Harwell Oxford formerly known as Harwell Science and Innovation Centre

6.20 The following significant sites have been developed since 2011:

Table 6a: Significant employment site development since 2011

Location	Net amount of land
Site B, allocated in the Thames Neighbourhood Development Plan 2013	Scheme delivering 4.6 hectares of employment land on a site of 6.9 hectares
Allocated sites at Wallingford (Hithercroft Industrial Estate)	1 hectare
Land at Howbery Park, Crowmarsh Gifford	0.3 hectares
Total	5.9 hectares

Policy EMP1: The amount and distribution of new B-class employment land

To facilitate the provision of additional B-class jobs, between 2011 and 2033, the equivalent of at least 30 hectares of B-class employment land will be provided at the following locations:

Location	Net amount of land (hectares)	
Didcot	Southmead Industrial Estate (safeguarded sites)	3.04
	Within Vale of White Horse District	6.50
Henley	Sites to be identified in the NDP	1.00
Thames	Sites to be identified in the NDP	2.00
Wallingford	Hithercroft Industrial Estate (safeguarded sites)	2.82
	Sites to be identified in the NDP (Likely to be at the Hithercroft Industrial Estate)	3.10
Crowmarsh Gifford	Sites at Howbery Park	2.50
Culham	Culham Science Centre (safeguarded sites, redevelopment and intensification to provide equivalent of 5.3 hectares)	5.30
	Land west of Culham Science Centre (additional to the retention of 10 hectares of existing employment land)	2.00
Chalgrove	Sites to be identified in the NDP (Likely to be sites at Monument Business Park)	2.25
	Airfield development	5.00
Berinsfield	To be allocated in accordance with the regeneration strategy	
Total	35.51	

The table above includes commitments (safeguarded sites) in the case of allocations secured in the Core Strategy.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 3 & 6.

Types of employment premises

6.22 In order to meet the diverse need for employment across South Oxfordshire the Council will encourage a range of premises within any proposals for employment development.

Policy EMP2: Range, Size and Mix of Employment Premises

Proposals for employment use should provide a range and size of premises including flexible business space to meet current and future requirements. We will encourage proposals for premises suitable for small and medium sized businesses, including start-up/incubator businesses (up to 150m²) and grow-on space (up to 500m²). Proposals for employment uses will be considered against this criteria.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 3 & 6.

6.23 South Oxfordshire District Council in partnership with the Vale of White Horse District Council commissioned consultants NLP to prepare a Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SME) Business and Innovation Strategy (2017). The strategy highlights the importance of SMEs in South Oxfordshire and highlighted the difficulties these firms are experiencing in finding suitable premises.

6.24 To promote a balanced local economy, we need to ensure that a range of size and types of premises is available. We will seek to widen the variety of premises, to include more modern and flexible business space. We need enough space for small and medium sized businesses, including start-up/incubator businesses (up to 150m²) and grow-on space (up to 500m²), and we will look for opportunities to provide this. Whether units are suitable for start-up/incubator businesses will depend partly on management arrangements and lease terms that are beyond our control, however we will do all we can to assist in this regard.

Retention of Employment Sites

Policy EMP3: Retention of Employment Land

Employment land will be retained in order to promote and grow a balanced, sustainable economy and local services. Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of employment land to non-employment uses will be permitted if all of the following criteria are met:

- **The existing employment land use causes detrimental effects to the amenity of the nearby area – particularly where residential uses are adversely affected**
- **There is evidenced to be no market interest in the site following one year of active and effective marketing**
- **The change of use from employment uses will not lower the employment capacity of the District below that estimated to be necessary to meet projected need.**

Through the monitoring of employment land gains and losses the Council will record, and publish in our monitoring report, how much land we continue to need to meet the projected employment land requirements in the District. We will use this information to help determine planning applications.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 3 & 6.

6.25 To support sustainable economic growth, meet the development needs of business and the anticipated needs over the plan period and to ensure that sufficient land of the right type is available the Council will seek to ensure that employment land is not lost during economic fluctuations. The Council will seek to ensure that employment land is only released for other uses where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. One of the main aims of this Local Plan and national planning policy is to reduce the need to travel and thus minimise pollution, congestion, energy use and support local communities. The provision and retention of local employment opportunities supports this aim.

6.26 It is important that local employment sites are retained to maintain a reasonable balance of employment and housing uses within settlements. This affords the residents of the villages, towns and surrounding areas the opportunity to find work locally. This need is particularly strong as many

employment sites have been redeveloped for housing in recent years. Local employment plays an important role in supporting local services and facilities and supporting sustainable communities.

- 6.27 The District is an area of economic growth and demand for premises is usually high. However, we accept that there could be instances where the continued use of a site for employment may not be economically viable. In such circumstances, and before any planning permission for alternative, non-employment uses is granted, we will require evidence that the site has been marketed at a realistic price for at least one year. We are likely to take advice from property consultants about the evidence submitted and prevailing market conditions. The Council has a guidance note that demonstrates the sorts of marketing that we believe necessary to meet the above criterion for market interest evidence. In the event that any employment use is demonstrably economically not viable, we may require that a range or mix of alternative uses is explored and the policies in this Plan on other uses will apply.

The Four Towns

- 6.28 The Employment Land Review (ELR) published in September 2015 identifies that at the time of the review, there was approximately 215,000m² of gross office floorspace in South Oxfordshire and that Henley is the most predominant office location in the District.
- 6.29 We do not propose to provide additional employment land at Henley as there is scope to intensify uses on existing sites.

Policy EMP4 - Employment Land in Didcot

In addition to employment opportunities generated through the Didcot Garden Town masterplan and the strategic allocations in this plan, at least 3.04 hectares of employment land will be delivered at Didcot at the following sites currently allocated in the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, located within Southmead Industrial Estate:

- **Site EMP4i: Southmead Industrial Estate East**
- **Site EMP4ii: Southmead Industrial Estate West**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 3 & 6.

Policy EMP5 - New Employment Land at Henley

At least 1 hectare of employment land will be delivered at Henley. This will be delivered through the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Development Plan must be submitted to the Council within 12 months of adoption of this local plan. If the Neighbourhood Development Plan is not adequately progressed in this time the local planning authority will allocate site(s) through a review of the local plan.

Schemes that improve the stock of existing commercial buildings and the environment of existing employment areas will be supported.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 3 & 6.

Policy EMP6 – New Employment Land at Thame

In addition to allocations in the made Thame Neighbourhood Development Plan, an additional 2 hectares of employment land will be delivered at Thame. These will be delivered through a review of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The review of the Neighbourhood Development Plan must be submitted to the Council within 12 months of adoption of this local plan. If the Neighbourhood Development Plan is not adequately progressed in this time the local planning authority will allocate sites through a review of the local plan.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 3 & 6.

- 6.30 Whilst levels of employment are high in Thame, some employment sites need upgrading, specifically Thame Industrial Estate, the depot and works on Rycote Lane, Station Yard and at the industrial site on Aylesbury Road. In addition, this local plan provides for a further 2 hectares of employment land to be provided in Thame, to be allocated in the review of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Policy EMP7 – New Employment Land at Wallingford

At least 2.82 hectares of employment land will be delivered at Wallingford at the following sites currently allocated in the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, located within Hithercroft Industrial Estate:

- **Site EMP7i: former Elliott factory, Hithercroft Road**
- **Site EMP7ii: land at Lupton Road**
- **Site EMP7iii: land at Whitley Road**
- **Site EMP7iv: land at the junction of Whitley Road and Lester Road**

At least a further 3.10 hectares of employment land will be delivered at Wallingford through the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Development Plan must be submitted to the Council within 12 months of adoption of this local plan. If the Neighbourhood Development Plan is not adequately progressed in this time the local planning authority will allocate site(s) through a review of the local plan.

Schemes that improve the stock of existing commercial buildings and the environment of existing employment areas will be supported.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 3 & 6.

- 6.31 High-tech and science related industries are attracted to the District and this creates indirect demand for employment floorspace linked to Science Vale. This includes supply chain firms that seek to be close to but do not have to be within Science Vale. Wallingford/Crowmarsh Gifford is a key location for this type of demand with around a third of the overall South Oxfordshire industrial demand located in this area.

Employment Sites in the Villages

Policy EMP8 - New Employment Land at Crowmarsh Gifford

At least 2.5 hectares of employment land will be delivered at Crowmarsh Gifford at the following sites located within Howbery Park:

- **Site EMP8i: Howbery Park North**

- Site EMP8ii: Howbery Park Centre

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 3 & 6.

Policy EMP9 - Employment at Culham Science Centre

The redevelopment and intensification of Culham Science Centre for research and science based businesses will be supported. Proposals for redevelopment and the intensification of uses with the creation of about 1,000 new jobs (providing the equivalent of 5.3 hectares of new employment land) will be supported. We will work proactively with the site owners and existing businesses to develop an agreed masterplan that facilitates this growth.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 3 & 6.

Policy EMP10 - New Employment Land at Chalgrove

In addition to the strategic allocations a Chalgrove Airfield, at least 2.25 hectares of employment land will be delivered at Chalgrove (most likely to be through sites identified at Monument Business Park). This will be delivered through the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Development Plan must be submitted to the Council within 12 months of adoption of this local plan. If the Neighbourhood Development Plan is not adequately progressed in this time the local planning authority will allocate site(s) through a review of the local plan.

Schemes that improve the stock of existing commercial buildings and the environment of existing employment areas will be supported.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2, 3 & 6

¹² The Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire Estimates for 2014, Tourism South East Research Unit August 2015

Development in the Countryside and Rural Areas

Policy EMP11 - Development in the Countryside and Rural Areas

Proposals for sustainable economic growth in the countryside and rural areas will be supported. We will:

- **Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings**
- **Promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses**
- **Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This will include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and**
- **Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.**

This policy contributes towards objectives 1, 3, 4, 6 & 7.

Tourism and Visitors

6.32 Tourists and visitors make an important contribution to the economy and employment in Oxfordshire. In 2014 £1.56 billion was spent by visitors to Oxfordshire with a further £362.5 million of business turnover generated through indirect and induced spending (multiplier spend). This supported 23,197 FTE jobs and 32,089 actual jobs and accounted for 5.7% of all employee jobs across the County¹².

6.33 Tourism expenditure provides economic benefits to the rural areas, villages, towns of the District and assists with the viability of facilities and services that can also benefit residents. Tourists are attracted to South Oxfordshire by a

wide range of features, including the District's attractive countryside, the River Thames, the pretty villages and the historic market towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford.

Policy EMP12 - Tourism

Proposals that would result in the provision of new or extensions to existing tourist facilities will be permitted subject to there being no conflict with other policies in this Plan.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 3 & 6.

Tourist attractions and facilities

- 6.34 We will generally be sympathetic to proposals to improve existing tourist attractions and to the creation of new attractions which have regard to the character, landscape and heritage of the area. Examples include opening historic houses or gardens to the public, farm visits, museums, historic trails, interpretation plaques and interpretation centres.
- 6.35 Facilities which assist tourists by providing information or services, such as picnic areas, toilets, car parks and information points, can contribute to the enjoyment of a visit and will normally be permitted. We will ensure that such development is in keeping with the locality, both in terms of scale and design of any new building, and the level of activity and type of use. We will support schemes to improve existing signing for tourist attractions and facilities, where appropriate, if well designed and in keeping with the surrounding area. Applicants should refer to the "Tourism Signing in Oxfordshire" Application Pack produced by Oxfordshire County Council for guidance. Anyone wishing to erect a sign should seek advice from the District Council to see whether consent is required under the Advertisement Regulations and have regard to the relevant policies of this plan.

Serviced accommodation, public houses and restaurants

- 6.36 We will normally permit new hotels, including conference facilities and other serviced accommodation in the larger settlements outside the Green Belt. Extensions to existing premises will normally be permitted on sites outside the Green Belt. The conversion of suitable buildings to provide visitor accommodation will normally be permitted throughout the District, particularly

as this can provide a good way of retaining historically important buildings in a viable use.

- 6.37 Proposals for additional visitor accommodation should protect the amenity of the occupants of neighbouring properties and should not cause traffic congestion or disturbance. Proposals must be of high quality design in accordance with the adopted Design Guide and respect their surrounding environment. It is important that adequate off-street car parking is provided and that it is designed and landscaped to blend with its surroundings.
- 6.38 The use of existing homes to provide bed and breakfast is generally supported because it makes a valuable contribution to the local economy and provides for good value, short-stay visits. In many cases, the provision of some bed and breakfast accommodation may not require planning permission, however, the advice of the Council's officers should always be sought.
- 6.39 Proposals for tourist accommodation in the Green Belt will be considered against the relevant national policies and this plan.

Self-catering accommodation

- 6.40 In planning terms there is no difference between the use of a dwelling as a permanent home or as a holiday home unless conditions restricting the use of the property have been imposed on the planning permission. Purpose-built self-catering accommodation has a similar impact on the environment as new permanent homes and we will consider such proposals in the same way.
- 6.41 Where holiday accommodation is permitted, legal agreements may be used to ensure that the accommodation remains as holiday lets and permitted development rights may be withdrawn to protect the setting of the building.

Caravan and camping sites

Policy EMP13 - Caravan and camping sites

Touring caravan and camping sites will be permitted provided that:

- i) The proposed development has no adverse impact on the landscape, ecological or historic characteristics of the site and its surroundings**
- ii) The proposal is limited in scale and incorporates a comprehensive landscaping scheme and management that reinforces the visual,**

historic and ecological character of the site and its surroundings

- iii) The proposed development would not cause any detrimental impact on the amenity of adjacent occupiers or the quiet informal enjoyment of the open countryside**
- iv) Where appropriate, the site is accessible by public transport and provision is made for pedestrian and cycle links with adjacent areas**
- v) Where possible, associated facilities are sited in existing buildings. Where new buildings are essential these must be designed to a high standard and be sensitively sited, and**
- vi) Does not conflict with other policies in the Development Plan.**

Where permission is given, it will normally be subject to a condition restricting the use to holiday accommodation only and the site may also be made subject to a seasonal occupancy condition.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 3, 6 & 7.

- 6.42 The use of land for touring caravans and camping can assist in farm diversification and help sustain the provision of services in rural areas. Such sites can be visually intrusive, particularly in the open countryside, and usually require a number of permanent buildings, such as reception areas and toilet blocks. Where possible, associated facilities should be sited in existing buildings. We will take a cautious approach to the provision of caravan and camping sites. However, we recognise that with imagination and care it may be possible to design and locate new sites that are discreet and respect the landscape. Sites that present a negative impact on the landscape will not be permitted.
- 6.43 Proposals within the Green Belt will be considered in accordance with relevant national policies and this plan. Care will need to be taken to ensure that proposals do not adversely affect Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Conservation Areas. Sites should normally be located within walking distance of the main towns or larger villages which have a range of facilities and therefore reduce the need for visitors to travel. Adequate access to the site is particularly important where touring caravans are to be accommodated.
- 6.44 Caravan and camping sites will not be permitted in areas at highest risk from flooding. Where permission is granted for caravan and camping sites and flooding is an issue, planning conditions will be used to require the erection of suitable flood warning notices.

- 6.45 A comprehensive landscaping scheme and management plan is fundamental to ensure no detrimental impact on the surrounding landscape. Care should be taken with the boundary treatment to ensure effective screening.
- 6.46 Touring caravans are not suitable for permanent occupation and their use will be restricted to holiday accommodation only. Change of use for part or all of a touring caravan site, or an extension to a touring caravan site to a permanent residential caravan site, is unlikely to be acceptable given the additional impact on the environment and the need for additional services and facilities. To reduce the visual impact of new touring caravan and camping sites and to prevent them being used throughout the year, the site may be made subject to a seasonal occupancy condition.

Visitor Accommodation

- 6.47 Staying visitors are a particularly important element of the tourist economy. The retention of existing and the provision of new visitor accommodation are therefore of great importance in providing a range of accommodation types across economic groups and help to attract a mix of visitors.

Policy EMP14 - Visitor Accommodation

Development or change of use to form new visitor accommodation will be granted planning permission providing there are no unreasonable effects on the character of the area or on local amenity.

Development resulting in the loss of sites or premises used, or last used, as visitor accommodation will only be considered acceptable where it can be demonstrated that the:

- **Business is no longer viable and has no reasonable prospect of continuing and alternative businesses have been fully explored; and**
- **Loss of the visitor accommodation will not have an adverse impact on the tourism industry and the local community.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 3 & 6.

- 6.48 It is important to control the loss of visitor accommodation to prevent the threat to the quality, quantity and choice of accommodation on offer across the District and the resulting negative effects on the District's economy.

6.49 Viability evidence is required to be submitted as part of any proposal involving the loss of visitor accommodation. The information should be comprehensive and will often include detailed financial viability information, which may require the Council to seek specialist input to make an informed assessment. When assessing a proposal, consideration will be given to retaining and maintaining the direct economic benefit from income and employment generated for the District by visitor accommodation businesses and to maintain the indirect benefits through spending on goods and services.

6.50 Where a claim is made that the business is no longer viable, the Council must be satisfied that:

- The business has been run in a reasonable and professional manner by the proprietor
- There has been a serious and sustained effort to run a visitor accommodation business in the premises using available business support services
- The business has been actively market tested to potential purchasers of the business with a guide price reflecting the going concern value of the accommodation business (or its hotel/self-catering market value if not currently trading) normally for a minimum 18 months and that no reasonable offers have been received during this time. The guide price must reflect the potential earnings of the business and the cost of essential works
- Alternative visitor accommodation business models have been tried and discounted
- A forward business plan has been presented that shows the business is no longer viable. If the business has not operated recently, then a forward business plan must be presented with a clear demonstration that an attempt has been made to implement it
- Any previous tourism/visitor related planning approval has been given a reasonable time to become commercially established and any claims that these changes are no longer financially viable must show the relationship between the original business planning and the current situation. The Planning Authority will need to be satisfied that permitted enabling developments have supported the authorised provision of visitor accommodation.

6.51 Applicants should provide supporting information to demonstrate business activity for at least the last three years.



7 INFRASTRUCTURE

Introduction

- 7.1 Good connections and high quality infrastructure are essential to our quality of life. We need to travel to work, school, shops, leisure and health facilities. A thriving economy needs good connections to operate efficiently. These can range from the strategic road and rail network, to our ability to access the internet with the benefits that it can offer to work from home and provide services. Improving accessibility to services and employment is fundamental to sustainable development and to meeting the objectives of this plan. The challenge is to do this in a way that minimises the impact of the transport system on the environment and provides for necessary improvements in a cost-effective way.
- 7.2 Successful and sustainable communities depend upon physical, green and social and community infrastructure to meet the needs of residents and businesses. Infrastructure encompasses a very wide range of provision including transport, public utilities and waste management, flood management measures, social and community infrastructure such as affordable housing, health care facilities and sports provision, green infrastructure, culture, faith and spiritual facilities, education, leisure and tourism, and other community facilities ranging from community meeting halls to children's play areas.
- 7.3 It is important to appreciate that whilst there is a considerable degree of funding from governmental and other public sources, a significant amount of the money for provision of new or enhancement of existing infrastructure comes in the form of financial contributions from developers or in the form of payment in kind through direct provision of facilities or services.
- 7.4 To better understand the suitability of existing infrastructure provision and identify the infrastructure required to support the level of development proposed through the Local Plan, South Oxfordshire District Council commissioned an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), to form part of the Local Plan evidence base. The IDP is an important element of the evidence for the Local Plan and will help inform and underpin strategic policies for growth and development. A stage 1 report has been published to support this version of the Local Plan and this will be updated at the next stage of the Local Plan.
- 7.5 The location of all forms of development can be a key factor in influencing where and how we travel and reducing the need to travel and enabling

Successful and sustainable communities and new developments depend on suitable physical and social infrastructure being in place to meet the needs of their residents

sustainable travel options. The principles in this transport strategy have a key influence on the other elements of the plan. For example, accessibility to services and facilities and the availability of high quality, frequent and reliable public transport are key features for a strong network of settlements and the overall distribution of new housing and employment land.

- 7.6 This strategy contributes towards our vision and objectives which seek to build on opportunities for sustainable travel. However, we recognise that the rural nature of the District means that many residents will be dependent on car travel for some or all their journeys. The strategy has been informed by and is consistent with Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan, which sets the transport policies and provides transport strategies for the county to 2031. Improving travel choice in rural areas is to be encouraged, while accepting that there is unlikely to be a single model for delivering the flexible and responsive transport services required to meet the diverse needs of rural communities.

Infrastructure provision

- 7.8 Successful and sustainable communities and new developments depend on suitable physical and social infrastructure being in place to meet the needs of their residents. These needs include transport, utilities and waste, social infrastructure, environmental and green infrastructure, cultural, education, leisure, faith and community facilities. The level and type of infrastructure can range from major investments such as new schools, to support for community transport schemes.
- 7.9 The need for and importance of providing adequate, appropriate and timely infrastructure is a strong message that comes from local residents during consultations, who are often concerned that the necessary infrastructure is not provided, or not provided quickly enough.
- 7.10 To maintain and provide infrastructure and other community services effectively, it is essential that there is partnership working approach between the public, private and voluntary sector agencies involved. We will continue to work closely with a wide range of infrastructure providers and stakeholders. Key organisations include Oxfordshire County Council, the Highways Agency, the NHS and Clinical Commissioning Group, Town and Parish Councils, Thames Water and the Environment Agency.



Policy INF1 – Infrastructure Provision

New development must be served and supported by appropriate on-site and off-site infrastructure and services.

Planning permission will be granted for developments where the infrastructure and services needed to meet the needs of the new development is already in place or will be provided to an agreed timescale. Infrastructure includes the requirements set out in Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, any relevant made Neighbourhood Development Plans, and/or infrastructure needed to mitigate the impact of the new development. The provision of infrastructure will be required to an agreed timescale.

Infrastructure and services, required as a consequence of development and provision for their maintenance will be sought from developers, and secured through the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), planning obligations, conditions attached to a planning permission, and/or other agreement, levy or undertaking. Details of required infrastructure and services are to be agreed before planning permission is granted.

New development should provide community benefits where this is appropriate and necessary. Types of community benefit could include improving skills levels of residents, the use of local labour in construction, promoting access to the jobs the development creates, and/or the provision of skills training related to the type of new development, for residents living within South Oxfordshire through a community employment plan.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 4, & 6.

Transport

Strategic Transport Infrastructure

- 7.11 As the Highway Authority, Oxfordshire County Council manages and maintains the local road network and prepares a countywide Local Transport Plan which sets out policies and strategies for developing the transport system across the county. Highways England is the government company charged with operating, maintaining and improving England's motorways and major A roads, including the M40 and A34. Network Rail own the railway network, with train operating companies such as Great Western Railway, along with other public transport operators, providing sustainable transport choices across the District.
- 7.12 We work with our partners including neighbouring authorities, Highways England and the National Infrastructure Commission to reflect, support and enable the implementation of transport objectives through land-use policies and proposals.
- 7.13 All development influences travel patterns either through new trips on the network or the re-routing of existing trips. The main requirements of national policy relating to transport are to reduce the need to travel, promote more sustainable modes of transport and improve accessibility. The location of all forms of development is therefore very important.



Policy TRANS1 – Supporting Strategic Transport Investment

The Council will work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to:

- i) Deliver the transport infrastructure which improves movement in and around Didcot, including measures that help support delivery of the Didcot Garden Town**
- ii) Support measures identified in the Local Transport Plan for the District including within the relevant area strategies**
- iii) Support delivery of the safeguarded transport improvements as required to help deliver the development required in this plan period and beyond**
- iv) Ensure that the impacts of new development on the strategic and local road network, including the A34 and M40, are adequately mitigated**
- v) Plan for improvements in the Reading area, including a proposal for a new River Thames crossing which provides demonstrable benefits for South Oxfordshire and which ensures that any traffic and environmental impacts of those measures do not result in an adverse impact**
- vi) Understand the impacts and implications of the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway proposals**
- v) Support the development and delivery of a new Thames road crossing between Culham and Didcot Garden Town.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 4, & 6.

7.14 To enable delivery of transport network improvements required to bring forward new development, there will be a need for on-going positive engagement with infrastructure providers throughout the plan period. Oxfordshire County Council have recently published their Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP 4), and it will be important that, as far as possible, the Local Plan supports delivery of identified to improve highway and public transport networks. The LTP4 also supports promotion of sustainable travel, particularly within more built-up areas such as Didcot. New development can help fund and enable the provision of new public transport, walking and cycle links between homes, jobs, shops and other facilities such as centres of health. Over a wider cross boundary area, development and supporting infrastructure also need to be appropriately planned for as identified in the relevant Infrastructure Delivery Plans. In particular, we recognise the ambition of neighbouring authorities for additional connections across the River Thames and the potential for park and ride options into Reading.

7.15 Road and rail connections within and through South Oxfordshire are currently experiencing significant growth in demand because of strong economic growth. This is set to continue as new homes and jobs come forward in the District and the surrounding areas. Significant new investment is already taking place, such as upgrades to junctions on the A34 Trunk Road, and electrification of the West Coast Mainline. However current studies being undertaken by Network Rail and Highways England indicate that these will only cater for part of the forecast increase in demand for travel. Further options for road and rail investment are therefore being studied in more detail, including the recently announced funds for detailed feasibility work to consider the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway options. The Council will need to continue to engage with others to explore and plan for both the economic benefits and environmental impacts of these proposals¹³.

Policy TRANS2: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility:

The Council will work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to:

- i) Ensure that where new development is located close to, or along, existing strategic public transport corridors, bus and/or rail services can be strengthened in response to increases in demand for travel**
- ii) Plan positively for rail improvements within the area that support improved connectivity to areas of new development**
- iii) Ensure new development is designed to encourage walking and cycling, not only within the development, but also to nearby facilities, employment and public transport hubs**
- iv) Support provision of measures which improve public transport (including Park & Ride), cycling and walking networks within and between towns and villages in the District**
- v) Promote and support improvements to the transport network which increase safety, improve air quality, encourage use of sustainable modes of transport and/or make our towns and villages more attractive**
- vi) Adopt a comprehensive approach to the provision and management of car parking aimed at improving the attraction of our town and village centres**
- vii) Ensure the needs of all users, including those with impaired mobility are planned for in development of transport improvements.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 4, & 6.

¹³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/oxford-to-cambridge-expressway-strategic-study-stage-3-report and www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-statement-2016-documents



7.16 It is recognised that new development can have both a positive role in improving and funding sustainable transport network connections, and also through the provision of good urban design to encourage walking and cycling from new development to shops, schools and other facilities. This will be particularly important in significant growth areas including Didcot Garden Town, where we will work with the Vale of White Horse District Council, to ensure that plans for cross border development and infrastructure are co-ordinated appropriately. In Neighbourhood Development Plan areas, it will be important to ensure that sustainable transport movements are incorporated into Neighbourhood Development Plans. These improvements will also need to be complimented by relevant and reasonable upgrades to surrounding highway networks to mitigate impacts of development. The provision and management of car parks will be key given that within a rural District such as South Oxfordshire the car will continue to play a key role in providing transport accessibility for many.

7.17 To enable further delivery of key transport infrastructure that will support development within the plan, there is a need to safeguard land to ensure that any proposals for development do not prejudice their future delivery. The final schemes proposed to be safeguarded will be informed by the final transport evidence base which will support the next stage of consultation on the Local Plan.

The provision and management of car parks will be key given that within a rural District such as South Oxfordshire the car will continue to play a key role in providing transport accessibility for many

Policy TRANS 3 Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes

Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of the following identified transport schemes:

- Clifton Hampden bypass
- Culham to Didcot Thames River Crossing
- Didcot Northern Perimeter Road
- Science Bridge, Didcot
- (A4130/ B4493) Didcot Central transport corridor improvements
- A4130 road safety improvements
- A bypass for Stadhampton
- A bypass for Watlington
- A bypass for Benson
- A bypass for Southern Abingdon
- A new Park and Ride site at Sandford to the south-east of Oxford.

New development in these areas should be carefully designed having regard to matters such as building layout, noise insulation, landscaping, the historic environment and means of access.

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to impact upon the delivery of the identified schemes should demonstrate the proposal would not harm their delivery.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the transport schemes listed above.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 4, 6, 7 & 8.

¹⁴ South Oxfordshire Local Plan Preferred Options 2: Evaluation of Transport Impacts, Stage 1 (www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-studies)

¹⁵ www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/ltp4-area-strategies

7.18 Transport infrastructure improvements will be required to support the demand for travel arising from proposed new development, and the need for new measures will be informed by transport evidence which supports the Local Plan growth strategy. The District Council therefore continues to work with partners, including the County Council, to assess requirements through use of transport modelling tools and assessment of sustainable transport improvements. The evidence developed to date has identified the benefits of delivering a number of key highway infrastructure schemes, as well as several sustainable transport improvements¹⁴. This, in turn, builds on priorities identified in the Local Transport Plan 4 Science Vale Area Transport Strategy¹⁵.

- 7.19 Plans which illustrate the extent of the safeguarded transport schemes identified in Policy TRANS3 are shown in Appendix 5.

Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans

- 7.20 As new development comes forward, there will be a need to look in more detail at the specific transport and access impacts associated with individual sites. Where such developments would generate significant amounts of travel, there will be need for a transport assessment for the site. The determination of whether significant amounts of travel are generated will be dealt with on a case by case basis. This will need to review both the transport implications of development, as well as appropriate mitigation. Especially important will be promotion of measures that enable sustainable transport choices, and where relevant a travel plan will be required to demonstrate how such measures will be delivered.
- 7.21 The scoping of transport assessments should be done in agreement with the County Council as highway authority, and be in line with latest County and Planning Practice Guidance¹⁶. It is also important that developers take account of requirements for infrastructure in the area as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which will be reviewed and updated as required. In scoping of transport impacts, there will also need to be consideration of the development site location, recognising that in more rural areas the opportunity for take up of sustainable transport choices may be less, and that more innovative measures may be needed.



¹⁶ <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

Policy TRANS4 - Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans

Proposals for new developments which have transport implications that either arise from the development proposed or cumulatively with other proposals will need to submit a transport assessment or a transport statement, and where relevant a Travel Plan. These documents will need to take into account Oxfordshire County Council and Planning Practice Guidance¹⁷. Appropriate provision for works and/or contributions will be required towards providing an adequate level of accessibility by all modes of transport and mitigating the impacts on the transport network.

The transport assessment or transport statement should, where relevant:

- i) Illustrate accessibility to the site by all modes of transport**
- ii) Show the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site**
- iii) Detail the proposed measures to improve access by public transport, cycling and walking to reduce the need for parking and reduce transport impacts**
- iv) Illustrate the impact on the highway network and the impact of proposed mitigation measures where necessary**
- v) Include a travel plan where appropriate; and**
- vi) Outline the approach to parking provision.**

In accordance with the guidance, travel plans will be required, implemented and monitored:

- i) For all major developments comprising residential, employment, shopping or leisure uses or services; and**
- ii) For other small developments comprising residential, employment, shopping, leisure, or education facilities which would generate significant amounts of travel.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 4, & 6.

¹⁷ www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/travel-plans-statements-and-advice and www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-plans-transport-assessments-and-statements

7.23 In planning for new development, there are several key considerations in relation to transport access and movement that need to be accommodated at both the design and delivery stage. For most new development, this will be looked at as part of the transport assessment, and where relevant a site travel plan. Transport also needs careful consideration as part of the wider master

planning and site design development. Promotion of sustainable transport access and provision of facilities on-site will also need to take account of wider environmental impacts and issues such as air quality, particularly where Air Quality Management Areas are in place.

Policy TRANS5 - Consideration of development proposals

Proposals for all types of development will, where appropriate:

- i) Provide for a safe and convenient access for all users to the highway network**
- ii) Provide safe and convenient routes for cyclists and pedestrians**
- iii) Be accessible by public transport and have a safe walking route to nearby bus stops or new bus stops**
- iv) Provide for appropriate public transport infrastructure**
- v) Be served by an adequate road network which can accommodate traffic without creating traffic hazards or damage to the environment**
- vi) Where new roads, pedestrian routes, cycleways and street lighting are to be constructed as part of the development, they should be constructed to adoptable standards and be completed as soon as they are required to serve the development; and**
- vii) Make adequate provision for those whose mobility is impaired.**

Proposals for development will also, where appropriate, make provision for:

- viii) Loading, unloading, circulation and turning space**
- ix) The servicing of properties by refuse vehicles**
- x) Parking for people with disabilities**
- xi) The parking of vehicles in accordance with the County Council parking standards, unless specific evidence is provided to justify otherwise**
- xii) Facilities to support the take up of electric and/ or low-emission vehicles, particularly where air quality issues in the area have been identified; and**
- xiii) Covered, secure and safe cycle parking, complemented by other facilities to support cycling where relevant.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 4, 6 & 8.

7.24 Demand for use of rail services is growing strongly, and there are plans to significantly improve rail services operating to and through South Oxfordshire¹⁸. In the short-term, there is a focus on enhancing rail services to Didcot, complemented by measures to expand the station and improve access by car, bus, walking and cycling. Any upgrades in this area will need to take account of proposals developed as part of Didcot Garden Town. In the longer-term there is likely to be a need for upgrades at Culham and other smaller stations in association with significant infrastructure investment and to serve new areas of homes and jobs. There will be a need to ensure that such improvements are delivered in a way that do not significantly impact on the environment or surrounding residential areas.

Policy TRANS6 - Rail

Where required, and not covered within the scope of permitted development, planning permission will be granted for proposals which:

- i) Improve rail services in South Oxfordshire**
- ii) Improve access to rail services and/or**
- iii) Improve facilities at railway stations such as car and cycle parking and upgrades to interchanges provided that there are no significant adverse effects on the environment or amenities of residents.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 4, & 6.

7.25 It is recognised that development that results in significant increases movements of lorries such as logistics operations needs careful consideration in planning terms, and that in general these types of operations are more appropriate in locations with good access to strategic transport networks. Detailed transport assessment work will need to be undertaken to understand environmental impacts and appropriate mitigation, and wherever possible sustainable transport access should be promoted for staff and visitors.

¹⁸ www.networkrail.co.uk/

[wp-content/uploads/2016/11/](#)

[Western-Route-Study-Final-1.pdf](#)

Policy TRANS7 - Development generating new lorry movements

Proposals for development leading to significant increases in lorry movements, such as freight distribution depots should only be permitted in locations where:

- i) Any increase in lorry movements can be appropriately accommodated on the surrounding road network**
- ii) The opportunities for sustainable transport access have been maximised; and**
- iii) The development does not result in serious and adverse environmental effects on the surrounding area.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 4, 6, 7 & 8.

7.26 It is recognised that keeping community facilities is a high priority. We carried out a comprehensive survey of village facilities in 1991, and have regularly reviewed this assessment – the most recent being in 2016. All facilities which we consider important to the vitality of communities have declined since 1991. The facilities covered by the survey were food shops, GP's surgeries, primary schools, petrol filling stations and pubs. We will continue to try to protect these facilities through the planning system as they contribute to the sustainability of village communities. However, in the face of continuing decline we recognise that some services and their delivery are being provided differently. For example, the internet provides opportunities for online shopping which some rural residents find useful.

7.27 Community initiatives will be important and these can be enhanced through funding from developer contributions. Another way that planning can be involved is through allowing the flexible use of community buildings.

7.28 Sustainable means of transport and access to services and employment can be more difficult for rural residents who do not have access to a car. The movement strategy and policies TRANS 2, 3 and 5 seek to support the network of settlements by encouraging the identification of opportunities to improve public transport, cycle routes and public rights of way to local service and employment centres. We will seek contributions to this from development, and support proposals that are in line with Neighbourhood Development Plans. We will also support local initiatives and traffic management initiatives which protect local character and addresses air quality issues.

Policy TRANS8 - Community Facilities and Rural Transport

Proposals which result in the provision of facilities and services in the rural areas will be encouraged, those which result in the loss of services and facilities will be resisted.

Rural transport initiatives that enable improvements to access services and employment will be encouraged.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 4, & 6.

- 7.29 This will allow business and residents to access services and information more effectively, thereby helping to reduce the need to travel. Provision of improved electronic communication across the District and to new development will be critical to supporting continued economic development in the District, and supporting growth of high-tech industries. From a transport perspective, it will also be important in supporting new ways of working such as flexible hours and working at home that help reduce pressure on the transport network, particularly at peak times, and support vitality of our towns and villages.

Communications

Policy INF2 - Electronic Communications

The Council will work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to promote faster, more reliable and more comprehensive coverage of electronic communications.

Proposals for all new development should ensure appropriate infrastructure is provided during construction, sufficient to enable all development to be connected to superfast broadband without any post development works.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 4, & 6.

- 7.30 The availability of advanced ICT infrastructure including high-speed broadband access is important for the success of the local economy and skills development.

Policy INF3 - Telecommunications Technology

In accordance with Government advice, if a proposed installation meets the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines for public exposure then it will not be necessary to consider further health aspects and concerns.

Prior approval (or planning permission where required) for the siting and appearance of antennae will be granted for telecommunications installations provided that the following criteria are met:

- i) The siting and appearance of the proposed apparatus and associated structures should seek to minimise impact on the visual amenity, character or appearance of the surrounding area in accordance with design policies and where appropriate heritage and/or ecological policies**
- ii) If on a building, apparatus and associated structures should be sited and designed to seek to minimise impact to the external appearance of the host building**
- iii) If proposing a new mast, it should be demonstrated that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting apparatus on existing buildings, masts or other structures. Such evidence should accompany any application made to the Council**
- iv) If proposing development in a sensitive area, the development should not have an unacceptable effect on areas of ecological interest, areas of landscape importance, archaeological sites, conservation areas or buildings of architectural or historic significance**
- v) When considering applications for telecommunications development, the Council will have regard to the operational requirements of telecommunications networks and the technical limitations of the technology.**

Any planning permission will contain conditions to ensure that when any facility ceases to be used, becomes obsolete, or falls into disrepair, the demolition and removal of all works is undertaken, both above and below ground, and the reinstatement of the site to its original condition or to an agreed specification, will be required.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 4, 5, 6 & 7.

7.31 Telecommunications are of great importance to the economy and we need to accommodate the growth of new and existing systems. However, owing to the potentially obtrusive nature of telecommunication installations, wherever legally and technically possible, the Council will encourage the sharing of existing masts, buildings and other structures such as electricity pylons to limit the proliferation of unsightly development, particularly in visually sensitive locations. To achieve this, we will encourage pre-development and pre-application discussions between operators and will expect confirmation that the cumulative exposure will not exceed the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) standards. Where the sharing of a mast will require it to be extended, we may consider the sharing of an existing site to be preferable in environmental and visual amenity terms. In proving a need for new telecommunications development, applications should be supported by technical evidence such as radio coverage plots.

7.32 The future telecommunication requirements of a new development should be given careful consideration at the design stage to minimise visual intrusion, not adversely affect the amenity of nearby residents, allow for easy maintenance and future growth. Developers will be expected to demonstrate that there are no suitable alternative locations before consideration will be given to proposals within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Because telecommunications is a rapidly expanding and evolving technology it can become obsolete. Redundant apparatus should be removed.



Reservoir to the north of Chinnor

7.33 Thames Water has identified the possible need for a major new reservoir in the District. The Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) 2014, published by Thames Water, identifies potential options to address its long-term water resource management in the south east, including the development of a large storage reservoir to the north of Chinnor.

Policy INF4 - Chinnor reservoir

Thames Land have indicated that there is likely to be a strategic need for a reservoir and ancillary works to the north of Chinnor. This will be determined through the publication of Thames Water's Resources Management Plan 2019. The proposed reservoir, if included in an adopted Water Resources Management Plan, must be brought forward through a comprehensive masterplanning process agreed between the community, the local authority, the local highway authority and the statutory utility provider.

Any proposal for a reservoir must:

- i) Mitigate the impact of construction on residents, the environment and roads**
- ii) Minimise the effects on the landscape of an embankment reservoir through its design, general configuration and the use of hard and soft landscaping**
- iii) Maximise the creation of wildlife habitats and biodiversity**
- iv) Promote the recreational uses of the reservoir consistent with the landscaping and biodiversity values of the proposal and having regard to the traffic impacts of such uses, and**
- vii) Includes measures to avoid and mitigate any other significant impacts identified through the environmental impact assessment of the proposal, including on the local and wider highway networks and on surface water and fluvial flooding.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 4, 6 & 7.

- 7.34 We will safeguard the land until such time it is no longer considered necessary, as set out in the WRMP 2019, or subsequent decisions made by Thames Water or the Secretary of State.

Water

Policy INF5 - Water Resources

All development proposals must demonstrate that there are or will be adequate water supply and water treatment facilities in place to serve the whole development. For phased development proposals, each phase must demonstrate sufficient water supply and water treatment capacity.

We will require major development proposals to be supported by an integrated water management plan.

All development proposals must demonstrate that they meet the highest standard of water consumption as defined in Building Regulations Part L. In addition, proposals that increase the requirement for water will only be permitted where adequate water resources either already exist or can be provided without detriment to existing abstraction, river flows, groundwater flow to and from springs, water quality, biodiversity or other land uses.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 4, 6 & 7.

- 7.35 Demand for water in the District continues to increase and it is appropriate, therefore, that new development minimises the pressure on existing resources. Measures to reduce the demand for water should be incorporated into new development. Where there is an adverse impact on water resources, including from groundwater, planning conditions and planning obligations may be imposed to mitigate the adverse effects of the development and to secure water conservation measures. The statutory sewerage and water undertaker for South Oxfordshire (currently Thames Water) and the Environment Agency provide advice on the availability of water resources in the District.



PENDON
MUSEUM

APPLEFORD 2 1/4
DIDCOT 3 1/2
NORTH MORETON 3 1/4

MPDEN 2 1/2
3 1/2

ST. RICHARD'S
CHURCH

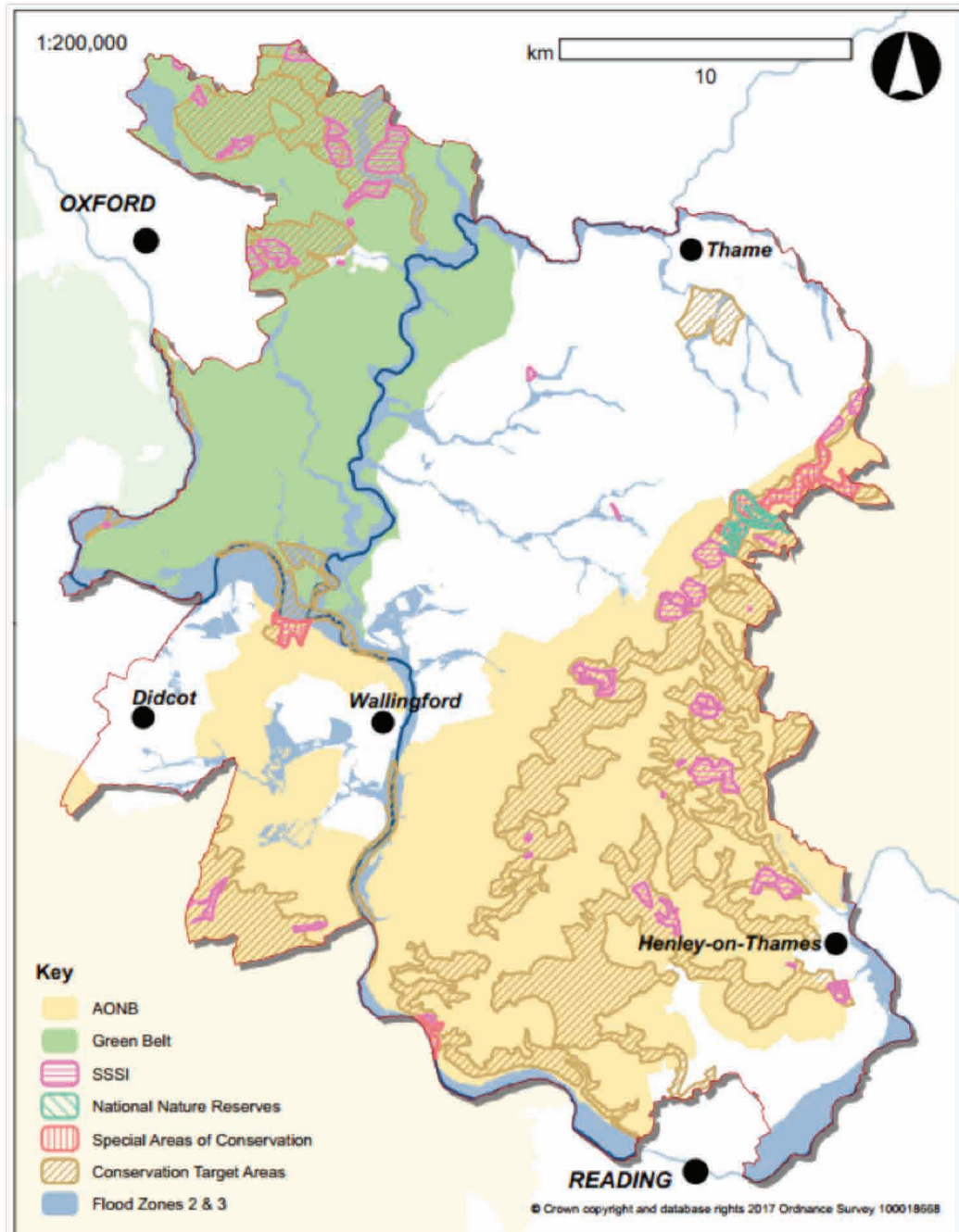
EARTH
TRUST

SS
A

8 NATURAL AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

- 8.1 South Oxfordshire has a beautiful natural and built environment, which makes the District an attractive place to live and work. This environment also attracts visitors from near and far who contribute significantly to the local economy.
- 8.2 The landscape of the District includes rolling downland, wooded hills, historic parkland, low-lying farmland, riverside meadows and strategic environmental assets including the North Wessex Downs and the Chilterns AONB, the Green Belt and the River Thames and its tributaries. The Council encourages effective management of the AONB and the Green Belt.
- 8.3 The whole District is rich in biodiversity, including international, national and locally protected sites and habitats. Maintaining sustainable agricultural land and practices is important in preserving the District's rural character and landscape.
- 8.4 The valley and tributaries of the River Thames are highly attractive features of the landscape and its special visual and environmental qualities are for the most part unspoilt. The Thames Valley is noted for its peace, tranquillity, biodiversity and cultural heritage, which is essential to preserve. The long-distance Thames Path and the river itself provide a focus for recreation and leisure activities.
- 8.5 We will seek to ensure that the planning and design of development not only protects water supply and quality, but also protects and, where appropriate restores, natural river form and function, whilst maximising resistance and resilience to flood risk.
- 8.6 The District has a rich cultural history that has provided South Oxfordshire with over 3,500 listed buildings, 52 scheduled monuments, 12 Registered Parks and Gardens, a Registered Battlefield, 72 Conservation Areas and 20 sites on the Heritage at Risk Register. Parts of the District's natural environment and some historic assets are of national significance. These heritage assets help establish the distinctive character of South Oxfordshire. The Council seeks to ensure the conservation, enhancement, enjoyment and understanding of all our heritage assets as they make a positive contribution to sustainable communities, including their economic vitality.



Landscape and countryside

Policy ENV1 - Landscape and Countryside

The District's landscape, countryside and rural areas will be protected against inappropriate development and where possible enhanced.

- i) Planning permission will only be granted for major development in the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest**
- ii) Development which supports economic growth in rural areas will be supported provided it conserves and enhances the landscape, countryside and rural areas**
- iii) Development will be permitted where it protects or enhances:**
 - a. The landscapes, waterscapes, cultural heritage and user enjoyment of the River Thames, its tributaries and flood plains**
 - b. The attractive landscape setting of settlements or the special character and landscape setting of Oxford. Design must be informed by the South Oxfordshire Design Guide, "made" Neighbourhood Development Plans and where appropriate, by landscape, visual impact assessment and AONB management plans**
 - c. Local landscape features such as trees, hedgerows, watercourses and water bodies that contribute to locally distinctive landscapes, amenity and biodiversity or have important historical value**
 - d. The landscape setting and positive features of rivers and riverbanks. Outside settlements, proposals for mooring stages will not be permitted. Proposals for posts, earthworks or facing river banks with piles and planking will not be permitted. Where it is necessary to protect a riverbank from erosion, the protective measures must be designed to maintain and enhance the special character of the river and its environment.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 2,3, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

- 8.7 South Oxfordshire is a mainly rural District. Mid-year population estimates for 2014 from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) rank the District as 249th out of 326 districts in terms of population density, with an average of 202 people per square kilometre (the national average for England is 417 people per square kilometre).
- 8.8 The countryside and its relationship with our settlements contributes significantly to the District's character and is highly valued. We will ensure that development conserves and where possible, enhances the landscape setting of settlements.
- 8.9 Whilst supporting suitably located and designed development necessary to facilitate the economic and social well-being of local communities, great weight is given to conserving and enhancing the intrinsic character and beauty of our Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection. Significant weight is also given to protecting non-designated landscapes, the countryside and green infrastructure assets from harm.

Green Belt

- 8.10 In 1992 the Central Oxfordshire Local Plan defined the boundaries of the Green Belt within South Oxfordshire. This Local Plan proposes to alter these Green Belt boundaries to accommodate development. These proposals are included at Appendix 4.
- 8.11 The five purposes of the Green Belt are to:
- Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
 - Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
 - Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
 - Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns (such as Oxford)
 - Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 8.12 We will give great weight to protecting the Green Belt when considering any planning application. Only appropriate development will be permitted in the Green Belt; inappropriate development will only be permitted in very special circumstances.
- 8.13 Appropriate development within or adjacent to the Green Belt should be carefully designed and sited to protect the positive characteristics of the Green Belt and landscape.

Trees and hedgerows in the landscape

- 8.14 Trees, individually and collectively, make an outstanding contribution to biodiversity and the landscape. They also absorb atmospheric pollution and have a beneficial influence on the climate.
- 8.15 We will protect trees of significant amenity importance which are worthy of retention and considered to be at risk, through Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Areas and planning conditions as appropriate, except in woodland subject to a Forestry Commission management agreement. When considering applications to carry out work to trees protected by an Order or Conservation Area, the Council will take account of good arboricultural practice, the effect of the trees on nearby properties, and the contribution they make to the visual quality of the area.
- 8.16 Where a proposal results in the removal of an important hedgerow (according to the definition within the Hedgerow Regulations 1997) the Council will seek retention of the hedgerow. Where a proposal seeks the removal of a hedgerow the Council will require compensatory planting with a mixture of native hedgerow species.



Biodiversity

Policy ENV2: Biodiversity - Designated Sites, Priority Habitats and Species

The highest level of protection will be given to sites of international nature conservation importance (Special Areas of Conservation). Development that is likely to result in a significant effect, either alone or in combination, on such sites and species will need to satisfy the requirements of the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2010.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are of national importance. Development that would affect a SSSI will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the special interest features and its contribution to the local ecological network.

Development likely to result, either directly or indirectly to the loss, deterioration or harm to:

- Local Wildlife Sites and Proposed Local Wildlife Sites
- Local Nature Reserves
- Priority Habitats and Species
- Ancient Woodland and veteran trees
- Legally Protected Species
- Local Geological Sites
- Ecological Networks (Conservation Target Areas)
- Important or ancient hedges or hedgerows

Will only be permitted if:

- i) The need for, and benefits of the development in the proposed location outweighs the adverse effect on the interests and
- ii) It can be demonstrated that it could not reasonably be located on an alternative site that would result in less or no harm to the interests and
- iii) Measures can be provided (and secured through planning conditions or legal agreements), that would avoid, mitigate or as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects resulting from development.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 6 & 7.

8.17 The level of protection and mitigation should be proportionate to the status of the habitat or species and its importance individually and as part of a wider network.

Policy ENV3: Biodiversity – Non designated sites, habitats and species

Development that will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in the District will be permitted. All development should result in a no net loss of biodiversity and opportunities for biodiversity gain will be actively sought.

Development proposals which would result in a net loss of biodiversity will only be considered if they can demonstrate that alternatives which avoid impacts on biodiversity have been discounted. In the absence of alternative sites or layouts, development proposals must include adequate mitigation measures to avoid a net loss of biodiversity. Where harm cannot be prevented or adequately mitigated, appropriate compensation measures will be sought to offset the loss by contributing to appropriate biodiversity projects to achieve an overall net gain for biodiversity.

Planning permission will only be granted if impacts on biodiversity can be avoided, mitigated or compensated.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 6 & 7.

8.18 South Oxfordshire supports a rich variety of natural habitats and species. Many of these habitats are of national and international significance. These include:

Table 8a: Natural habitats and species

International	4 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
National	38 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
Local	150 confirmed or proposed Local Wildlife Sites ¹⁹ 4 Local Nature Reserves 5 local Geologically Important Sites

In addition, there are numerous other important natural habitats, which are priority habitats of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity (under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act²⁰).

¹⁹ A current list of Local Wildlife Sites is available on the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre website (www.tverc.org/cms/). The list is updated periodically so should be referred to for the most up to date list of conservation sites

²⁰ Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, available at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents

- 8.19 In Oxfordshire a series of Conservation Target Areas (CTA)²¹ have been identified which form the Ecological Network for the County. The CTA provide the best opportunities for targeted conservation action. They connect and buffer important habitats and species assemblages and have been designed to provide resilience to future climate change. Development proposals that would affect the integrity of these networks will be resisted.
- 8.20 Development should contribute to the conservation of ecological networks, protected sites and priority habitats. All development should consider how it can improve biodiversity and loss can only be permitted when there are unavoidable impacts that cannot be mitigated. The Council applies a form of Biodiversity Accounting to help it understand if development proposals can achieve no net loss.

Biodiversity: Watercourses

Policy ENV4: Watercourses

Development on land that contains or is adjacent to a watercourse must protect the function or setting of the watercourse and its biodiversity. Permission will only be granted where the benefits to the local community significantly outweigh any harm, and the detrimental impact can be appropriately mitigated.

Development proposals adjacent to or encompassing a watercourse should include an appropriate buffer zone to either side of the watercourse to create a corridor of land and water favourable to the enhancement of biodiversity. Where such a buffer is not deemed possible, justification must be provided by the developer to the satisfaction of the local planning authority before planning permission will be granted.

Proposals should avoid culverting any significant section of a watercourse. Development proposals which include enhancements to watercourses and adjacent habitats will be viewed positively.

Proposals located within 20 metres of a watercourse should submit a construction management plan for approval before commencement of work to ensure that the watercourse will be satisfactorily protected from damage, disturbance or pollution.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 6 & 7

²¹ www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversity/conservation-target-areas/

- 8.21 Watercourses refers to both main rivers, as defined by the Environment Agency, which are the larger rivers, brooks and streams, and ordinary watercourses such as headwaters and smaller brooks and streams. All of these watercourses, even seasonal ones which run dry in summer, have a part to play in enhancing biodiversity in our District.
- 8.22 All watercourses are vital to biodiversity, providing a unique range of habitats, acting as wildlife corridors, and forming an important element of South Oxfordshire's ecological network. They make significant contributions to the character of our landscape and form an important part of green infrastructure. Watercourses also provide a number of vital ecosystem services particularly in terms of drainage and flood management but also provide green space for informal recreation, benefiting health and well-being.
- 8.23 Of specific note are the District's globally rare chalk streams. There are only around 200 chalk streams in the world, and 85% of these are found in England, where their importance is often overlooked. As a result Chalk Rivers have been specifically identified as a priority for conservation under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Natural Communities Act (2006).
- 8.24 The geology of chalk streams produces characteristic features that support special wildlife habitats and species. Fed from aquifers in the chalk rocks of the Chiltern Hills, the water is characterised as having high clarity and quality, with a stable temperature regime. It is the quality of the water as well as the in stream and bankside habitats that make chalk streams so important for a variety of rare and protected species. Chalk streams in the District arise from the escarpment of the Chiltern Hills, examples include the Ewelme Brook and the Chalgrove Brook.
- 8.25 It is estimated that only around a quarter of Britain's chalk streams are in good environmental status under the Water Framework Directive. They are under threat from abstraction for drinking water, pollution arising from agriculture and urban developments as well as the impacts of human activities on the important species they support.
- 8.26 It is essential that watercourses are positively integrated in the design of new development from the outset, to ensure that they do not compromise the ecological importance of the watercourse and seek to retain and enhance biodiversity. By including the watercourse in design from the start, it is possible to make the most of attractive riverside settings which can form natural areas of green infrastructure useful for informal recreation and other ecosystem services.

8.27 All development proposals adjacent to watercourses should wherever possible aim to avoid damaging impacts on the watercourse and provide mitigation for any unavoidable impacts. All development proposals that incorporate watercourses should ensure that the watercourse is protected from the development and aim wherever possible to provide enhancements to the watercourse that benefit biodiversity and other ecosystems services.

Watercourse Buffer Zones

Buffer zones are important along watercourses to give species and habitats protection from increased disturbance associated with development

8.28 Buffer zones are important along watercourses to give species and habitats protection from increased disturbance associated with development. The extent of the buffer is dependent on the size and nature of the development, but it should be a minimum of 10 metres wide, measured from the top of each bank. Larger developments should provide further buffering, and these additional areas can be used for informal recreation.

8.29 Buffer zones are important as they can help:

- i) To allow the watercourse to undergo the natural processes of erosion and deposition and natural changes to the bank profile without necessitating intrusive and harmful bank protection works
- ii) To provide space for semi-aquatic and terrestrial habitats which are important to the lifecycle of many species
- iii) To create wildlife corridors which can also be used as part of the green infrastructure networks within development
- iv) To prevent permanent overshadowing of the water by buildings
- v) To reduce the risk of pollution through run off.

8.30 Buffer zones also help to reduce incidences of flooding by allowing water storage and natural drainage of rainwater.

8.31 Buffer zones should be reserved as a natural or semi-natural habitat, free from built development or formal landscaping. Buffer zones should be planted with native species that are naturally found by riversides. It should not form domestic land or parking areas of any kind, but may form part of the requisite green infrastructure for new developments. This space may then also be used for informal recreational uses such as walking or jogging and should be designed into the development to create a safe space, overlooked by, and where possible, fronted by, dwellings or other buildings, and forming an attractive part of the development with a positive impact on the visual amenity and character of the settlement.

8.32 Proposals should include long-term management plans for the buffer zone that would retain or enhance its biodiversity value.

8.33 Where a 10 metre wide buffer zone is not considered possible by the local planning authority, (for example in dense urban areas where existing development comes closer to the watercourse) a smaller buffer zone may be allowed, but should still be accompanied by detailed plans to show how the land will be used to promote biodiversity and how maintenance access to the watercourse will be created. Wherever possible within settlements a minimum 10 metre buffer should be maintained.

Culverts

- 8.34 All opportunities to de-culvert a watercourse should be taken and new culverting should be avoided and only used as a last resort. Culverting a watercourse has a huge impact on ecology of the watercourse by removing habitat and fragmenting the channel and its river corridor. This is due to:
- i) The absence of sunlight, natural banks and vegetation means that culverts are not usually able to sustain significant life
 - ii) Changes in the channel dynamics resulting from the flow needing to be focused into a particular route
 - iii) Where culverts are protected from blockage by screens, this usually makes the culvert impenetrable to animals such as otter, water voles, fish and invertebrates
 - iv) Culverts can prevent the movement of species along the river corridor and lead to animals such as otters and other large mammals being forced onto roads in order to seek food and shelter. Not only can this lead to animal deaths, it can also lead to road traffic incidents
 - v) Culverting can significantly increase the risk of flooding due to the risk of blockage, and it complicates maintenance since access is restricted.
- 8.35 For these reasons, sites for new development with existing culverts will be expected to investigate the feasibility of de-culverting the watercourse, where bridges are proposed as an alternative to culverting, the construction method should take into account the importance of maintaining an obstruction free bank for wildlife.
- 8.36 It should be noted that in addition to any planning permission, consent is required from either the Environment Agency or Lead Local Flood Authority to carry out any work within 8 metres of a watercourse.

Green Infrastructure

Policy ENV5: Green Infrastructure in new developments

Development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of additional Green Infrastructure and protect and enhance existing Green Infrastructure.

Planning permission will be granted if proposals can demonstrate that they will:

- i) Protect, conserve and where possible, enhance the District's green infrastructure**
- ii) Provide an appropriate level of green infrastructure where a requirement has been identified for additional provision either within the Green Infrastructure Strategy, the relevant Neighbourhood Development Plan, or the Habitats Regulations Assessment**
- iii) Avoid the loss, fragmentation, severance or a negative impact on the function of green infrastructure**
- iv) Provide appropriate mitigation where there would be an adverse impact on green infrastructure; and**
- v) Provide an appropriate replacement where it is necessary for development to take place on areas of green infrastructure.**

All green infrastructure provision should be designed to meet the quality standards set out within the Green Infrastructure Strategy or the relevant Neighbourhood Development Plan. Consideration should also be given to inclusive access using such guides as the Fieldfare Trust "Countryside for All – A good practice guide to Disabled People's Access in the Countryside" and the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 6 & 7

8.37 Green Infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green space in both urban and rural areas, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Such networks can also include "blue" infrastructure features such as ponds, lakes, reservoirs, streams and rivers. When assessing planning applications, the Council will take into account the findings of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Habitat

Regulations Assessment (HRA) to define new Green Infrastructure requirements and how they should be delivered. Where new Green Infrastructure is identified as a mitigation requirement within the HRA this must be delivered by the developer to meet requirements.

Historic Environment and Heritage Assets

Policy ENV6 - Historic Environment

The District's heritage assets, both above and below ground, such as:

- **Nationally designated assets including listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, historic battlefields and scheduled monuments**
- **Conservation Areas; and**
- **their settings**

will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance and their important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.

Proposals for development that affects non-designated historic assets will be considered, taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5, 6 & 7





8.38 We will ensure that these areas are conserved and enhanced through:

- Conservation Area appraisals/reviews
- Management plans
- Designating new Conservation Areas where appropriate
- The determination of planning, listed building consent and other relevant applications.

We will support Neighbourhood Development Plans where they seek to assess their heritage assets.

Listed Buildings

8.39 A “listed building” is a building, object or structure that has been judged to be of national importance in terms of architectural or historic interest and included on a special register, called the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

8.40 When a building is listed, it is listed in its entirety, which means that both the exterior and the interior are protected. In addition, any object or structure fixed to the building, and any object or structure within the curtilage of the building, which although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1 July 1948, are treated as being part of the listed building.

Policy ENV7– Demolition of Listed Buildings

Proposals for the substantial or total demolition of a listed building will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, as they are a finite and irreplaceable resource.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 7.

Policy ENV8 – Alteration of and Extension to Listed Buildings

Any alteration or extension to a listed building must respect its character, historic and architectural qualities and its setting. Any alteration or extension must be appropriate and sympathetic to its original structure in terms of proportion, scale, design and materials and must not dominate or overwhelm it. Any harm to the building must be demonstrably outweighed by its benefits.

Proposals must take into account any contribution made by the building's historic curtilage or context, value within a group of buildings and/or its setting such as the importance of a historic burgage plot, farmstead group, street frontage or traditional shopfronts.

Applications for change of use will only be permitted if the features of special architectural or historic interest which it is desirable to preserve are protected and the proposals are compatible with the historic building and its character. Development should be in accordance with South Oxfordshire's Design Guide.

Applicants will be required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance. In some circumstances, further survey, analysis and recording may be required pre-determination to inform decision making or otherwise will be made a condition of consent.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 7.

Conservation Areas

Policy ENV9 - Conservation Areas

The substantial or total demolition of a building in a Conservation Area will only be permitted if the loss of the building would not adversely affect the character or appearance of the area and, where appropriate, if there are detailed and acceptable plans for the redevelopment of the site.

Where a building is considered to make an important contribution to the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area and is worthy of consideration as a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement will be made with regard to its total loss or the significance of the alteration against demonstrable benefits.

Permission will only be granted for development which preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area or its setting. The special characteristics of the Conservation Area (such as existing walls, buildings, trees, hedges, open spaces and important views, burgage plots, traditional shopfronts and signs, farm groups, medieval townscapes, archaeological features, etc.) should be preserved. Where harm to significance is caused, a balanced judgement will be made with regard to the level of harm against demonstrable benefits. In addition, new development must be designed in scale and sympathy either using traditional materials or contemporary materials appropriate to the Conservation Area. Development should be in accordance with South Oxfordshire's Design Guide.

Applicants will be required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance. In some circumstances, further survey, analysis and recording will be made a condition of consent.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 7.

- 8.42 Conservation Areas are described in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to

preserve or enhance". Inevitably, these areas will vary greatly. Pleasant groups of buildings, open spaces, trees, an historic settlement pattern, a village green, or features of archaeological interest, may all contribute to the special character of an area, and it is that character, rather than individual buildings, which Conservation Area legislation seeks to preserve and enhance.

Archaeology

Policy ENV10 – Archaeology

There will be a presumption in favour of physically preserving nationally important archaeological remains and their settings, whether scheduled or not.

Where sites or deposits of archaeological interest are known, or suspected to exist, planning applications must include sufficient information to enable an informed and reasoned planning decision to be made which either includes the results of evaluation by fieldwork or makes provision for it.

Wherever possible, if the existence and significance of deposits is confirmed, planning permission will only be granted where the proposal includes provision to preserve the archaeological remains in situ by sensitive layout and design (particularly foundations, drainage and hard landscaping). Where demonstrated not to be practicable, the application must make provision for the investigation and recording of any archaeological remains that cannot be preserved, including the publication of results, in accordance with a detailed scheme of investigation approved before the start of the development.

In assessing proposals affecting any non-designated archaeological sites or deposits of significance equal to that of a nationally important monument, great weight will be given to their preservation in the balancing judgement.

In some circumstances, further survey, analysis and recording will be made a condition of consent.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 7.

8.43 Our archaeological resource has great social, economic, cultural and educational value for the community and this potential can be developed through suitable management and interpretation. Some archaeological sites and monuments are designated as Scheduled Monuments and are legally protected under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act.

Historic Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Landscapes

Policy ENV11 - Historic Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Landscapes

Proposals should conserve the special historic interest, character or setting of a designated battlefield, park or garden contained in the Historic England Registers. Any harm must be demonstrably outweighed by its benefits, and all other options for their conservation or use must have been explored. Substantial harm to or loss of these assets should be wholly exceptional in the case of grade I and grade II* sites and require clear and convincing justification in other cases.

A balanced judgment will be required in assessing proposals affecting non-designated historic landscapes of special interest that make a considerable contribution to local distinctiveness.

Applicants will be required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance. In some circumstances, further survey, analysis and recording will be made a condition of consent.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 7.

8.44 Historic battlefields, parks and gardens are an important part of the District's heritage and environment. They comprise a variety of features including the open space itself, views in and out, archaeological remains and, in the case of parks or gardens, a conscious design incorporating planting and water features and frequently buildings. The Green Infrastructure and biodiversity value of historic landscapes is also important. There is a need to protect such sites and their settings and to encourage sympathetic management wherever possible.

8.45 A number of the most important sites have been included on the “Historic England Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England”. Registered Parks and Gardens are included on the National Heritage List for England. Registered sites are of national importance, but the District has several other sites of regional or local importance that should also be protected from harm, and enhanced where possible.

Environmental Protection and Pollution

Policy ENV12: Pollution - Impact from Neighbouring and/or Previous Land Uses on New Development (Receptors)

Development proposals should be appropriate to their location and should be designed to ensure that the occupiers of a new development will not be subject to individual and/or cumulative adverse effect(s) of pollution. Proposals will need to avoid or provide details of proposed mitigation methods to protect occupiers of a new development from the adverse impact(s) of pollution.

Unless there is a realistic potential for appropriate mitigation, development will not be permitted if it is likely to be adversely affected by pollution. Factors can include, but is not limited to:

- **Noise or vibration**
- **Smell, dust, odour, artificial light, gases and other emissions**
- **Air pollution, contamination of the site or its surroundings and hazardous substances nearby**
- **Land instability; or**
- **Any other relevant types of pollution.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 6, 7 & 8.

Policy ENV13: Pollution - Impact of Development on Human Health, the Natural Environment and/or Local Amenity (Sources)

Development proposals should be located in sustainable locations and should be designed to ensure that they will not result in significant adverse impacts on human health, the natural environment and/or the amenity of neighbouring uses.

The individual and cumulative impacts of development on human health, the natural environment and/or local amenity will be considered when assessing development proposals.

The consideration of the merits of development proposals will be balanced against the adverse impact on human health, the natural environment and/or local amenity, including the following factors:

- **Noise or vibration**
- **Smell, dust, odour, artificial light, gases and other emissions**
- **Air pollution, contamination of the site or its surroundings and hazardous substances nearby**
- **Land instability**
- **Any other relevant types of pollution.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 6, 7 & 8.

8.46 "Pollution" is anything that affects the quality of land, air, water or soils, which might lead to an adverse impact on human health, the natural environment or general amenity. Pollution can arise from a range of emissions, including smoke, fumes, gases, dust, steam, odour, noise and light. Pollution can also include ground conditions and land instability, natural hazards or sources of pollution from former activities such as mining.

8.47 In determining proposals, the Council will consider whether the proposal is an acceptable use of the land, the cumulative impact of the proposal and also consider the impact of the proposed use. Amongst other matters, the Council will consider proposals in terms of how it may be effected by sources of pollution and how a proposal may cause pollution. The Council will prevent new development from being put at risk from or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of pollution or land instability. Development should be appropriate for its location. The Council will also consider the future remediation of the land.

- 8.48 Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner. Proposals should avoid or provide assessments of and mitigation for all significant adverse impacts from pollution. Further information on requirements and standards is available from the Council's Environmental Protection Team.
- 8.49 The Council will also consider that existing businesses and uses may wish to develop in continuance and will therefore consider the effect nearby proposals may have on these existing businesses and uses.
- 8.50 The Council will consider proposals against current local and national standards, guidance, legislation and/or objectives. This will include consideration of the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality.

Policy EP1 - Air Quality

Air quality has been identified as a key consideration in South Oxfordshire. In order to protect public health from the impacts of poor air quality:

- **Development must be compliant with the measures laid out in the Council's developer guidance document and the associated air quality action plan, as well as the national air quality guidance and any local transport plans**
- **All development proposals should include measures to minimise air pollution at the design stage and incorporate best practice in the design, construction and operation of the development**
- **Where a development has a negative impact on air quality, including cumulative impact, developers should identify mitigation measures that will sufficiently minimise emissions from the development. Where mitigation is not sufficient the impacts should be offset through planning obligations**
- **Development that leads to the creation of an Air Quality Management Area will not be permitted.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 6, 7 & 8.

Hazardous substances

Policy EP2 - Hazardous substances

Development which involves the use, movement or storage of hazardous substances will only be permitted where due weight has been given to the risks to the health and safety of users of the site, neighbouring land or the environment. Development within the vicinity of an installation involving hazardous substances or activities will only be permitted if the health and safety of occupants of that development is acceptable. The Council will seek to reduce the potential for conflicting land uses and promote safety of people and protection of the environment.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 6 & 7.

8.51 The Council is empowered under the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990 to regulate the presence of hazardous substances, so that they cannot be kept or used above specified quantities. National Planning Practice Guidance provides further advice on how the planning system deals with hazardous substances. Development of new installations where hazardous substances are handled will be carefully controlled.

Flood risk

8.52 Areas of South Oxfordshire are at risk of flooding and the impact of climate change is important. The planning system has an important role to play in minimising flooding, the risk of flooding and increasing resilience. Only appropriate development should take place in areas at risk from flooding, and development should be directed away from areas of the highest risk. A sequential, risk-based approach to locating development, referred to as applying the Sequential Test, and if necessary, the Exception Test should be applied, taking into account climate change.

8.53 The council will uphold the sequential approach to flood risk. Neighbourhood planning groups considering proposing development within areas at risk of flooding should apply the Sequential Test to the whole neighbourhood area. If necessary, the Exception Test should also be applied. The Environment agency provide standing advice where developments require a site-specific flood risk assessment. Should mitigation be required, we will expect those measures to be in the application proposals and part of the development.

Minerals Safeguarding Areas

Policy EP3 - Minerals Safeguarding Areas

Minerals are a non-renewable resource, therefore to safeguard future potential extraction, development will be directed away from Minerals Safeguarding Areas.

Where development in Minerals Safeguarding Areas cannot be avoided, development must demonstrate that all opportunities for mineral extraction have been fully explored.

This policy contributes towards achieving objective 7.

8.54 Minerals Safeguarding Areas are identified on Oxfordshire County Council's Minerals and Waste Core Strategy.



STARBUCKS COFFEE

MARKET PLACE
TO BAPTIST CHURCH

HENLEY-ON-THAMES

An information board for Henley-on-Thames, featuring a map and text. The board is mounted on a green post.

STARBUCKS COFFEE

9 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- 9.1 Our “built environment” consists of all the man-made aspects of our surroundings. It includes not only buildings but the man-made spaces between buildings such as parks and gardens, and urban gathering spaces such as squares, as well as the infrastructure that supports our daily activities such as roads, railways, utility and telecommunication networks and flood defences.
- 9.2 How we develop our built environment has a direct impact on the successfulness and sustainability of the places and communities that we create. In South Oxfordshire we want to create places that work well where people want to live, work and visit and that allow us to carry out daily activities with ease and offer us choice as how to do them. These places should work well for everyone and continue to work well for everyone into the future.

High Quality Development

- 9.3 The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, which is an important component of sustainable development. New development should create a sense of place where people will feel safe and are proud to live and work.
- 9.4 We are committed to securing the highest quality of design in new development of all types and in all locations across South Oxfordshire. In 2016, we adopted a new innovative South Oxfordshire Design Guide which focuses on educating people in the principles of high quality design and raising the profile of high quality design throughout the District. It also seeks to address specific design issues that we have been experiencing within South Oxfordshire. We consider the Design Guide to be a vital tool in raising the quality of design within South Oxfordshire and its value and quality have been demonstrated by it being shortlisted for a national award. The Design Guide together with the policies in this plan, will ensure that we can deliver our objectives for high quality developments.



Policy DES1 - Delivering High Quality Development

All new development must be of a high-quality design that is locally distinctive and both physically and visually enhances and compliments its surroundings.

Planning permission will be granted for new development that meets the key design objectives for delivering high quality development set out in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide, as well as the policies within this plan.

New development should be designed to ensure that buildings and their surrounding spaces can be accessed and used by everyone while promoting safe environments that reduce the opportunity for crime.

Where development sites are located adjacent to sites that have a reasonable prospect of coming forward in the future, integration with the neighbouring site should be considered as part of the proposals design. Where the Council are aware of sites that have similar delivery timescales coming forward together they will require a comprehensive masterplan to be prepared across all sites.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5, & 7.

- 9.5 The South Oxfordshire Design Guide sets out Key Design Objectives that we consider critical in delivering high quality development. These objectives should be considered at the outset and throughout the design process. The Council will support development that meets these objectives and follows the design criteria set out in the guide.
- 9.6 Securing high quality design is about more than aesthetic considerations. It is important that new development delivers sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities in order to create successful places where people want to live and work. New development should be designed to meet the needs of all users including the elderly, disabled, parents and carers.
- 9.7 Past developments in the District have not always taken account of future development coming forward on adjacent sites, this has undermined integration.

Policy DES2 – Enhancing Local Character

All proposals for new development must demonstrate how the design:

- i) Has been informed by and responds positively to the site and its surroundings; and**
- ii) Reinforces place-identity by enhancing local character.**

Where a character assessment has been prepared as part of a Neighbourhood Development Plan a proposal must demonstrate that the positive features identified in the assessment have been incorporated into the design of the development.

Where there is no local character assessment a comprehensive contextual analysis of the local character should be prepared identifying the positive features that make up the character of the area. The proposal must demonstrate that these positive features have been incorporated into the design of the development.

This should be set out as part of the supporting Design and Access Statement or Design Strategy.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 7.

- 9.8 National planning guidance emphasises the importance of promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness rather than imposing a particular style or taste, which can often stifle innovation. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide sets out what makes up the character of South Oxfordshire. Proposals for new development should demonstrate clearly how the proposed scheme reflects this special character as well as the distinct character of the local area. This should be set out as part of the Design and Access Statement that supports the application.
- 9.9 The Council encourage communities preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans to consider what the positive features are in their local area and identify them as part of their plan. Where these local features have been identified as part of the Neighbourhood Development Plan proposals should demonstrate that they have been incorporated into the design. Where these local features have not been identified proposals should include a comprehensive contextual analysis that identifies them.

9.10 In some cases developers have been selective in the features that they have identified as forming part of the local character and have not always considered whether the features form a positive part of the local character. To avoid developments reflecting previous poor quality design the Council may undertake their own contextual analysis if they consider that the positive features of the local character have not been identified correctly.

Policy DES3 – Design and Access Statements

All proposals for new development, including applications for listed building consent, should be accompanied by a design and access statement that demonstrates how the development proposal meets the key design objectives of the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and the design criteria set out in Part 2 of the Guide.

The Design and Access Statement should be proportional to the scale and complexity of the proposal. It should include:

- **A clear drawing trail showing how the design of the development and the rationale behind it has evolved and clearly demonstrating that the key design objectives and principles set out in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide have been considered at the outset and throughout the process and have been met by the final design**
- **The delivery implementation phases and strategies to be put in place to ensure the timely delivery of infrastructure and services when they are needed by new residents; and**
- **How consultation with the existing community has been incorporated.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 7.

9.11 Design and Access Statements are an important mechanism for communicating the design of a development to the officer determining the planning application as well as other stakeholders of the application process including local communities. When people do not understand a proposal they can often imagine the worse and this can lead to unnecessary concerns and objections. The Design Guide recommends effective ways of communicating the design of a development.

Policy DES4 - Masterplans for allocated sites and major development

Proposals for sites allocated in the Development Plan, including sites allocated within Neighbourhood Development Plans and major development, must be accompanied by a Masterplan that:

- **Clearly sets out the land uses proposed including the amount, scale and density of development, the movement and access arrangements and green infrastructure provision**
- **Illustrates how the proposal integrates with the surrounding built, historic and natural environments, in particular maximising existing and potential movement connections and accessibility to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport**
- **Defines a hierarchy of routes and the integration of suitable infrastructure, including for example SuDS within the public realm**
- **Demonstrates a legible urban structure and identifies key elements of townscape such as main frontages, edges, landmark buildings and key building groups and character areas**
- **Demonstrates as appropriate the careful siting of community facilities and other amenities to meet the needs of the existing and future community, including access to education/training facilities, health care, community leisure and recreation facilities**
- **Demonstrates a clear link to the principles established in the Design and Access Statement and the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 4, 5, 6 & 7.

- 9.12 The demonstration of good urban design principles through a masterplan approach for strategic and major applications is required through policy DES4. Masterplans should be produced in consultation with South Oxfordshire District Council, the community and other stakeholders where appropriate. The information provided should be proportionate to the scale, complexity and location of the application.

Policy DES5 – Outdoor Amenity Space

A private outdoor garden or outdoor amenity space, or alternatively a shared amenity area should be provided for all new dwellings. The amount of land that should be provided for the garden or amenity space will be determined by the size of the dwelling proposed, by the character of surrounding development and by plot coverage standards. Private outdoor sitting areas should not be overlooked by adjacent outdoor sitting areas, living/dining rooms or kitchens.

Proposals for new development should demonstrate that the size, location and character of gardens and outdoor amenity spaces have been considered as an integral part of the design and not as an afterthought. These spaces should not be compromised by parking areas.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 4, 5, 6 & 7.

- 9.13 The relationship of a building with its plot is critical to how well it fits in with neighbouring development and to its impact on the overall character of the street. The extent of plot coverage also determines the external area available for private garden space. This policy and the Design Guide seek to ensure that reasonable standards of private amenity space are provided in new developments.
- 9.14 The Design Guide contains guidelines in respect of the recommended minimum size of private amenity space that should be provided, with the size relating to the number of bedrooms in the proposed dwelling. Used on their own, these standards would lead to uniform plot sizes and shapes that pay little regard to the character of the area. This policy, however, requires the character of the site and the surrounding development to be considered in determining the appropriate garden area, as well as the type of dwelling that is being provided. It also requires that private garden and outdoor sitting areas are designed to provide a reasonable degree of privacy.
- 9.15 Often garden and outdoor amenity spaces, particularly communal areas provided for flatted developments, are identified at the end of the design process and consist of the leftover space surrounding the building(s). This tends to result in spaces of an inappropriate size and shape that bear no relation to the internal workings of the building and/or the requirements of the intended



user(s). Gardens and outdoor amenity spaces should be considered from the beginning of the design process and throughout. The provision of garden and outdoor amenity spaces should not be compromised by the need for parking.

Policy DES6- Privacy and daylight

All new dwellings should be designed and laid out to secure a reasonable degree of privacy for the occupiers. Development will not be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5, 6 & 7.

9.16 New dwellings should be designed to ensure adequate privacy for existing and new residents to enable them to enjoy their homes without undue intrusion from neighbours or the public. Buildings should also be orientated within their plots to maximise daylight and passive solar gain, with garden areas orientated to maximise sunlight. These objectives can be achieved by careful siting of properties, by ensuring that there are adequate distances between properties and through the erection of screen walls and fencing. Developments should be designed to avoid overshadowing of adjoining dwelling, although it is recognised that in high density housing schemes, overlooking distances may not be so readily achievable. Innovative design approaches will therefore be sought to provide acceptable standards of privacy. The Design Guide contains detailed guidance.

Policy DES7 – Efficient use of resources

The Council encourages developers to make provision for the effective use of natural resources where applicable, including:

- i) Minimising waste and making adequate provision for the recycling of waste on site
- ii) Using recycled and energy efficient materials
- iii) Maximising passive solar heating, lighting, natural ventilation, energy and water efficiency and re-use of materials
- iv) Making efficient use of water, for example through rainwater harvesting and grey water
- v) Causing no deterioration in, and where possible, achieving improvements in water quality
- vi) Taking account of, and if located within an AQMA, is consistent with, the Council's Air Quality Action Plan
- vii) Ensuring that the land is of a suitable quality for development and that remediation of contaminated land is undertaken where necessary
- viii) Avoiding the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, unless it is demonstrated to be the most sustainable choice from reasonable alternatives, by first using areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality
- ix) The efficient use of land, with densities of at least 25 dwellings per hectare, and
- x) Re-using previously developed land, provided it is not of high environmental value.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8

9.17 In South Oxfordshire we recognise that the prudent use of natural resources is a key element of delivering sustainable development. We encourage developers to consider how our existing resources can be used effectively and efficiently when planning and designing development proposals.

9.18 National policy requires planning policies to take account of the presence of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. There are three Air Quality Management Areas designated in South Oxfordshire in the market towns of Henley on

Thames and Wallingford, and the larger village of Watlington. This plan seeks to ensure that new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with our Air Quality Action Plan.

- 9.19 The Water Framework Directive seeks to protect the quality of water, including the aquatic ecology, unique and valuable habitats, drinking water resources and bathing water. It requires that there is no deterioration in the status of water bodies and that they all achieve good ecological status by 2027. The Thames River Basin Management Plan sets out actions to help meet this obligation. Policies on Green Infrastructure, biodiversity and sustainable construction will also assist in achieving this objective by ensuring that surface water run-off is appropriately controlled.
- 9.20 Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for determining planning applications for minerals and waste development and producing the Minerals and Waste Local Plan, which will safeguard mineral resources, aggregate rail depots, sites for recycled and secondary aggregate supply, other minerals infrastructure sites and sites for waste management. These areas will be marked on the Local Plan's Adopted Policies Map for reference in future, following adoption by the County Council. Should the District receive a planning application in any of these areas, the County Council will be consulted on the development. Applicants are advised to review the Minerals and Waste Local Plan prior to making a planning application.
- 9.21 All development will be expected to make an efficient use of land, with a density appropriate to the site and its surroundings, subject to a minimum density of 25 dwellings per hectare (dph).



Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy DES8 - Promoting sustainable design

All new development, including building conversions, refurbishments and extensions, should seek to minimise carbon and energy impacts in line with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy and nationally adopted standards.

The Council encourages developers to design new development to improve resilience to the anticipated effects of climate change.

The Council will not refuse planning permission for buildings or infrastructure which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design (unless the concern relates to a designated heritage asset and the impact would cause material harm to the asset or its setting which is not outweighed by the proposal's economic, social and environmental benefits).

New developments are required to be designed to a water efficiency standard of 110 litres/head/day (l/h/d) for new homes.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5, 6, 7 & 8.

- 9.22 To improve resilience to the anticipated effects of climate change, the Council expects developers to consider the role of tree planting and landscaping alongside measures to reduce solar heat gain in the summer and from lower sun angles in the winter.
- 9.23 Increasing our resilience to the likely impact of climate change and promoting a low carbon future is one of the Local Plan's strategic objectives in response to the Climate Change Act (2008) which mandates an 80% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050.
- 9.24 The South Oxfordshire Water Cycle Study identified South Oxfordshire as being in an area of water stress. In order to address this we are applying a higher standard for water efficiency.

- 9.25 The design and construction of new developments and refurbishments to existing buildings can have a significant role in helping to reduce carbon emissions, which can be supported by improving the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings.
- 9.26 The Government has established that through Part L of the Building Regulations, emissions allowed from new buildings will be reduced incrementally and that “zero carbon” buildings will be required within the plan period. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 stipulated that a review of minimum energy performance requirements under building regulations must be carried out and it is expected that changes will be made to current standards.

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation

Policy DES9 - Renewable Energy

The Council encourages schemes for renewable and low carbon energy generation. Planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy generation will be supported, provided that they do not cause a significantly adverse effect to:

- i) Landscape, both designated AONB**
- ii) Biodiversity, including protected habitats and species and Conservation Target Areas**
- iii) The historic environment, both designated and non-designated assets, including by development within their settings**
- iv) The visual amenity and openness of the Green Belt**
- v) The safe movement of traffic and pedestrians**
- vi) Residential amenity.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.

- 9.27 The Government has set a target of 15% of the UK’s energy to come from renewable sources by 2020. To help increase the use of renewable and low carbon energy we will promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources, including community-led initiatives, and design policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts.

Policy DES10: New buildings or structures in the countryside and rural areas

New buildings or structures will only be permitted in the countryside and rural areas where:

- **There is a demonstrable need for the building or structure; and**
- **Where the demonstrable need cannot be met by existing buildings or structures and full use has been made of existing buildings worthy of retention.**

Any new buildings or structures in the countryside and rural areas should:

- **Be considered to be sustainable development in accordance with this plan**
- **Be of high quality and inclusive design with appropriate landscaping in accordance with the design, landscape and environmental policies of this plan**
- **Wherever possible or acceptable, be located close to existing buildings rather than in open countryside; and**
- **Accord with the Council's Design Guide.**

9.28 The planning system should seek to support a prosperous rural economy. We will support economic growth in rural areas to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development and balancing sustainable growth with the protection of the countryside.

9.29 The design of farm buildings requires special consideration as their scale, materials and general appearance are often designed for function and economy rather than to fit into the landscape, and they can potentially be seriously damaging to the visual amenities of the countryside. Where new farm buildings are proposed, they should be sited to take advantage of natural screening features and levels to reduce their impact on the landscape. It is important to have regard to the need to assimilate the design and materials of agricultural buildings into the countryside or, where located close to other traditional farm buildings, to respect the scale and materials of such buildings. In the Council's view the siting and design of agricultural buildings should receive the most careful attention.

9.30 Buildings in the open countryside should be sensitively related to existing settlement patterns, the landscape and wildlife resources. Where a new building is essential for an acceptable farm diversification scheme, a small-scale building may be permitted, subject to the criteria in this plan. The Council may also seek a legal agreement to tie the building to the land to discourage subsequent fragmentation of the agricultural unit by separate use of the building.

Re-use of Rural Buildings

Policy DES11 - Re-use of rural buildings

Where permission is required for the re-use of a rural building(s) outside the built-up areas of the towns and villages, permission will be granted provided that:

- i) The building(s) is/are of permanent and substantial construction and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction**
- ii) Their form, bulk and general design maintains or enhances the character of their surroundings**
- iii) The fabric and essential character of the buildings are maintained**
- iv) If the site is in the Green Belt the proposal is in accordance with the local plan and national policy; and**
- v) There are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections.**

In the case of proposals for the re-use of a rural building(s) for residential use planning permission will only be granted where other uses have been explored and found to be unacceptable in planning terms.

9.31 The re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of the rural areas for commercial and industrial development, as well as for tourism, sport and recreation. The re-use of rural buildings can reduce demands for new building in the countryside, avoid leaving an existing building vacant, boost the economy and provide jobs. In recent years, the re-use of rural buildings has provided a substantial stock of buildings for employment use. This policy applies to buildings which are outside the built-up areas of the towns and villages of the District.

- 9.32 Buildings to be reused should be permanent and substantial, and not require reconstruction. To meet this requirement, buildings should normally be enclosed on all sides and the whole of the structure covered by a roof and it should be in a sound structural condition. The Council may request applicants to provide a structural survey to demonstrate that this requirement can be met.
- 9.33 We will generally support the re-use of rural buildings for employment use. Such buildings are often particularly suitable as they often need little adaptation. New development should be located where the need to travel by car can be reduced and where cycling and walking and the use of public transport can be encouraged. Any proposals for the enclosure of adjoining land as part of the re-use of the building will be an important consideration especially in terms of potential impact on the landscape.
- 9.34 To prevent the proliferation of buildings in the countryside, planning permission for the conversion of farm buildings may be subject to conditions to prevent their replacement by new buildings under permitted development rights. Similarly, the Council is unlikely to grant planning permission for the conversion of buildings erected under permitted development rights where they have clearly not been genuinely needed or used for agriculture.





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10 TOWN CENTRES AND RETAILING

Introduction

- 10.1 Our vision for South Oxfordshire is that all communities will have access to the services they value including high quality leisure, retail and cultural facilities supporting the health and wellbeing of everyone. South Oxfordshire will be a prime tourist destination, helping our towns and villages to remain vibrant and prosperous.
- 10.2 Didcot is the largest town within South Oxfordshire and is the focus for a significant amount of planned growth, whilst the three market towns (Henley, Thame and Wallingford) retain their role as key service centres for the rural community and are historic towns attractive to visitors. There are also 12 larger villages within the District that provide a more limited range of shops and services which serve the local community²². It is important that even in changing economic times, that these centres are maintained and enhanced in order to remain active and vibrant so that they retain their role as a service centre.
- 10.3 South Oxfordshire published a Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment in 2016 which provides an assessment of retail and other town centre uses within the District's four main centres (Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford) and to forecast the need for new retail floorspace in the District over the plan period.
- 10.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets a default threshold of 2,500m² gross floorspace, above which all proposals for retail, leisure and office development outside town centres that are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, should be accompanied by an impact assessment²³. The NPPF indicates that local planning authorities can consider setting a local threshold for retail impact assessments, where it is felt this is necessary.
- 10.5 Analysis undertaken by retail consultants²⁴ has demonstrated that Didcot town centre requires improvements to its comparison goods (non-food) retail offer to meet the growth agenda of the town, and that the other main centres in the District – whilst generally performing strongly – are relatively small and could potentially be adversely impacted by inappropriate out- of-centre development. Policy TC1 therefore sets local floorspace thresholds for town centres based on recommendations in the 2016 Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment. Any proposals that exceed the local floorspace thresholds will need to be accompanied by an impact assessment based on a methodology and assumptions that have been agreed with the Council in advance.

²² The full assessment of the settlements in South Oxfordshire is available in the Settlement Assessment Background Paper, June 2016

²³ Paragraph 26 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Communities and Local Government, March 2012

²⁴ Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment 2016 – GVA Grimley Ltd

10.6 An update to the retail study will be undertaken to inform the next stage of the Local Plan.

Policy TC1: Retail and town and larger village centres

The District's towns and larger villages defined in the Settlement Hierarchy are the preferred locations for larger scale development or redevelopment for retailing and other main town centre uses. These centres will be supported, ensuring all communities have access to the services and facilities they value. Town centre boundaries are identified for each of the towns.

The hierarchy of centres in the District is:

- **Town centre: Didcot, Henley, Thame, Wallingford**
- **Larger village centre: Berinsfield, Benson, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Goring, Nettlebed, Sonning Common, Watlington, Wheatley, Woodcote.**

To achieve the long-term success of our centres, development proposals will be permitted that:

- **Provide further retail and leisure uses within the town and larger village centres through infill development and small scale redevelopment, or**
- **Diversify the town centres to provide uses that are complementary to retail, while not undermining the town's retail role, including where appropriate mixed-use developments, uses that contribute to the evening economy, community facilities and upper floor residential and office uses, or**
- **Reinforce the local distinctiveness of our towns, improve their vitality and viability and encourage more visits, or**
- **Seek to improve access and movement for all users to the town and larger village centres.**

As a starting point, the Council will expect proposals for main town centre uses to be sited within town and then larger village centres. Applications for such uses on unallocated sites outside town and larger village centres will be required to be in accessible locations well connected to the town and larger village centre.

Proposals on sites outside of town centres, or on unallocated sites, will be subject to the sequential test and, for proposals over 500m², a retail

impact assessment will be required. Proposals that do not satisfy these tests will not be permitted. Changes of use within defined primary and secondary retail frontages will be managed to maintain the role of the town centres.

Where planning permission is required, proposals for appropriately scaled retail developments in rural areas will be supported where it supports an existing agricultural business and it can be demonstrated that it would not have an adverse impact on an existing retail offer.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7

- 10.7 Town Centre boundaries are currently identified in Neighbourhood Development Plans (Henley and Thame) and the Adopted Local Plan Proposals Map. At the next stage of this Local Plan, a full Proposals Map will be provided which includes these boundaries.



Amount and location of retail floorspace

- 10.8 The South Oxfordshire District Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment 2016 updates the Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment 2009, (updated 2010) and provides the evidence base for the retail strategy and policies.
- 10.9 The Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment 2016 has considered the need for both comparison (non-food) and convenience (food) floorspace. This identified the following:

Policy TC2: Amount and location of new retail floorspace

New comparison and convenience retail floorspace will be provided in line with the following requirements:

	2011-2019	2020-2024	2025-2031
Convenience goods floorspace	2,100m²	700m² (2,800m²)	900m² (3,700m²)
Comparison goods floorspace	2,300m²	5,500m² (7,800m²)	8,500m² (16,300m²)

- 10.10 The evidence base recommends that the following market towns would benefit from additional convenience retail floorspace as set out below:

Henley	between 1,500 to 2,000m ² net foodstore
Wallingford	up to 2,000m ² net foodstore
Thame	a small-medium format foodstore, up to 1,500m ² net

Policy TC3 – Retailing in Henley

Subject to identification of a suitable site, the Council will seek the provision of additional convenience goods floorspace, in the format of a single foodstore in the region of 1,500m² to 2,000m².

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 3, 4, 6 & 7.

- 10.11 It is considered that the Neighbourhood Development Plans can consider the provision of these needs. There is no qualitative need for comparison goods floorspace, therefore it is not recommended to direct a significant amount to Henley. Applications for new comparison goods floorspace in Henley town centre should be treated on individual merits and should be of a scale appropriate to the size of the centre.
- 10.12 The key opportunity site which has potential to accommodate retail floorspace is the "Empstead Works/Stuart Turner" site. The site is allocated for retail development in the Henley-Harpsden Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 10.13 Applications for new comparison goods floorspace outside Henley town centre should be resisted, and be required to demonstrate compliance with the sequential test and a locally set retail impact threshold (500m²)

Policy TC4: Retailing in Thame

Proposals for a smaller/medium format convenience/food store in the town will be supported.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 3, 4, 6 & 7.

- 10.14 An appropriate site has been identified as part of the comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment of the Cattle Market site, but the current made Neighbourhood Development Plan excludes this use in its allocation. The review of the Neighbourhood Development Plan should consider the allocation of a smaller format convenience store at an appropriate location in the town.

Policy TC5 – Retailing in Wallingford

Proposals for an A1 foodstore (c.2000m²) and for the redevelopment of the former Waitrose site to include retail provision will be supported. These should be delivered through the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Development Plan must be submitted to the Council within 12 months of adoption of this local plan. If the Neighbourhood Development Plan is not adequately progressed in this time the local planning authority will allocate site(s) through a review of the local plan.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 3, 4, 6 & 7.

- 10.15 The need for a new foodstore (c 2000m²) will be met if the Lupton Road permission is implemented. Wallingford has the lowest expenditure retention rate of the four towns in the District (48 per cent) suggesting there is scope for improvement to existing foodstore provision. This would be met if the Lupton Road permission was implemented. Should this permission not progress there is a qualitative need for a new foodstore (c. 2,000m² net).
- 10.16 A priority is to secure the letting of the former Waitrose store on St Martin's Street to a quality retailer. There is no qualitative need for comparison goods floorspace.
- 10.17 The Orchard Centre phase 2A permission proposes c.8,700m² which meets the comparison goods needs for the District up to 2024. This approach does not rule out appropriately-scaled developments on smaller town centre opportunity sites elsewhere in the District, but does ensure that the Council will be able to meet its identified needs in full, as required by the NPPF.

Primary and Secondary Frontages

- 10.18 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to define primary and secondary shopping frontage in their network of centres. Together, the primary and secondary shopping frontages form the "primary shopping area", which, for the purposes of the NPPF's retail policies²⁵, equates to the "town centre".
- 10.19 The focus for future retail development and other town centre uses will continue to centre on the primary and secondary retail frontages and town centre policy areas as defined. Henley and Thame have identified town centre boundaries and the boundary for Wallingford's centre is identified on the Adopted Local Plan Proposals Map.
- 10.20 The Henley and Harpsden Joint Neighbourhood Development Plan (2016) identifies the primary shopping frontage; the secondary shopping frontage is on the Adopted Local Plan Proposals Map. The Neighbourhood Development Plan for Thame (2013) identifies both primary and secondary frontages.
- 10.21 The primary and secondary shopping frontages for both Didcot and Wallingford are identified in the Adopted Local Plan Proposals Map and will be identified on the Proposals Map at the next stage of this Local Plan.

²⁵ i.e. the sequential and impact assessment, paragraphs 24-27 of the NPPF, (March 2012)

Policy TC6 - Primary Retail frontages

Neighbourhood Development Plans, where they exist, are expected to designate primary shopping frontages. Where there is no Neighbourhood Development Plan, or if the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not designate boundaries and frontages within 12 months of adoption of this plan, the Council will define and the primary shopping frontages, using appropriate evidence.

PRIMARY FRONTAGES

Within the primary shopping frontages, new A1 (retail) development will be encouraged. The change of use of A1 (retail) premises at ground floor level will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that the unit is not suitable for continued A1 use, the proposed use will maintain or enhance the vitality of the area and it would not have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of adjacent residents or businesses.

SECONDARY FRONTAGES

Within the secondary shopping frontages, the change of use from A1 (retail) to use classes A2 (financial institutions), A3 (restaurants and cafes), A4 (pubs), A5 (hot food takeaway), D1 (non-residential institutions) and D2 (assembly and leisure) will be permitted provided that it would not have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of adjacent residents or businesses, or result in a continuous frontage of two or more non-A1 retail units.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 3, 6 & 7.

- 1022 Primary shopping frontages have yet to be identified in the 12 larger villages have identified primary frontages to date and it is considered that this should be appropriately explored through the preparation and review of Neighbourhood Development Plans. Where a Neighbourhood Development Plan does not exist, or the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not designate primary frontages, within 12 months of adoption of this Local Plan, the Council will define the primary frontages based on the evidence from the updated retail study.



15

11

COMMUNITY AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Introduction

- 11.1 The ability to access local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship forms an essential part of the quality of life for residents of the District. We recognise the importance of these community facilities in promoting social interaction and cohesive communities and the Local Plan promotes the retention and development of local services and community facilities in its towns and villages.
- 11.2 It is important that there is a sufficient network of facilities across the District. We need to provide the right type of housing in our towns and villages, particularly our smaller settlements, to attract young people and families that will support the sustainable provision of facilities and help to ensure their vibrancy. We recognise that there is pressure on local services, particularly schools, doctors, surgeries and community facilities, and the need to provide facilities for all parts of the community, including people with disabilities and young people.
- 11.3 Planning plays an important role in safeguarding existing and developing new community and recreational facilities as it can create new opportunities for exchanges and interactions between a variety of community members.
- 11.4 Much of the Council's role in ensuring there are sufficient community and recreational facilities is undertaken in the preparation of the Local Plan and when determining planning applications. In determining planning applications for the loss of community facilities, the Council will be guided by its Community Facilities Viability Assessment²⁶.
- 11.5 We will require developers to make contributions towards the provision of new community and recreational facilities and the ongoing maintenance of existing facilities.
- 11.6 The Council will also support communities in protecting, enhancing and delivering community and recreation facilities in their towns and villages. Town and parish councils can seek to do this through the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders or to construct or rebuild community buildings under a Community Right to Build Order. Local communities are also able to identify buildings or open space that

²⁶ Community Facilities Viability Assessment, 2014. Available online at www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan/local-plan-2011

are of value to them and apply for them to be listed as Assets of Community Value allowing them to bid for the assets if they are put up for sale. We have a support role to play in taking these powers forward.

Policy CF1 - Safeguarding Community Facilities

Proposals that result in the loss of an essential community facility or service, through change of use or redevelopment, will not be permitted unless:

- i) Suitable alternative provision is made for the facility (or similar facilities of equivalent community accessibility and value) on a site elsewhere in the locality**
- ii) It has been determined that the community facility is no longer needed**
- iii) In the case of commercial services, it is not economically viable.**

Appropriate, detailed and robust evidence will be required to satisfy the above criteria. The Council will require the independent assessment of this evidence.

Planning conditions or legal obligations may be necessary to ensure that any replacement facilities are provided. Any replacement facility should normally be available before the original facility is lost.

A community facility or service may be essential, either because it is one of a limited number of that nature in a settlement or area, or is fundamental to the quality and convenience of everyday life in a settlement. If suitable alternative provision already exists, a facility will not be considered essential.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 3, 4, 6 & 7

- 11.7 In the interests of the well-being of local communities, it is important to protect the existing community facilities in our towns and villages wherever possible, by resisting their loss to another use. We will give priority to the retention and enhancement of community uses on established sites.

Policy CF2 - Provision of Community Facilities and Services

Proposals that would result in the provision of additional community facilities or services within settlements will be permitted, subject to there being no conflict with the other policies in this plan.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 3, 4, 6 & 7.

11.8 In general, we will welcome proposals involving the provision of new community facilities and services for the local population, provided that there are no overriding objections to the proposal. The provision and improvement of public house facilities will also be considered in relation to policies CF1 and CF2.

11.9 In the event that a community identify the need for a new local facility, we will support the community in exploring this through a Neighbourhood Development Plan and/or Community Right to Build Order.

Recreation

11.10 Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation make an important contribution to the health and well-being of the residents of and visitors to South Oxfordshire and also provide a range of benefits including biodiversity, green infrastructure and visual amenity. National guidance recognises the important role that the planning system has in facilitating healthy communities through providing access to high quality facilities for sport and recreation, including open spaces for informal recreation.

Policy CF3 - New Open Space, Sport and Recreation facilities

Proposals for sport and recreation facilities will be encouraged and supported, in line with other policies in the Plan. Where possible new sports and recreation facilities should be co-located with other community uses and well related to the settlements they serve, being sited within or adjacent to settlements. Where new, major facilities for outdoor sport are to be provided they should, as far as possible, be accessible by public transport. Provision for the future long-term maintenance and management of the facilities will be sought as part of the development.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 3, 4, 6 & 7.

- 11.11 The Council would encourage and support proposals for new sport and recreation facilities provided that they are appropriately located to serve the local population and, if appropriate, the wider population by public transport. The long term maintenance and management of the facilities must be agreed as part of any planning application and may need to be set out in a legal agreement. The Council will also explore options for the management of new areas of open space to be undertaken by community owned and run trusts.

Policy CF4 - Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

The Council will seek to protect, maintain and where possible enhance existing open space, sport, recreation, play facilities and land including playing fields to ensure their continued contribution to the health and well-being of visitors and residents. Development proposals that result in the loss of such facilities will only be permitted where:

- i) It can be demonstrated that alternative facilities of equal or better quality will be provided in an equally accessible location as part of the development**
- ii) The loss is associated with an alternative sports provision that would deliver benefits that would clearly outweigh the loss**
- iii) An assessment has been undertaken to demonstrate the existing facility is surplus to requirements.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 4, 6 & 7.

11.12 The policy above is intended to safeguard all existing recreation facilities whether formal or informal, publicly or privately owned, and whether buildings or open land, including allotments. This is considered important in view of the growing demand for recreational facilities and the restrictions on public spending. There is also increasing concern about the loss of recreational facilities, particularly within more urban areas, as once land is lost to development it cannot be brought back into recreational use if a need arises for further provision in the future.

Policy CF5 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation in new residential development

New residential development will be required to provide or contribute towards accessible open space, sport, recreation and play in line with the most up to date standards (currently set out in South Oxfordshire District Council Open Space Standards 2013²⁷), including:

- **Amenity greenspace (including parks and gardens)**
- **Allotments**
- **Equipped children's play areas**
- **Sports facilities**
- **Playing pitches**

The provision of open space, sport, recreation and play is expected to be delivered on site, unless this is demonstrated not to be feasible.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 4, 6 & 7.

11.13 Provision of the new facilities should be made within the development site itself and in perpetuity. Where it is demonstrated that on-site provision is wholly or partially infeasible, a financial contribution will be required and collected through the Council's adopted Community Infrastructure Levy. The future management of open space provided on site will need to be agreed with the Council to ensure that residents can enjoy the benefits of them in the long term.

²⁷ www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-studies/evidence-base-core-stra-8



12 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 12.1 Monitoring the performance of the Development Plan is essential to assess the effectiveness of South Oxfordshire District Council and to record whether proposals and policies are being implemented and delivered. The outputs of appropriate monitoring will enable the Council to be fully informed of the progress of development in the area and whether a full or partial review of the plan is necessary.
- 12.2 The NPPF sets out that plans should be flexible to adapt to changing circumstances. As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the Council is committed to reviewing the plan if delivery issues emerge through monitoring, and will implement measures to ensure that housing, employment and infrastructure needs are met during the plan period.
- 12.3 In order to ensure effective monitoring, a framework has been prepared, setting out key indicators that will track the delivery of the plan.
- 12.4 The tables below set out the indicators in relation to each SODC objective. They include any specifically-identified target, the source of the data, and the frequency of monitoring. The range of indicators reflect SODC's relationship with other plans and programmes and therefore includes indicators required by Government as part of the "Single List", "Contextual Indicators" (CI) which relate to local characteristics and issues of the locality and other "Local Indicators" such as those from the Local Transport Plan (LTP).
- 12.5 The monitoring outcomes for each Development Plan Document will be reported in each Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR is required to outline the progress in preparing the documents and assess the extent to which the policies are being implemented and their effectiveness. Where a policy is not meeting its objective, the AMR will explain why and suggest what action should be taken. The monitoring framework itself will be reviewed as part of the AMR.

1. Settlements

- 1.1 Support the settlement hierarchy, the growth and development of Didcot Garden Town, the creation of new settlements at the heart of the District, the growth of our market towns and the vitality of our villages.
- 1.2 Support rural communities and “their way of life”, recognising that this is what attracts people to the District.
- 1.3 Meet identified housing needs by delivering high-quality, sustainable, attractive places for people to live and work.
- 1.4 Focus growth in Science Vale through delivering homes and jobs, retail and leisure facilities and enhanced transport infrastructure.

Indicator	Target	Source	Period
Meet identified housing need	Housing Trajectory showing for the ring fence area and the rest of District area: i. Annual dwelling completions, ii. Annual average no. of additional dwellings required to meet housing targets	Annual housing monitoring	Annually
Net dwelling completions, based on the set housing requirements and 5YHLS	To deliver against the established objectively assessed need over the plan period	Annual housing monitoring	Annually
A coordinated approach to new development in Science Vale through an urban design framework	Development of housing, employment and infrastructure in tandem	Annual housing monitoring	Annually

2. Housing

- 2.1 Deliver a wide range of housing options to cater for the housing needs of our community (self-build, starter homes, older person's accommodation).
- 2.2 Support the regeneration of housing and facilities to strengthen communities, and address identified poverty and social exclusion.
- 2.3 Support meeting the economic and housing needs of the county as a whole, reflecting the special character of South Oxfordshire.

Indicator	Target	Source	Period
Net dwelling completions, based on the set housing requirements and 5YHLS	To deliver against the established objectively assessed need over the plan period	Annual housing monitoring	Annually
Net completions of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling showpeople accommodation against requirements, based on the set target	To deliver against the established objectively assessed need over the plan period	Annual housing monitoring	Annually
Net affordable housing completions against annual requirements	To deliver against the established objectively assessed need over the plan period	Internal monitoring	Annually

3. Economy

- 3.1 Improve employment opportunities and employment land provision, providing high quality local jobs to help retain more of its skilled residents in the local workforce.
- 3.2 Support business growth, especially in locations close to existing business areas, transport connections and broadband provision and which provide the opportunity to reduce commuting distances.
- 3.3 Ensure economic and housing growth are balanced, to support sustainable journeys to work.
- 3.4 Support the retail and service sectors as well as high-tech industries.

- 3.5 Create the conditions whereby world-renowned and cutting edge industries choose to locate and grow their businesses here, contributing to a strong and successful economy, in line with the Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire.
- 3.6 Inspire the next generation of workers by planning for high quality education facilities.
- 3.7 Encourage tourism by protecting our built and natural assets, such as the Thames, and providing services and facilities for visitors.

Indicator	Target	Source	Period
Economically inactive persons aged 16-64	Maintain levels close to the south east and national average	ONS	Annually
Net amount of employment floorspace created by use class (employment-generating uses)	To deliver against employment requirement over the plan period	Authority Employment Monitoring	Annually
Number of new business "births"	To increase business start-ups in the SODC area	ONS	Annually
Amount of employment land lost to other non-employment-generating uses	No target but annually assessed	Authority Employment Monitoring	Annually
Gross weekly earnings of full-time workers	Maintain levels close to the south east and national average	ONS/NOMIS	Annually
Percentage of residents with NVQ Level 4 qualification and above	Maintain levels close to the south east and national average	ONS	Annually

4. Infrastructure

- 4.1 Ensure that essential infrastructure is delivered to support our existing residents and services as well as growth.
- 4.2 Make sustainable transport an attractive and viable choice for people, whilst recognising that car travel and parking provision will continue to be important in this rural District.

Indicator	Target	Source	Period
Net additional floorspace from retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses created within defined town centres	Linked to strategic centre allocations in the emerging local plan	Authority Employment Monitoring	Annually
Net additional floorspace from retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses outside designated centres/contrary to policy	No target but annually assessed	Authority Employment Monitoring	Annually

5. Design

- 5.1 Deliver high quality, innovative, well designed and locally distinctive developments in sustainable locations.
- 5.2 Support development that respects the scale and character of our towns and villages, enhancing the special character of our historic settlements and the surrounding countryside.

Indicator	Target	Source	Period
Proportion of strategic sites with comprehensive masterplans completed and agreed with the local planning authority	All Strategic Sites to have comprehensive masterplans to guide their future development	Internal monitoring	Annually

6. Community

- 6.1 Champion neighbourhood planning, empowering local communities to direct development within their area and provide support to ensure Neighbourhood Development Plans are deliverable, achievable and sustainable.
- 6.2 Provide access to high quality leisure, recreation, cultural, community and health facilities.
- 6.3 Ensure all communities have access to the services and facilities they value, supporting the health and wellbeing of everyone.

Indicator	Target	Source	Period
Number of homes provided with fibre broadband by milestone area against set target	Target to be agreed, but progress to be monitored on an annual basis	Better Broadband Oxfordshire	Annually
Net additional employment floorspace created within the rural areas by use class per annum	No target but annually assessed	Authority Monitoring Report	Annually
Net retail floorspace in rural areas (Change of Use from A1)	No net loss of floorspace	Authority Monitoring Report	Annually
Number of Air Quality Management Areas	Reduce the number of Air Quality Management Areas	Internal Monitoring	Annually
Amount of public open space provided in new developments	All schemes to meet policy standards for the provision of public open space	Internal monitoring	Annually
Number of Lower Super Output Areas in the 40% most deprived areas in England	To reduce the number of Lower Super Output Areas amongst the 40% most deprived in England	Indices of Deprivation	Annually
Number of essential community facilities lost or gained through the development process	No loss of community facilities	Internal monitoring	Annually
Provision of sporting facilities	Increase sports facilities in the South Oxfordshire area	Sport England Local Sport Profiles	Annually
Access to green space - % of dwellings having access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-maintained, high-quality and versatile green space within 300 metres 20ha green space site within 2km 100ha green space site within 5km 500ha green space site within 10km 	Maintain and improve the % of dwellings with sufficient access to green space	Internal monitoring	Annually

7. Natural and Built Environment

7.1 Protect and enhance the natural environment, including biodiversity, the landscape, green infrastructure and our waterways, placing particular importance on the value of the Oxford Green Belt, our two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the River Thames.

7.2 Conserve and enhance our rich and varied historic assets and their settings, celebrating these as some of our strongest attributes.

Indicator	Target	Source	Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in areas of UK41 priority habitats • Change in number of UK41 priority species • Distribution & status of farmland birds • Distribution & status of water voles • Changes in areas of non-agri-environmental biodiversity gains 	No net loss	Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report	Annually
Conditions of SSSIs and other areas of landscape and biodiversity importance	To maintain the protection of SSSIs and continually manage and enhance areas of landscape and biodiversity importance	Natural England	Annually
Type of development granted permission in the Green Belt	No inappropriate development in the Green Belt	Internal monitoring	Annually
Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Scheduled Monuments on the "at risk register"	To continue to monitor and to support the historic environment	Local Authority BAR (Buildings at Risk) registers. English Heritage – Heritage at Risk register	Annually
Net changes in the number of Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas, Battlefield and sites of archaeological importance including Scheduled Monuments	No net loss	Internal monitoring	Annually

8. Climate change

8.2 Minimise carbon emissions and other pollution such as water, air, noise and light, and increase our resilience to the likely impact of climate change, especially flooding.

Indicator	Target	Source	Period
Per capita reduction in CO ² emissions by local authority area	Reduction in the carbon dioxide emissions per person in the District	National Indicator, NI186	Annually
New developments incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) development	No target but monitoring progress	Internal monitoring (SA indicator)	Annually
Installed Renewable Capacity for South Oxfordshire	No target but monitoring progress	ReGenSE Renewable Energy Progress Report – Annual Survey (SA indicator)	Annually
10% of energy demand from major sites derived from decentralised, renewable or low carbon sources	All developments over 10 residential dwellings or non-residential development over 1000m ²	Internal monitoring	Annually
Progress of delivery of schemes included in updated IDP	To deliver strategic infrastructure items in accordance with the timeframes identified in the IDP	Internal monitoring	Annually

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