



# Joint Local Plan

## Preferred Options Consultation

(Regulation 18 Part 2)

South Oxfordshire and  
Vale of White Horse  
District Councils

January 2024

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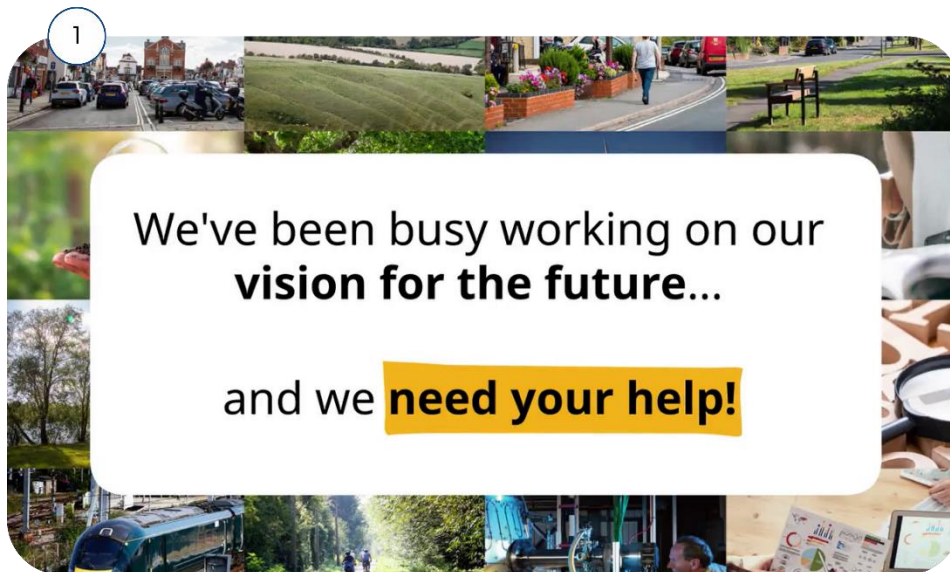
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# 1. Introduction

## What is the Joint Local Plan?

Here is a brief overview of what our Joint Local Plan is, where we are in the process of preparing it and how you can get involved at this stage. You can view these images as an animated video online at: [www.southandvale.gov.uk/JLP](http://www.southandvale.gov.uk/JLP)



We've been busy working on our vision for the future... and we need your help!

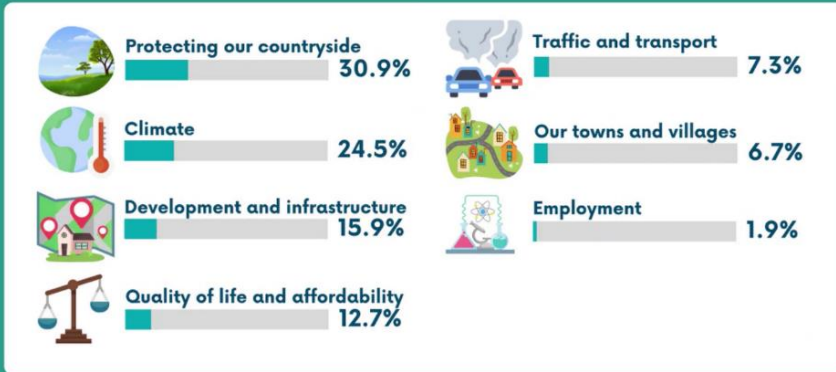


In 2022, you shared what you love most about your community...



3

And you prioritised the key issues we're facing.



...and you prioritised the key issues we're facing.

4



Using your feedback and the latest research, we've drafted policies for the future of our districts. And now we want to hear from you!

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Climate



Housing, towns and villages



Environment



Development



Travel and transport



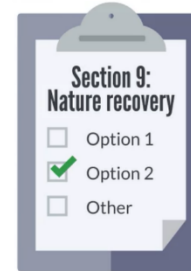
and more!

View our preferred options and have your say on topics like climate, housing, environment, development, travel, and so much more.

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## Two ways to share your thoughts

### Joint Local Plan in a Nutshell



Get the facts fast



### Comment on draft policies



Delve into the details



There are two ways to share your thoughts:

1. Our Plan in a Nutshell has topic summaries and fast facts to make it easy to give your feedback.
2. Or get right into the detail and comment on specific policies on the things that matter most to you.

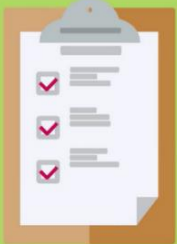
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### How to get involved:

Online surveys

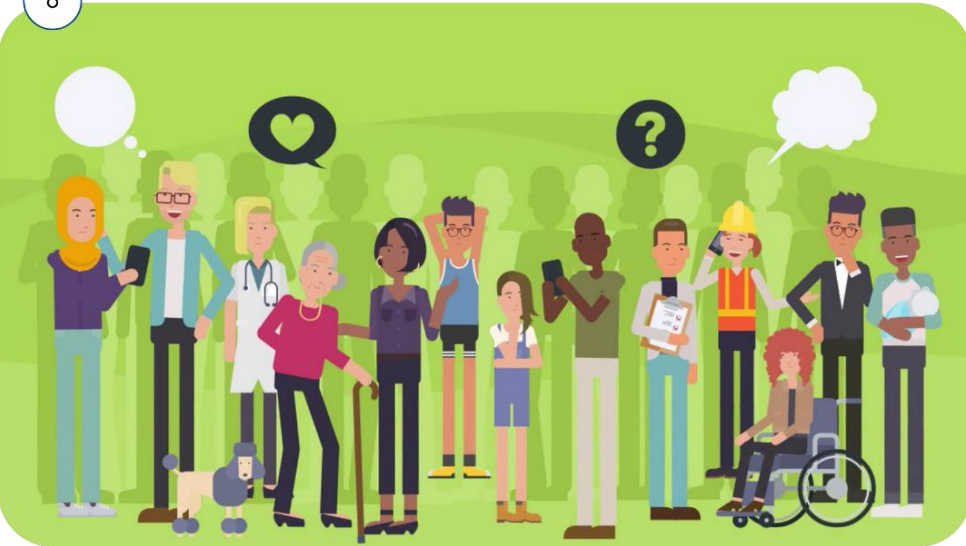
Print surveys

In-person events



You can have your say online, complete a printed survey, or come and have a chat with us at our in-person events across the districts.

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With your help, we can make sure our Joint Local Plan reflects the needs of all in our community.

Find out more and have your say today.



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Local plans set out how development will be planned and delivered over time to meet the current and future needs of people living and working in a particular district. They identify where development should take place and where development should be restricted because of the area's value for nature or heritage, its flood risk, the sustainability of the location and so on. This allows all the sites that developers want to develop to be compared, weighed up carefully and the best possible sites chosen. This is known as a planned system.

Local plans are key in making decisions on future planning applications in the area. Rather than a council deciding each application randomly, they provide a clear guide on what kind of developments are likely to be acceptable and should be approved without delay, and which types of proposal are unacceptable as they are contrary to policy.

In the past the councils have produced separate Local Plans for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. This time we are preparing a single Joint Local Plan (JLP) for both council areas. This is saving taxpayers' money and will provide a simpler single set of policies for our local communities, local agents and planning officers to use. It will be especially helpful where existing planned development sites straddle the district boundary, like at Didcot.

The last local plans were adopted in 2016 and 2019 (Vale of White Horse) and in 2020 (South Oxfordshire) and the new Joint Local Plan will replace these when it's adopted.

Both councils retain complete control of the plan, and both will be asked separately to adopt the final plan. There is no risk of development being 'foisted' by one council onto the other district because we have separate housing numbers for South Oxfordshire and the Vale and will plan all the housing for South Oxfordshire in South Oxfordshire, and all the housing for the Vale in the Vale. We will also continue to monitor the housing supply separately for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

### **How does it fit with other plans and strategies?**

At the beginning of the plan making process, we identified where some priorities set out in our Corporate Plans were linked to the main planning issues to be addressed in South Oxfordshire and the Vale. These priorities have shaped the vision, objectives and key themes for our Joint Local Plan.



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The image below is helpful to explain how other documents relate to and influence the way in which our planning policies are prepared:



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As you can see, the Development Plan for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts (which is the starting point for the assessment of all planning applications in our area) not only includes the local plan, but also any adopted neighbourhood development plans prepared by local communities; and any development planning documents relating to minerals and waste prepared by Oxfordshire County Council.

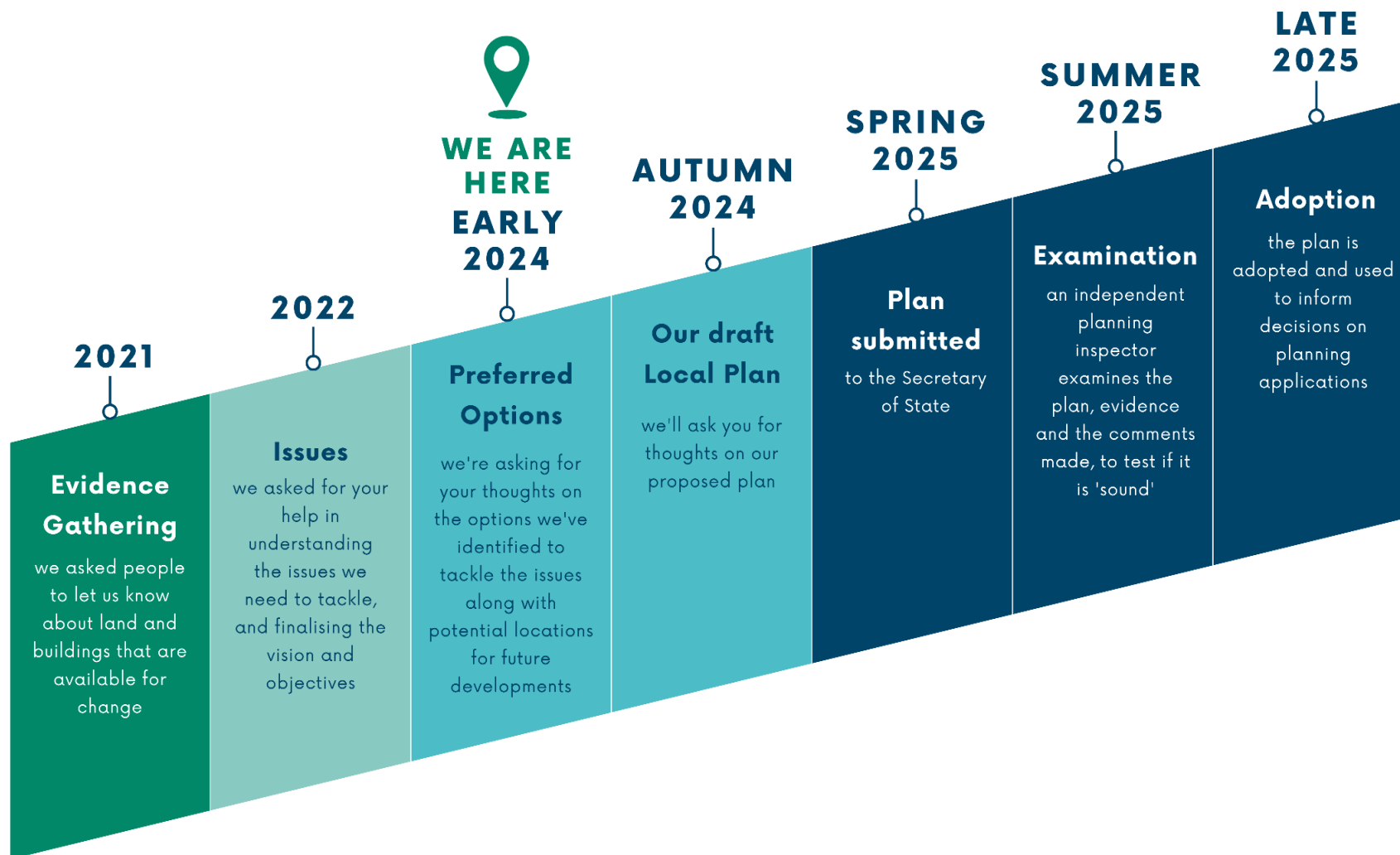
### **The local plan process**

We must follow government legislation and guidelines to create local plans. This means we need to create an updated one every few years.

We want to make things as easy as we can, so lots of people can take part, including people who are new to the idea of local plans. That's why we've simplified it a lot here. If you're interested to learn more, or you feel like you need to understand the process and context a bit better, head over to our Local Plan Explainer section where we explain it in more detail.

Here's a quick look at a timeline of the process to create our Joint Local Plan:





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## Joint Local Plan Preparation – Progress so far

We are making good progress with our plan preparation, and we've been busy considering the 314 survey responses (plus a further 2,564 responses submitted via our interactive website) that we received during our "Issues Consultation" which ran from May to June 2022. After reading all the responses, we updated our [interactive Issues Consultation website](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/42cd165a5d0b439d86c351c01688e586)<sup>1</sup> to share the consultation results. We also published a full [Issues Consultation Results](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/02/JLP-Issues-Consultation-Results-Document.pdf) document<sup>2</sup> in a more traditional document format. The consultation findings have provided a useful insight into the main issues facing our districts and how we can use the Joint Local Plan to address them.

Over the past year we have commissioned evidence on a wide range of topics which we will use to help shape our planning policies. We have carried out a Settlement Assessment to gain a better understanding of how well residents' everyday needs are met in the towns, villages and smaller settlements of South and Vale, and have also undertaken a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (or HELAA), which identifies a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and/or employment uses across our districts between now and 2041. Both assessments are important sources of evidence to inform plan-making.

To help draft and refine the emerging JLP policies, we have sought the views of officers from across council departments and we've also received invaluable input and guidance from our councillors.

Since our Issues Consultation in 2022, there have been some key changes which have influenced the way we have approached our plan making. The most significant change has been the decision of all the Oxfordshire councils not to progress with the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. This has meant that our Joint Local Plan now needs to include housing and employment land requirements, as well as taking a wider (more strategic) view on how we would like our districts to develop more sustainably over the next 18 years.

Our new evidence indicates no requirement for us to identify any new sites for larger-scale housing and/or employment development in the Joint Local Plan. This is because there is already planned development coming forward and we have enough sites already allocated in our existing local plans.

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<sup>1</sup> Interactive Issues Consultation website: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/42cd165a5d0b439d86c351c01688e586>

<sup>2</sup> Issues Consultation Results: [www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/02/JLP-Issues-Consultation-Results-Document.pdf](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/02/JLP-Issues-Consultation-Results-Document.pdf)

It did make sense though to take another look at our existing allocated sites, to see whether we wanted to remove any allocation (or a part of an allocation) from the plan, either because it didn't fit in with our preferred strategy for future development in South Oxfordshire and the Vale or because there were other significant reasons which would affect successful delivery of development on the site.

### Structure of our “Preferred Options” consultation document

We're delighted to be able to share our latest public consultation document with you now.

In both the interactive and traditional versions of the document, we set out our preferred policy and site options, alongside other alternatives that we have considered. We have also included proposed policy wording for our preferred options.

We have also prepared an interactive digital map to show where different policies and allocations are located. This map provides a hyperlink to the relevant written policy.

We've tried to avoid using planning 'jargon' as much as we can and have provided a glossary when we think some words or phrases might need a bit more explanation.

The Joint Local Plan takes forward the best aspects from existing South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Local Plan policies and, where appropriate, we have harmonised policy approaches and taken a cross-boundary view in our new policies, whilst also recognising the uniqueness of each district and the need for slightly different policy wording in some circumstances. We have also looked at best practice across all policy areas (such as in relation to net zero and climate change policies), with the ultimate aim of producing a plan that is at the forefront of policy development and is ground-breaking in terms of its style and accessibility to wider audiences.

Our Preferred Options will require further refinement and testing before we reach the Draft Plan stage in the autumn of 2024. However, we feel it is important to share detailed plan content now, so that everyone has the opportunity to feed into policy development at this key stage of plan preparation.

### Supporting documents

Alongside the Joint Local Plan, we need to carry out both Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of our emerging policies and site allocations. These assessments will make sure the plan considers the relevant environmental, social, and economic issues and minimises any potential negative impacts that our preferred policies or site

allocations (or their alternatives) might have in our districts. You can read and make comments on the latest version of the Sustainability Appraisal report, as well as on an initial HRA screening report during this consultation.

Other supporting documents that we have published include a summary of the consultation document (the JLP in a Nutshell) and some evidence base reports and topic papers, which explain the background/ rationale to particular policies or site allocations.

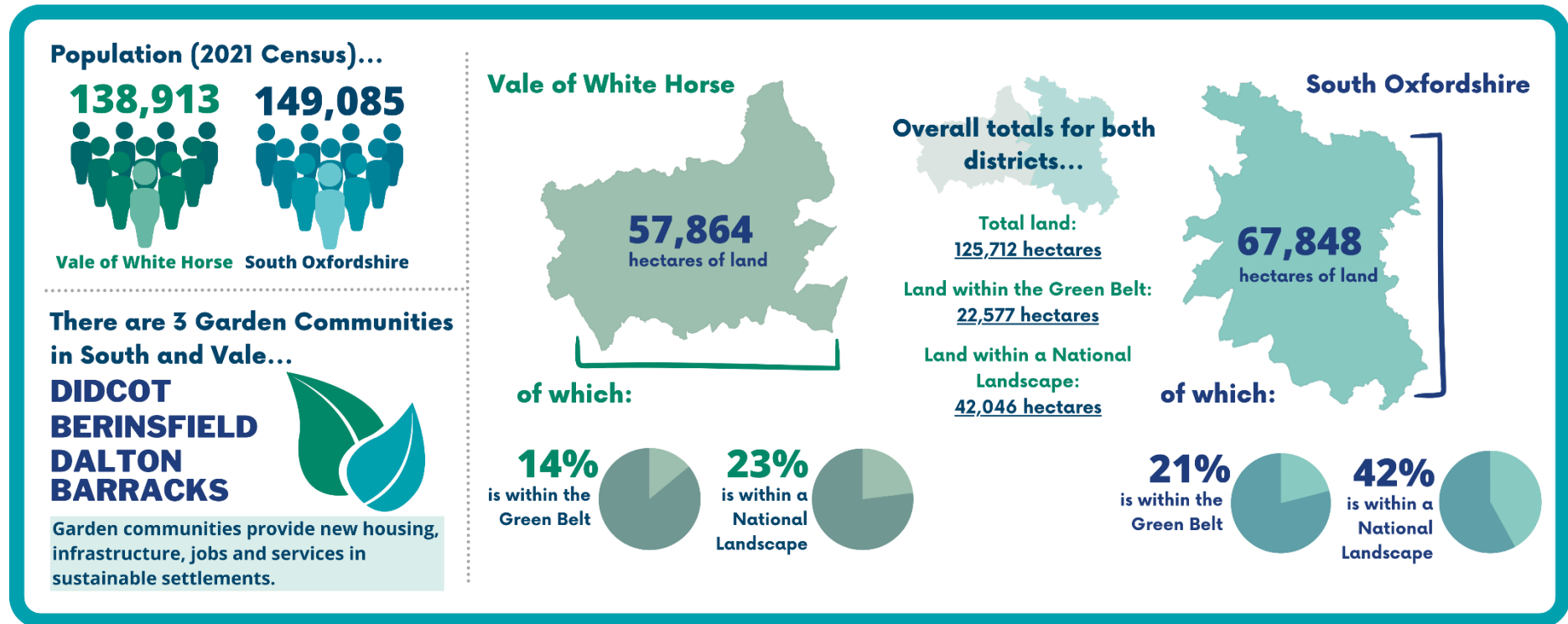
### **Tell us what you think**

As our policies are beginning to take shape, we'd really welcome your thoughts on whether you think we're headed in the right direction or whether you think there are still improvements we could make to our emerging plan.

You can respond to as many questions as you like in this consultation, which will run until 11.59pm on 21 February 2024. More details on how you can share your thoughts and comments can be found in Chapter 14. Get Involved and Next Steps.

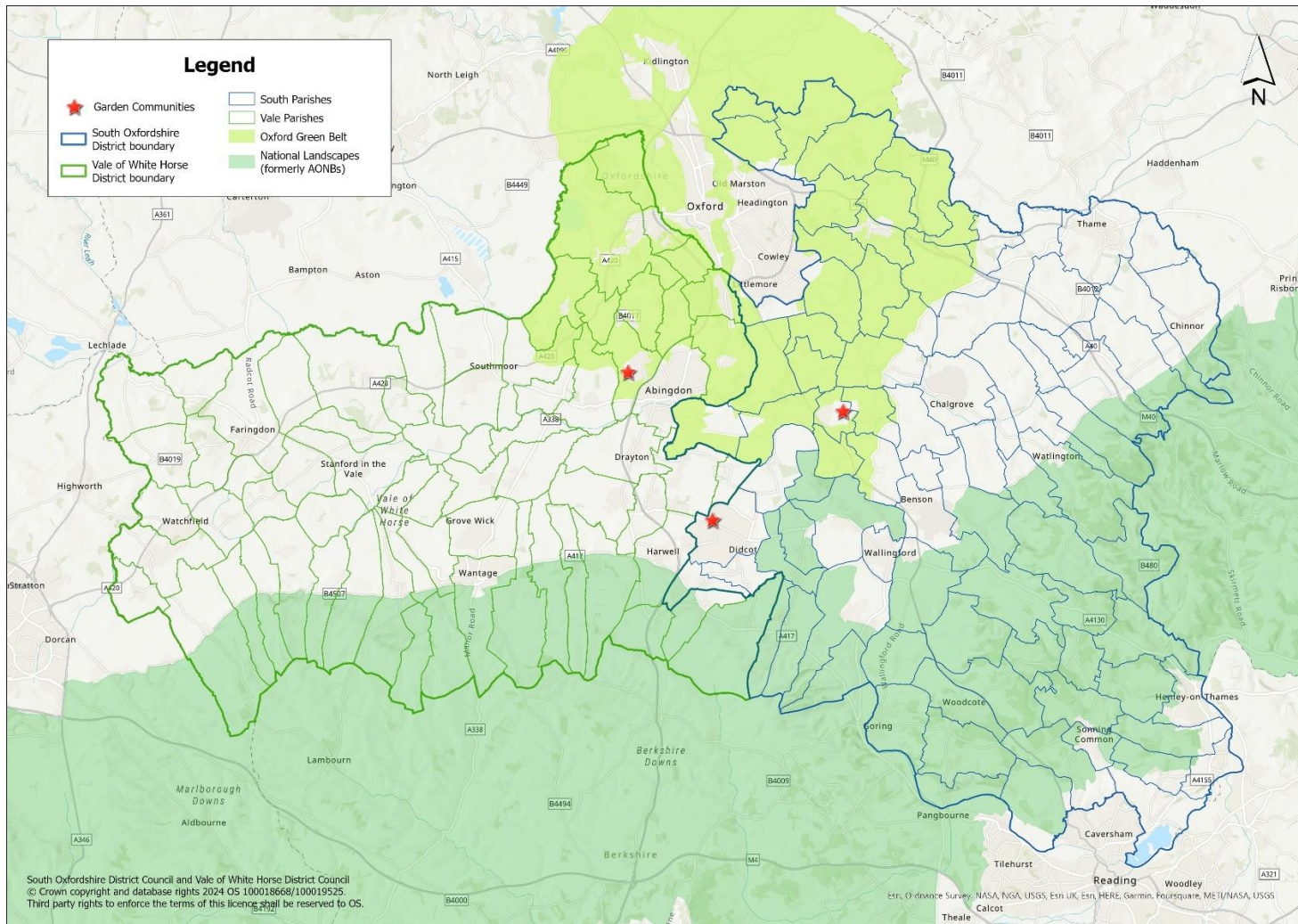
## 2. About the Districts

Here are some facts and figures about our districts that help set the scene.



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## Map of the districts



To explore this map in greater detail please visit our website: [www.southandvale.gov.uk/JLP](http://www.southandvale.gov.uk/JLP). See glossary for definitions of the terms which appear in this map.

## What do you value most about where you live?

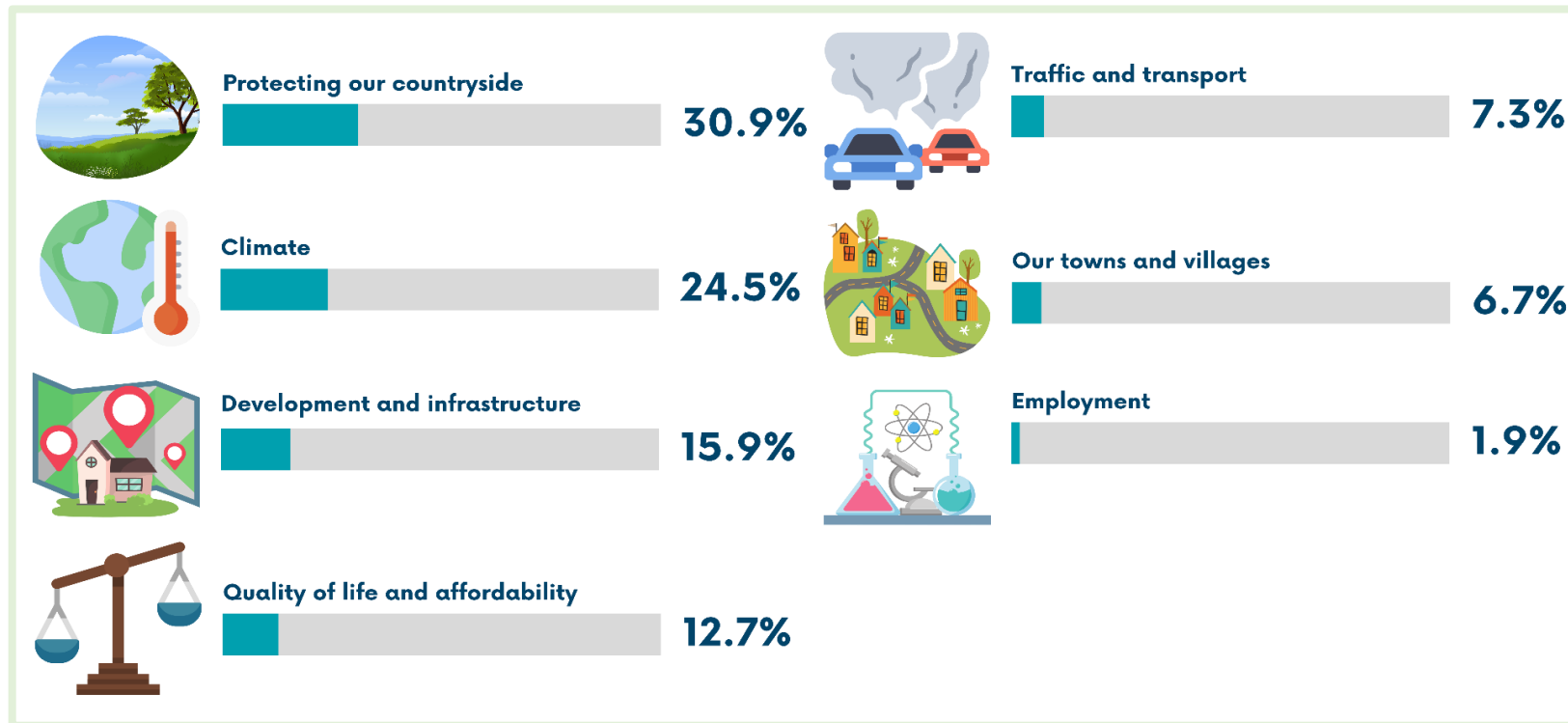
We asked you last time what three things you valued most about where you live and you told us that countryside, access, community and greenspace were some of the things you valued the most. We have considered all of your feedback when developing our policy options, selecting our preferred option and proposed policy wording throughout our Joint Local Plan Preferred Options document.



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## How things are right now

We asked you last time which of these issues you thought was most important for our districts and you told us:



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You also let us know that you generally agreed that these were the main issues that the Joint Local Plan should consider, with almost 85% of responses selecting strongly agree or agree. We have continued to focus on these key issues as we progress with developing the Joint Local Plan. As a reminder, these were the issues we presented last time:





### Protecting our countryside

We live in districts of beautiful countryside that are home to two National Landscapes (formerly AONBs), which we have an important duty to protect. Oxfordshire is the most rural part of South-East England and we have lots of important historical and natural assets to look after, including the River Thames.



### Climate

We have a commitment and a duty to tackle the climate emergency, reduce carbon emissions, increase biodiversity and reverse nature's decline.



### Development and Infrastructure

Our adopted Local Plans have already planned large quantities of new housing and employment land, much of it still to be built. It is important that new infrastructure is delivered alongside this growth, to reduce pressure on existing facilities. This will include better public transport, new schools, sewage treatment capacity, health facilities and open space.



### Quality of life and affordability

We're an area of high demand for housing, with house prices beyond the reach of many who want to live in the district. Living in an expensive area of the country makes the lives of those with less money even more difficult. People's experiences of living in the districts vary and while we live in a relatively affluent area of the country, many households are facing a cost of living squeeze. The resident population is also getting older, which brings more challenges.



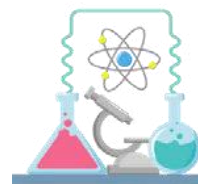
### Traffic and transport

Many of our roads have already reached or exceeded their maximum capacity, which causes congestion and significant air quality issues in certain areas. As a neighbour to the city of Oxford and large towns of Reading and Swindon, many people live in the districts and travel to work outside, and vice versa.



### Our towns and villages

Most of our residents live in historic villages and market towns, and we have a duty to manage any change in these locations extremely carefully. There are also a number of areas where significant growth and change is already planned or happening.



### Employment

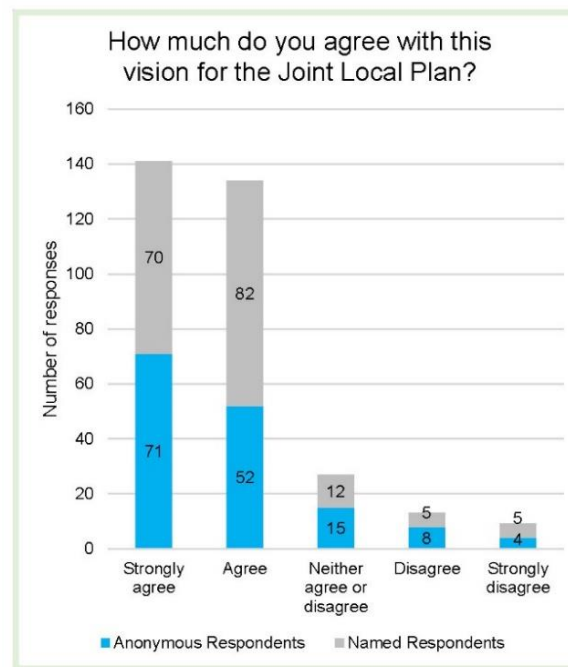
There are low levels of unemployment in the districts, which are most notably home to a wide range of science and innovation businesses that are nationally and globally important. Many of these businesses are based in an area known as Science Vale that crosses the district boundary and is home to two Enterprise Zones.

### 3. Vision and objectives

#### You told us

*What did people say on the vision in the Issues Consultation?*

Most people liked the draft vision. Around 85% of respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with it. Just over 8% of responses were “neither agree nor disagree” and the remaining 7% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Of the written comments received, the most common comment was that the vision was too vague/generic, and that it would be hard to measure progress towards it. Some people raised concerns that the vision was unachievable and didn’t seem realistic within the plan period. Others raised questions around how the vision would be achieved in reality. Some people said the different parts of the vision were contradictory or expressed doubts that the councils were serious about it, pointing out that previous decisions made by the councils didn’t match the new vision.



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## Our Vision

Our vision is for carbon neutral districts, for current and future generations.

For this to be a place where nature is thriving, and nature reserves are no longer isolated pockets. A place where history is still visible, where heritage and landscape character are safeguarded and valued, and the beauty and the distinctive local identity of our countryside, towns and villages have been enhanced.

A place where people can thrive. Where people have housing choices they can afford, where villages, market towns and garden communities are diverse and inclusive places where people of all ages and backgrounds can live together.

A place where residents can reach the facilities they need for everyday living on foot, bicycle, wheeling, public transport or by zero-emission and low carbon transport choices.

Where residents and visitors can live healthy lifestyles and access greenspace. Where people are safe from pollution, flooding, and the effects of climate change.

Where there are valuable and rewarding jobs, embracing clean technologies, and growing the opportunities in Science Vale for the districts to contribute on a national and international scale to solving pressing global issues.

## Actions based on your feedback

We've kept the vision largely the same as in the Issues Consultation. Most people liked the vision. It looks ahead to 2041 and paints a picture of what the local area will be like, giving a flavour of the broad philosophy of the plan, and marks a shift towards meeting the challenges of the climate emergency, nature, and community wellbeing. One useful suggestion was to add the word

'countryside' to the vision, and we've done that so that it covers enhancing the beauty and the distinctive local identity of our countryside, as well as our towns and villages.

## Objectives for the Plan

The vision above shows how we'd like the districts to be. Now, we're adding **objectives** for the Joint Local Plan which take us a step closer to policy options:

1. Create a **unified set of policies** for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, retaining the best from each previous local plan and building in the latest thinking to create an ambitious and fresh joint plan, which sets a framework for successful neighbourhood plans.
2. Help transition to **net zero carbon districts** by 2030 for South Oxfordshire and 2045 for Vale of White Horse, mindful of the districts' carbon budgets, by locating new housing and employment development in places which minimise the need to travel by private car, requiring buildings to be designed to the highest achievable standards for reducing energy and water use, encouraging suitable renewable energy generation, and supporting nature-based carbon and stormwater storage.
3. Strengthen **resilience to climate change** by designing new buildings and infrastructure in our districts for extreme weather events, such as flash floods and heat waves, and implementing nature-based solutions like planting street trees.
4. Help **nature recover** by protecting wildlife and expanding natural habitats, requiring developments to achieve the highest viable net gain in biodiversity so that it leaves the natural environment better than it was before the development.
5. Focus new allocations of land for development at **well-located brownfield sites**, recycling land that is already developed, using land efficiently and re-using buildings and materials rather than expending new resources.
6. Help communities lead **healthy and more active lifestyles**, by providing high-quality greenspace, promoting safe and active travel, and controlling air, water, light and noise pollution from new developments, so that people and nature can be safe, healthy, and thriving.

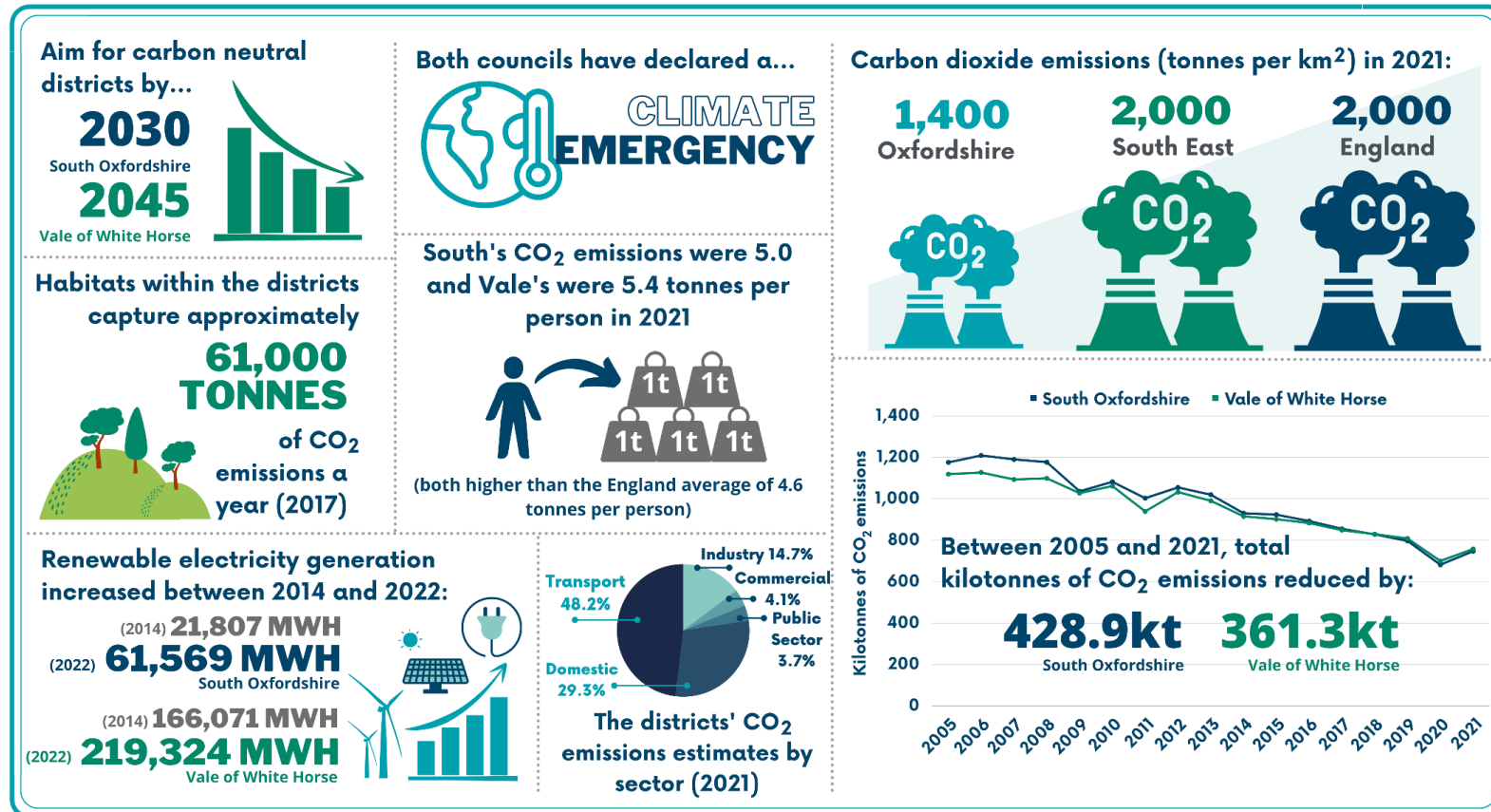
7. Cherish and protect **natural and built heritage**, with policies that make sure the location and design of development respects landscape character and the local distinctiveness of towns and villages.
8. Plan for enough **new homes to meet our needs**, including significant numbers of homes that are genuinely affordable to rent or buy, and different kinds of homes to meet the needs of our communities, including older people, those with care needs and younger people getting their first home.
9. Plan for enough new jobs, a **flourishing local economy, and a wide range of jobs**, not only in the science and innovation sector for which the districts are well known, but in the foundational economy which underpins this and provides people's day to day needs.
10. Ensure that new developments **create great places** that make our districts better, leaving a positive legacy for the future.
11. **Plan for infrastructure** in the right places and built at the right times to serve our growing communities, like transport, water, energy, and digital networks, along with health, education, and cultural facilities.
12. Help create and sustain communities by **protecting community facilities** and supporting new local facilities that help residents live healthier, more active, sustainable lifestyles without the need to rely on cars.

These objectives build on the opportunities we identified during the Issues Consultation for “What can the Joint Local Plan do about this?”. They underpin the strategy of our plan and its policies. We have broadly aligned these objectives with the National Planning Policy Framework, and with our Sustainability Appraisal objectives, which you can read in the Sustainability Appraisal.

## 4. Climate change and improving environmental quality

### Introduction

Here are some facts and figures that help set the scene for this chapter.



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## You told us

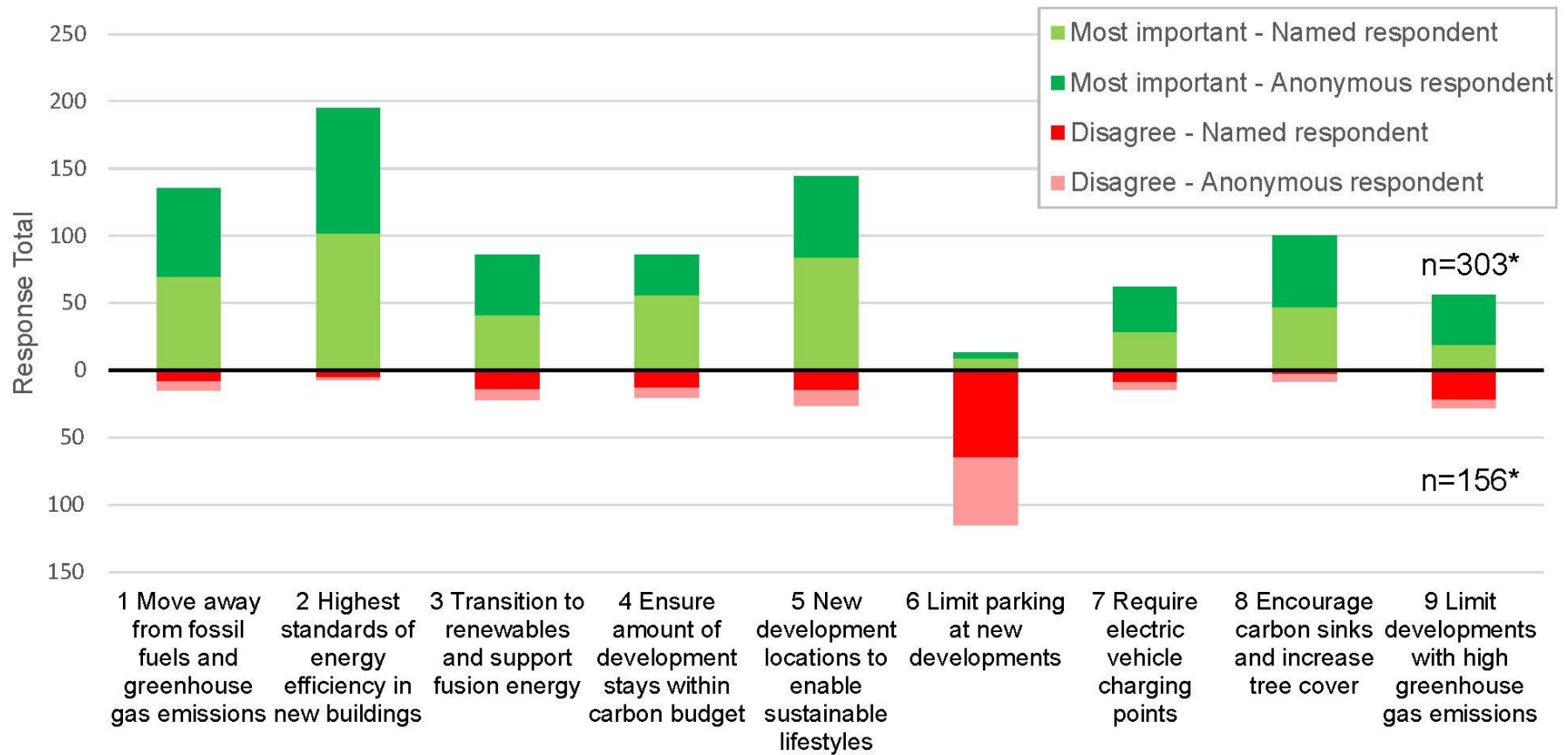
In response to our Issues Consultation, you told us that

- requiring new homes and buildings to minimise energy use through their layout, design and having the highest standards of fabric efficiency;
- planning for new development in locations that enable sustainable lifestyles; and
- planning for a move away from fossil fuels and greenhouse gas

were most important to you.

We have considered all feedback when developing our policy options, selecting our preferred option and proposed policy wording, which are presented in this chapter.





*\*n = the number of times this question was answered (combining named responses and anonymous responses)*

## **Policy CE1 - Sustainable design and construction**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will set out sustainable design requirements that will apply to all residential and non-residential developments within the districts, ensuring they are efficient and resilient to climate impacts.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

In order to meet both national and local net zero carbon targets, changes to the way we live, as well as how we build and use buildings are crucial. According to UK Green Building Council (UKGBC)<sup>3</sup>, the built environment contributes to a quarter of the total UK greenhouse gas emissions.

How we construct and design buildings also has a crucial role in reducing these emissions, as well as allowing us to adapt to a changing and increasingly extreme climate. Average land temperature has risen by around 1.2C since pre-industrial levels, and the summer of 2022 was the joint warmest summer on record in England, as well as the driest year since 1976.<sup>4</sup> As a result, the risk of overheating remains high. Setting sustainable design and construction standards for new developments will help lower the carbon emissions produced by the built environment, whilst ensuring new buildings are resilient to the impacts of climate change, such as overheating.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises in paragraphs 158 and 159 that factors such as development location, orientation and design can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and it therefore encourages plans to take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

The National Design Guide explains that well-designed places and buildings are those that “conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials” and “responds to the impacts of climate change by being energy efficient and minimising carbon emissions to meet net zero by 2050”. Therefore, the highest level of sustainable design and construction standards will be necessary to ensure new buildings are energy efficient and adaptable to the effects of climate change over their lifetime.

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<sup>3</sup> UKGBC Climate Change: [ukgbc.org/our-work/climate-change-mitigation](https://ukgbc.org/our-work/climate-change-mitigation)

<sup>4</sup> According to the Met Office – 1st September 2022: [www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/press-office/news/weather-and-climate/2022/joint-hottest-summer-on-record-for-england](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/press-office/news/weather-and-climate/2022/joint-hottest-summer-on-record-for-england)

## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that sets clear sustainable design and construction standards for new development within the districts, with compliance demonstrated through the submission of a completed Sustainable Design and Construction checklist. These standards will include:

- requiring developers to consider and set out how their development proposals will, through their design and construction, minimise carbon and energy impacts, taking a “fabric first” approach
- built in “climate resilience” measures to adapt to the effects of climate change, including:
  - reducing the risk of overheating by following the cooling hierarchy
  - reducing the risk of flooding and conserving and storing water in accordance with Policy CE6: Flood risk and drainage and Policy CE7: Water efficiency.
  - reducing the “heat island” effect through the use of cool materials and utilising planting, i.e., providing trees for shade.

### Why we prefer Option A

Option A involves taking the most sustainable approach to the design and construction of new developments within the districts and helps to reduce the carbon emissions produced by the built environment to meet climate change targets. By ensuring that architects and developers seek to minimise the carbon and energy impacts of their developments through their design and construction, new development in the districts will be built more sustainably, reducing their carbon impact. Additionally, by requiring climate resilience measures are built into new developments, this policy option will help to ensure they are adaptable to the effects of climate change and built to last.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Do not include a specific policy on sustainable design and construction, but instead incorporate these standards into Policy DE1: High quality design.

Although this alternative option has the advantage of incorporating all design standards together under one policy for ease, it would lose the benefit Option A holds of providing further emphasis and importance on sustainable design and construction standards. Given that addressing climate change and meeting our climate action targets is so crucial for us, we consider that a standalone policy offered by option a is preferred.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Do not include a policy on sustainable design and construction standards and instead rely on national policy and guidance.

This option is not preferred as failure to introduce more stringent standards for the design and construction of new development will hinder the councils' efforts to achieve net zero carbon emissions during the lifetime of the plan.

## **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

### **Policy CE1 - Sustainable design and construction**

- 1) All new development should seek to minimise the carbon and energy impacts of their design and construction. Proposals must demonstrate that they are seeking to limit greenhouse emissions through location, building orientation, design, landscape and planting, adopting a “fabric first” approach and taking into account any nationally adopted standards.

- 2) All new development should be designed to improve resilience to the anticipated effects of climate change. Proposals should incorporate measures that address issues of adaptation to climate change taking account of best practice. These include resilience to increasing temperatures and wind speeds, heavy rainfall and snowfall events and the need for water conservation and storage. All new developments should:
- a) reduce the risk of flooding and conserve and store water in accordance with Policy CE6 - Flood risk and drainage and Policy CE7 - Water efficiency;
  - b) reduce the “heat island” effect through the use of cool materials and utilising planting, i.e., providing trees for shade;
  - c) complete the following overheating assessment:
    - i) all new housing development must complete CIBSE TM59 (as route to compliance with Building Regulations Part O);
    - ii) all new non-domestic buildings must complete CIBSE TM52; and
  - d) be designed in accordance with the cooling hierarchy to reduce risk of overheating associated with increasing temperatures in the following order of preference:
    - i) **Passive design:** minimise internal heat generation through energy efficient design and reduce the amount of heat entering a building by consideration of measures such as orientation, shading, fenestration, albedo, thermal mass and insulation.
    - ii) **Passive/natural cooling:** – using outside air to ventilate and cool a building without the use of a powered system. For example, maximising cross ventilation, passive stack and wind-driven ventilation, night purging ventilation and designing windows and/or ventilation panels to allow effective and secure ventilation. Single aspect developments are discouraged.
    - iii) **Mixed mode cooling:** with local mechanical ventilation/cooling provided where required in order to supplement the above measures using (in order of preference):
      - a. Low energy mechanical cooling (e.g. fan-powered ventilation with/without evaporative cooling or ground coupled cooling).
      - b. Air conditioning (not a preferred approach as these systems are energy intensive)
    - iv) **Full mechanical ventilation/cooling system:** using (in order of preference):
      - a. Low energy mechanical cooling.

b. Air conditioning.

- 3) All new development should be built to last. Proposals must demonstrate that they function well and are adaptable to the changing requirements of occupants and other circumstances.
- 4) Proposals for buildings or infrastructure of an outstanding or innovative design which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design will, in principle and subject to other material considerations, be supported.
- 5) A completed Sustainable Design and Construction checklist is to be submitted as part of all planning applications, demonstrating how a development will incorporate the above requirements into relevant aspects of design, construction, and operation processes.

## **Policy CE2 - Net zero carbon buildings<sup>5</sup>**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will seek to ensure that all new buildings are both built and designed to be net zero operational carbon (including regulated and unregulated energy use).

### **Why is this policy needed?**

The growing impacts of climate change are evident, and it is clear that climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the world today.

In 2019 the UK Parliament declared an environment and climate emergency, subsequently amending the 2008 Climate Change Act to set a target for emissions in the UK to become net zero by 2050.

In December 2020, the Climate Change Committee in their Sixth Carbon Budget recommended reducing the UK territorial emissions by 78% between 1990 and 2035, in effect, bringing the UK's first legally binding 80% target forward by nearly 15 years.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse have both declared climate emergencies and are committed to tackling climate change and lowering greenhouse gas emissions through effective planning. Both councils have set targets to become carbon neutral districts, with South Oxfordshire aiming to reach this in 2030, and Vale of White Horse aiming for a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 and to be carbon neutral by 2045.

In order for the districts to play their part in meeting both these local targets and the wider UK's net zero targets, new development within the districts will need to be built to net zero carbon standards as soon as possible. Importantly, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 159 requires new development to be planned in a way that helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through location, orientation and design. It also states that "radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions" should be supported by planning, which supports our net zero aims.

Building new developments to net zero standards will also have cost benefits. Although more costly to build, they are cheaper to run and so more affordable to live in. Getting it right from the start will help to prevent the need for costly retrofits in future, as the

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<sup>5</sup> Policy CE2 Net Zero Carbon Buildings will be reviewed in light of the Written Ministerial Statement entitled 'Planning - Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update' dated 13 December 2023.

Climate Change Committee<sup>6</sup> found that “retrofitting a new home to meet high energy efficiency standards – including replacing its gas boiler with a heat pump – could cost a household an average of £26,000. That is over five times more than the £4,800 it would have cost to meet the standard when a property was first built”.

We have commissioned a Net Zero Carbon Study that will provide robust evidence on how the Joint Local Plan can enable South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse’s transition to net zero carbon. It will establish what “net zero carbon” really means, and what policies the Joint Local Plan could include to achieve net zero across both districts by local and national net zero targets.<sup>7</sup>

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Include a policy that requires new development (both residential and non-residential buildings) to:

- use no fossil fuel energy on-site
- meet set requirements on how much heating the building will need and the total energy use of a building
- generate the same amount of renewable energy as they demand, including all regulated and unregulated energy use (calculated using a robust methodology that predicts a buildings actual energy use performance)
- use offsetting for residual on-site renewable energy generation only in exceptional circumstances where these requirements cannot be met, for example due to feasibility concerns, (i.e., insufficient roof space for renewable energy generation).It is expected that this would be achieved through a council led offsetting fund supported by developer contributions, that would deliver local projects that save the same amount of carbon and/or cover the shortfall in renewable energy generation.
- demonstrate they have explored scope for energy storage and/or smart distribution systems, to optimise on-site or local consumption of the renewable energy (or waste energy) generated by the site.

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<sup>6</sup> [Mission Zero - Independent Review of Net Zero - Rt Hon Chris Skidmore MP](#)

<sup>7</sup> Policy CE2 Net Zero Carbon Buildings will be reviewed in light of the Written Ministerial Statement entitled ‘Planning - Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update’ dated 13 December 2023.



To demonstrate compliance, we will require developers to:

- use an assured performance method to ensure the buildings operational energy performances matches design intentions and therefore avoids a “performance gap”
- submit an Energy Statement to demonstrate compliance with the above requirements
- use the following metrics to accurately calculate the energy efficiency of buildings:
  - Space Heating Demand (kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year) – a measure of the thermal efficiency of a building
  - Total Energy Use Intensity (EUI) (kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year) – a measure of the total energy consumption of a building.

### Why we prefer Option A

This option is about development being built to net zero operational carbon standards preventing the use of fossil fuel energy, ensuring that the building meets specific requirements on energy use, and generating the same amount of renewable energy as it demands. It also takes into account instances where net zero may not be viable and provides offsetting as an option to address this. Additionally, using an assured performance method avoids the pitfalls of a “performance gap”, which is where a building’s as-built performance falls short of its designed performance. This option also requires new development to consider the incorporation of energy storage to help maximise usable output from intermittent renewable energy sources such as solar and wind, create carbon and energy savings, as well as minimise the need for grid reinforcements.

This option goes further than existing Policy DES10: Carbon Reduction in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. Policy DES10 requires new build dwellings and non-residential buildings to achieve a higher percentage reduction in carbon emissions than is set out in the Building Regulations. The issue with this approach is that the existing Building Regulations currently only count regulated energy (fixed building services, such as heating), which is only 50% of the carbon emissions from a building. Therefore, unregulated energy (such as plug-in appliances) is not covered by the current Building Regulations. Using metrics such as Space Heat Demand and Energy Use Intensity, we can more accurately measure the energy efficiency of a building, and address both regulated and unregulated energy.

We prefer this option as it will deliver net zero operational carbon buildings within the districts. This policy option will help South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse meet both national and local net zero commitments, and importantly help to avoid adding to the carbon emissions currently produced by the built environment. Building technologies are improving year on year and the public

increasingly wants homes that are cheaper to run, so there is no good reason to opt for lower standards in a local plan which runs to the 2040s.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Continue with Policy DES10 approach.

The current approach in South Oxfordshire's Local Plan Policy DES10 involves a percentage reduction in carbon emissions compared with a 2013 (now 2021) Building Regulations compliant base case. The Building Regulations Part L calculation only accounts for regulated energy (fixed energy uses such as heating, hot water, ventilation, fixed lighting etc). It does not account for unregulated energy (including plug in appliances, such as IT equipment, lamps, and cooking equipment) which can make up a large part of a building's total energy use (up to 50%). Compared with metrics such as Space Heat Demand, Building Regulations calculations are also not as accurate at measuring the physical thermal performance of a building. From an operational perspective, these buildings would therefore not be considered truly net zero.

Policy DES10 also does not take into account embodied carbon emissions, which are emissions associated with materials and construction processes through the whole lifecycle of a building.

This alternative approach would mean that we would not deliver truly net zero carbon buildings in the districts. It would also mean that we would not meet our targets of becoming carbon neutral districts by 2030 for South Oxfordshire and 2045 for Vale of White Horse because of the significant contribution the built environment has on overall carbon emissions.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Include no policy on net zero carbon buildings in the Joint Local Plan.

This would leave the delivery of net zero carbon to both Building Regulations and the Future Homes Standard/ Future Buildings Standard. As explained in Option B, the Building Regulations Part L calculation only accounts for regulated energy (fixed energy uses such as heating, hot water, ventilation, fixed lighting etc). It does not account for unregulated energy (including plug in appliances, such as IT equipment, lamps, and cooking equipment) which can make up a large part of a building's total energy

use (up to 50%). Compared with metrics such as Space Heat Demand, calculations required for the current Building Regulations are not as accurate at measuring the physical thermal performance of a building. From an operational perspective, these buildings would therefore not be considered truly net zero.

The Future Homes/Buildings Standard aims to ensure that new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than homes built under the 2013 Building Regulations (approximately equivalent to a 63% reduction on the current 2021 Building Regulations). However, it only requires buildings to be “zero carbon ready”, meaning further carbon reduction could be needed to meet net zero standards. Additionally, at this moment in time, the Future Homes/Building Standard does not take into account embodied carbon emissions, which are emissions associated with materials and construction processes through the whole lifecycle of a building.

This alternative approach would mean that we would not deliver net zero carbon buildings in the districts. For South Oxfordshire, it would be a backwards step from the progress made in adopted Policy DES10. It would also mean we would not meet our targets of becoming carbon neutral districts by 2030 for South Oxfordshire and 2045 for Vale of White Horse due to the significant contribution the built environment has on overall carbon emissions.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### **Policy CE2 - Net zero carbon buildings**

##### **Space Heating**

- 1) All housing and non-domestic buildings should demonstrate through an energy statement that they achieve a specific space heating demand (set out in per meter squared per year), as follows:

a) All new dwellings should have a space heating demand of <math><15 \text{ kWh/m}^2/\text{year}</math> (or <math>< 20 \text{ kWh/m}^2/\text{year}</math> for bungalows only).

b) All new non-domestic buildings should achieve a space heating demand of <math><15 \text{ kWh/m}^2/\text{year}</math>.

2) No new developments should be connected to the gas grid or use fossil fuel heating systems/technologies.

#### **Total Energy Use Intensity (EUI) targets**

3) EUI targets are achieved as per building type (set out in kWh per meter squared per year), as follows:

a) All new dwellings should demonstrate through an energy statement that they achieve an EUI of no more than <math>35 \text{ kWh/m}^2/\text{year}</math>.

b) All new non domestic buildings should demonstrate through an energy statement that they achieve the following EUI of no more than the following, where technically feasible, by building type:

i. Offices: <math>55 \text{ kWh/m}^2/\text{year}</math>.

ii. Schools: <math>55 \text{ kWh/m}^2/\text{year}</math>.

- iii. Warehouses: 35 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year.
- iv. Retail: 35 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year.
- v. Where unregulated energy loads for the specific use of a non-residential building may result in a total energy use that exceeds the limits set out above, and this is accepted by the councils, applicants are required to demonstrate that regulated energy is limited to 30 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year. Unregulated loads must be justified in an energy statement.
- vi. Other building types not listed above are required to achieve a regulated total energy use cap of 40kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year. Unregulated loads must be justified in an energy statement.

### **Energy performance**

- 4) All new housing and non-domestic building proposals should generate at least the same amount of renewable energy (preferably on-plot) as they demand over the course of a year, demonstrated through an energy statement. This should include all energy use (regulated and unregulated), calculated using a methodology proven to accurately predict a building's actual energy performance. Where an on-site net zero energy balance is not possible, proposals must demonstrate that the amount of on-site renewable energy generation equates to at least 120 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>building footprint/year. Where this cannot be achieved, it must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the councils that this is due to unavoidable design issues such as natural lighting and utility space.

- 5) Where a development of multiple buildings is concerned, the renewable energy generation requirement should be calculated and demonstrated across the whole development so that buildings that are able to exceed the requirements do so in order to compensate for any buildings onsite that cannot meet the requirements, prior to energy offsetting being considered.

### **Energy offsetting**

- 6) Only in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort where it is demonstrated and accepted by the councils that it is unfeasible to achieve an on-site net zero energy balance, any annual on-site energy use not matched by on-site annual renewable energy generation is to be offset. Where these exceptional circumstances arise, applicants must meet the following requirements:
  - a) Energy offsetting is primarily to be delivered via developer contributions to a fund which would be ring-fenced for use only to deliver local projects that save the same amount of carbon or deliver the required shortfall in renewable energy, with a preference to invest in additional renewable energy generation to ensure net zero carbon buildings are delivered.
  - b) In select cases it may be accepted that the developer conducts direct delivery of these local energy offsetting projects rather than provide financial contributions, subject to local authority approval of the proposed projects based on meeting criteria around their effectiveness, suitability and guaranteed delivery timescale.

- c) Where a proposal cannot meet the policy requirements set out in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 in full, in addition to offsetting, the development must be futureproofed to enable future occupiers to easily retrofit or upgrade buildings and/or infrastructure in the future to enable achievement of net zero carbon development.

### **Reduced performance gap**

- 7) Energy performance calculations of all new housing and non-residential units must be completed using Passivhaus Planning Package, CIBSE TM54, or other method demonstrably proven to produce accurate predictions in total in-use energy (subject to the council's approval of the method).
- 8) The energy performance of all units is to be calculated individually and must demonstrate compliance with the space heating demand and EUI targets of this policy.
- 9) In exceptional circumstances (such as limited roof space available), it may be considered acceptable to achieve a site-wide average that complies with the space heat demand and EUI targets of this policy. For all new housing proposals, this is subject to no individual dwelling exceeding a space heating demand of <20kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year and an EUI of <45 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year.
- 10) All new housing and non-residential buildings must demonstrate use of an assured performance method (approved by the councils) throughout all stages of construction in order to ensure that the buildings' operational energy performance reflects design intentions and addresses the performance gap.

### **Energy Demand Management**

11) Proposals for new housing and non-residential buildings should demonstrate through an energy statement how they have considered the difference (in scale and time) of renewable energy generation and the on-site energy demand, with a view to maximising on-site consumption (for example via energy storage and smart energy systems, such as demand side response (DSR)) of energy generated on site and minimising the need for wider grid infrastructure reinforcement.

12) Where the on-site renewable energy generation peak is not expected to coincide with sufficient energy demand (resulting in a need to export or waste significant amounts of energy), proposals should demonstrate through an energy statement how they have explored scope for energy storage and/or smart energy systems to optimise on-site or local consumption of the renewable energy (or waste energy) generated by the site. Where appropriate, these should optimise carbon and energy-saving benefits and minimise the need for grid reinforcements.



## Policy CE3 - Reducing embodied carbon

### What will this policy do?

This policy will ensure that measures are taken to reduce a development's embodied carbon emissions, through the careful choice, sourcing and use of building materials, as well as promoting the re-use of existing buildings over demolition.

### Why is this policy needed?

Embodied carbon is defined by the London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) and the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC) as the carbon emissions of a building created by its materials, including their extraction, manufacturing, transportation, construction, maintenance, replacement, and end of life treatment. According to the UKGBC, embodied carbon emissions can be as much as 50% of total emissions over a building's lifetime<sup>8</sup>. Materials like rammed earth, timber, stone and brick generally have lower embodied carbon than concrete, glass, steel and aluminium. Despite their influence on a building's overall carbon emissions, there are currently no national policy requirements on embodied carbon, and there are no plans yet for Building Regulations or the Future Homes Standard to address these emissions. This leaves a significant policy gap for us to address in the delivery of net zero carbon. It is clear that if we do not take action to tackle embodied carbon within our plan, we will not meet our net zero targets.

However, at this moment in time addressing embodied carbon through new developments is a complex challenge. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Whole Life Carbon Assessment for the Built Environment (RICS WLCA) is the consistent standard used to account for the embodied carbon of all the construction and materials across the life cycle stages of the building. RICS WLCA is the methodology widely adopted by those developers who are voluntarily pursuing a better understanding and better outcomes in their development's embodied carbon; however, much of the industry is yet to begin any such exercise. Also, for the later stages of building life cycle (in-use, and end of life) there is no consistent or agreed measurement of embodied carbon emissions. Additionally, the implementation of a RICS WLCA assessment can be a complex task that may be disproportionately onerous for smaller developments.

Target-setting for embodied carbon (including whole-life carbon) is also subject to ongoing debate and analysis across industry bodies. However, there are emerging standards, targets and guidance from LETI, the UKGBC, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and others on how to address embodied carbon emissions which we can apply. Additionally, the industry-led Part

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<sup>8</sup> New Homes Policy Playbook – UKGBC 2021: [ukgbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/New-Homes-Policy-Playbook-January-2021.pdf](https://ukgbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/New-Homes-Policy-Playbook-January-2021.pdf)

Z proposal, which aims to become a new element of Building Regulations, was taken to Parliament in 2022 under the Carbon Emissions (Buildings) Bill.<sup>9</sup> Part Z would require embodied carbon reporting in 2023 and set targets from 2027. Part Z has had its second reading in the House of Commons and remains a matter of debate. Whilst it could be integrated into Building Regulations in the coming years, we should continue to explore embodied carbon policy at a local level.

To reduce embodied carbon emissions in new development, the plan can support the careful choice, sourcing and use of building materials, as well as promote the re-use of existing buildings over demolition. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states in paragraph 157 that the planning system should encourage the re-use of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings. The Joint Local Plan also has the opportunity to promote “circular economy” principles and the efficient use of resources to help reduce the amount of waste we produce as well as lower our carbon emissions. A circular economy is an alternative to the linear waste model we are familiar with, where we “take, make and then dispose” causing significant waste, particularly of finite natural resources. The circular economy instead views resources as circular to be used in an infinite cycle where there is no such thing as “waste”.

By changing the uses of buildings over time as necessary, avoiding demolition, as well as dismantling and recovering materials for reuse or recycling at the end of a building's life, we can help to minimise resource extraction and waste arising from construction in the districts. This would consequently lower the embodied carbon associated with development over the course of the Plan period, and ultimately reduce the waste produced by the built environment sector in the districts in the future.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that:

- favours materials with lower embodied or negative carbon

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<sup>9</sup> Carbon Emissions (Buildings) Bill: [bills.parliament.uk/bills/3211](https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3211)

- promotes a range of circular economy principles to help minimise waste, increase the recycling and reuse of materials, and conserve resources within the districts, including retaining and re-using buildings where possible
- requires major development to submit a Whole Life Carbon Assessment as part of planning applications to calculate whole lifecycle carbon emissions (including embodied carbon emissions) and demonstrate actions taken to reduce lifecycle carbon emissions
- sets target requirements for larger developments to limit embodied carbon
- requires embodied carbon offsetting in circumstances when targets to limit embodied carbon are not met.

### Why we prefer Option A

This policy is preferred as it will help to reduce the embodied carbon emissions associated with new development. It aims to do so by helping to reduce waste produced by the development industry and ensure materials are reused and recycled materials where possible, by retaining, re-using and retrofitting existing buildings in preference over demolition, and consequently help to preserve finite resources. It also requires a whole life carbon assessment to be submitted and sets targets to limit embodied carbon, with offsetting required when these targets aren't met. This will allow embodied carbon to be considered alongside operational carbon produced by new buildings, and ensure actions are taken to reduce these emissions. This option will importantly help us to further reduce our overall carbon emissions and is therefore crucial in ensuring we reach our net zero targets.

### Option B - Alternative

Have no policy on reducing embodied carbon emissions and instead rely on national policy and guidance set out in the NPPF/planning practice guidance.

We do not prefer this option as it would not help to reduce the embodied carbon emissions associated with development through plan policy. National policy and guidance do not currently set out requirements on reducing embodied carbon, circular economy principles, or similar ambitions, and therefore without this policy we risk not addressing the embodied carbon emissions associated with development, which can make up a significant amount of a buildings total emissions over its lifetime. This would crucially mean we would not meet our net zero targets.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### **Policy CE3 - Reducing embodied carbon**

- 1) To reduce embodied carbon and make effective use and protection of building materials and natural resources, new development should:
  - a) demonstrate design decisions have been made to minimise the amount of material needed e.g. optimising structural efficiencies;
  - b) demonstrate a careful choice of building materials, prioritising materials with lower embodied carbon and carbon negative emissions;
  - c) prioritise the re-use, retention and retrofit of existing buildings and built structures following the waste hierarchy;
  - d) redevelop previously developed land, provided the land is not of a high environmental value;
  - e) avoid substantial demolition (whole or a significant part), but where it is necessary, provide a full justification for the demolition. Major developments that contain existing buildings and/or structures should also carry out a pre-demolition audit where demolition is proposed (following a well-established industry best practice method, e.g. BRE);

- f) be designed to enable easy material re-use and disassembly, subsequently reducing the need for end-of-life demolition;
  - g) minimise construction waste, which should include setting out how materials arising from any demolition and/or refurbishment are re-used on-site and/or recycled; and
  - h) maximise the use of locally sourced, repurposed or recycled materials where possible, especially from materials demolished on-site. In the National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) and on historic buildings in particular, reclaimed vernacular materials like local bricks and roof tiles, which also add character and design quality should be utilised.
- 2) All new major development should complete a whole life carbon assessment in accordance with RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment guidance\* and demonstrate actions to reduce life-cycle carbon emissions. This should include reducing emissions associated with construction plant.
- 3) New residential developments of 50 homes or more and new non-residential development of 5000m<sup>2</sup> or more should limit embodied carbon (equating to the emissions covered by Modules A1-A5 of the RICS methodology\*, or future equivalent methodology) to:
- a) Residential (excluding flats): 300 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup> GIA
  - b) Non-residential and flats: 475 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup> GIA
  - c) Non-residential and flats (from 2030): 350 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup> GIA
- 4) Any shortfall to the embodied carbon limits set out in paragraph 3 will be required to offset these emissions through a financial contribution reflecting the most up-to-date valuation of carbon\*\*from national government.
- 5) All new development is encouraged to achieve LETI best practice 2030 embodied carbon targets (or future equivalent targets) (modules A1-A5) set out in the LETI 2020 Design Guide\*\*\* (or future equivalent document).

\* *RICS WLCA Standard*: [www.rics.org/profession-standards/rics-standards-and-guidance/sector-standards/construction-standards/whole-life-carbon-assessment](http://www.rics.org/profession-standards/rics-standards-and-guidance/sector-standards/construction-standards/whole-life-carbon-assessment)

\*\* *The embodied carbon price is determined by the “high scenario” in the “Valuation of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions” document from government. This is currently set at £378/tCO<sub>2</sub> (2023) but will be revised annually.*  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/valuing-greenhouse-gas-emissions-in-policy-appraisal/valuation-of-greenhouse-gas-emissions-for-policy-appraisal-and-evaluation](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/valuing-greenhouse-gas-emissions-in-policy-appraisal/valuation-of-greenhouse-gas-emissions-for-policy-appraisal-and-evaluation)

\*\*\* *LETI 2020 Design Guide*: [www.leti.uk/\\_files/ugd/252d09\\_3b0f2acf2bb24c019f5ed9173fc5d9f4.pdf](http://www.leti.uk/_files/ugd/252d09_3b0f2acf2bb24c019f5ed9173fc5d9f4.pdf)

## Policy CE4 - Sustainable retrofitting

### What will this policy do?

This policy will encourage the sustainable retrofitting of existing buildings within the districts.

### Why is this policy needed?

According to the Centre for Sustainable Energy, retrofit refers to “any improvement work on an existing building to improve its energy efficiency, making them easier to heat, able to retain that heat for longer, and replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy”.<sup>10</sup> A significant amount of carbon emissions produced by the built environment come from existing buildings. Therefore, it is crucial that we do not only focus on reducing emissions from new development, but also tackle the emissions from our existing buildings wherever we can. This can be achieved through sensitive, sustainable retrofitting.

Importantly, in a report to the House of Commons, the Environmental Audit Committee recommend that “retrofit and reuse of existing buildings, where practicable, should be prioritised over new build to conserve resources, minimise embodied carbon emissions, reduce demolition waste and deliver cost-effective solutions to delivering on housing demand”.<sup>11</sup> This demonstrates that retrofitting existing buildings to improve their energy efficiency and to reduce their climate impact can also be aligned with the principle of re-using existing resources.

In addition to the carbon reduction benefits, the government’s “Retrofit for the Future: a guide to making retrofit work”<sup>12</sup> explains that a whole-house retrofit can provide wide reaching benefits including financial, comfort, and social benefits as well as helping to prevent health risks from damp and mould. The whole-house or whole building approach recognises that no single part of the building operates alone, and that the best results will come from considering and balancing all the interactions between different elements of the building.

It is also important to recognise that planning powers are limited in terms of retrofitting existing buildings, since many of these measures do not need planning permission because they are covered under permitted development rights (which are a good thing for enabling households to retrofit). However, due to the significant carbon emissions that come from existing buildings, the plan

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<sup>10</sup> [www.cse.org.uk/news/view/2687](http://www.cse.org.uk/news/view/2687)

<sup>11</sup> [committees.parliament.uk/publications/22427/documents/165446/default](http://committees.parliament.uk/publications/22427/documents/165446/default)

<sup>12</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/retrofit-for-the-future-a-guide-to-making-retrofit-work](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/retrofit-for-the-future-a-guide-to-making-retrofit-work)

cannot be silent on this issue, and can help by encouraging applicants to upgrade existing buildings when the opportunity arises as part of a planning application.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that:

- encourages retrofitting measures to existing buildings to improve their energy efficiency and replace fossil fuels with renewable energy sources
- gives significant weight to proposals which would result in considerable improvements to the energy efficiency, carbon emissions and/or general suitability, condition and longevity of existing buildings
- ensures all major developments that affect existing on-site buildings consider retrofitting opportunities and opportunities to re-use existing buildings on site.

#### Why we prefer Option A

This policy is preferred as it would promote the sustainable retrofitting of existing buildings, importantly helping to reduce carbon emissions across the districts. Additionally, the benefits of retrofitting are not limited to only reductions in carbon emissions, it can provide cost savings, reduce fuel poverty, increase comfort, prevent health risks, so this policy will also have wider social benefits.

#### Option B - Alternative

Have no policy on sustainable retrofitting within the Joint Local Plan.

This option is not preferred as it would miss the opportunity to encourage the sustainable retrofitting of existing buildings which would help to further reduce the carbon emissions associated with the built environment.



## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy CE4 - Sustainable retrofitting**

- 1) Sustainable and sensitive retrofitting measures to existing buildings to improve their energy efficiency and adaptability to climate change, and the appropriate incorporation of renewables, will be supported.
- 2) Development proposals which result in considerable improvements to the energy efficiency, carbon emissions and/or general suitability, condition and longevity of existing buildings will be supported, with significant weight attributed to those benefits.
- 3) In the case of extensions to buildings, developments should take a whole building approach and are therefore encouraged to take the opportunity to upgrade the energy efficiency and energy generation of the existing building as well as the extension. Significant weight will be attributed to a whole building approach.
- 4) Major development proposals within the districts should demonstrate through a pre-redevelopment audit (following a well-established industry best practice method, e.g. BRE) that opportunities for the retention and retrofitting of existing buildings, structures, and materials within the site have been identified and, where feasible and viable, included within the scheme. All schemes on sites that have pre-existing buildings should consider retrofitting opportunities as part of their design brief.

## **Policy CE5 - Renewable energy**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will encourage proposals for renewable energy schemes and community-led initiatives and will set criteria detailing where these schemes and associated infrastructure will be supported.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

The transition away from the use of fossil fuels and towards renewable energy sources is widely known as being one of the key ways in which we can help to tackle climate change and reduce our carbon emissions. To aid our move towards becoming net zero districts, we will need to increase the amount of renewable energy generation in the districts.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also supports these aims, as it encourages local authorities to take a positive approach to renewable energy, by identifying suitable areas for renewable energy generation as well as its supporting infrastructure. It also states that local authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable energy. We recognise the important role community-led renewable energy initiatives can have and the benefits they can provide local communities, and therefore will include policy support for these schemes in the Joint Local Plan.

The Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire<sup>13</sup> recommended that Solar PV is Oxfordshire's largest renewable energy generation resource and noted that there is a smaller, yet not insignificant potential for onshore wind (considering landscape constraints in the parts of the County that have good wind speeds). This report also notes the importance of increased energy storage capacity to bridge seasonal gaps and provide grid flexibility. We recognise that Solar PV will contribute significantly towards meeting our net zero targets, and therefore the Joint Local Plan will need to support it, alongside a range of other renewable energy opportunities like hydro-power and potentially onshore wind (noting the landscape constraints). The Plan will identify suitable areas for these schemes to ensure they are situated in appropriate locations. This is because, although renewable energy generation plays a vital role in meeting our net zero targets, it is important that the location of these schemes is suitable in planning terms. Adverse impacts can arise if renewable energy schemes are not suitably located, i.e., this can result in adverse visual and landscape impacts, including cumulative impacts of multiple schemes in one location.

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<sup>13</sup> Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PaZCO) 2021: [www.eci.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-09/PazCo-final.pdf](http://www.eci.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-09/PazCo-final.pdf)

We plan to set out the suitable broad locations for renewable energy schemes such as Solar PV and onshore wind, and ideally also energy storage, on the policies map, which will be informed by both a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment and findings from our Net Zero Carbon Study. Additionally, the Joint Local Plan will include a policy setting out what criteria will need to be met in order to ensure a site is appropriate to avoid adverse impacts arising as a result of these schemes. These policy measures will also assist planning applications for renewable energy schemes, and help applicants understand if their site is suitable.

Identifying suitable sites for onshore wind is particularly necessary, as the NPPF states in footnote 54 that “a planning application for wind energy development involving one or more turbines should not be considered acceptable unless it is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in the development plan or a supplementary planning document”. Onshore wind is also subject to consultation that demonstrates “that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been appropriately addressed and the proposal has community support”. Due to these additional requirements required for onshore wind development, ensuring that appropriate locations for these schemes are identified is even more important.

Larger renewable energy schemes/infrastructure with a capacity over 50MW would be regarded as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), and would therefore be determined by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).

### **Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)**

#### **Option A - Preferred**

Have a policy that:

- encourages the development of renewable energy generation schemes and their associated infrastructure, i.e., grid capacity upgrades, energy sharing networks, and battery or thermal storage
- identifies broad areas of potential suitability for different types of renewable energy
- provides clear support for community-led renewable energy schemes
- includes a set of criteria which all new renewable energy schemes will have to meet, helping to ensure that no significant adverse impacts (that cannot be mitigated) arise as a result of renewable energy schemes. This will include cumulative and cross-boundary impacts.

## Why we prefer Option A

In order to aid our transition towards a net zero future, planning policy will need to support future renewable energy schemes providing they are in areas that are deemed suitable and do not cause any adverse impacts, such as on landscape and amenity. This policy is preferred as it will meet both of these aims by positively encouraging the development of renewable energy schemes and will set criteria that will ensure that any adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily. Additionally, through identifying suitable areas for renewable energy development, we can have an early understanding of locations that will likely be appropriate for these schemes.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Have no policy on renewable energy and instead rely on national policy and guidance set out in the NPPF/planning practice guidance.

This alternative option is not preferred as it would be contrary to national policy which requires a positive approach to renewable energy to be taken in local plans. It would also provide no guidance to applicants and officers regarding suitable locations for renewable energy development, which is not favoured as it could result in adverse impacts arising as a result of inappropriately located renewable energy development.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy CE5 - Renewable energy**

- 1) The council encourages schemes for renewable and low carbon energy generation and associated infrastructure at all scales, including domestic schemes and innovative schemes.
- 2) Proposals for the exploration or extraction of fossil fuels will not be supported.

### **Standalone renewable and low carbon energy schemes**

- 3) Planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy generation and their associated energy storage and distribution infrastructure will be supported, provided that they do not cause significant adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated or reversed at the end of the life of the renewable energy installation, including cumulative and cross-boundary impacts on:
  - a) landscape, tranquillity and sensitive views;
  - b) biodiversity, including protected habitats and species and ecological networks;
  - c) the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2, and 3a) unless significant sustainability benefits are demonstrated to outweigh any loss;
  - d) the historic environment, both designated and non-designated assets, including development within their settings;
  - e) the openness of the Green Belt;
  - f) the National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) and their settings;
  - g) aviation and defence navigation systems/communications;
  - h) the safe movement of traffic, rail, and the enjoyment of public rights of way; and
  - i) residential amenity (including as a result of noise, vibrations, dust, odour, air quality and shadow flicker).

### **Wind Energy**

- 4) Planning applications for wind energy development will be supported where they:
  - a) are located in an area identified as potentially suitable for wind energy development as shown on the Policies Map [areas to be defined through further evidence which will be published at the next stage of consultation] or in a neighbourhood plan;

- b) have conducted adequate community engagement and consultation, and following this, demonstrated that planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been appropriately addressed; and
- c) have gained community support for the proposal.

### **Solar Energy Proposals**

- 5) Planning applications for ground mounted solar energy and associated infrastructure will be supported where they are located in an area identified as potentially suitable for ground mounted solar development as shown on the Policies Map [areas to be defined through further evidence which will be published at the next stage of consultation] or in a neighbourhood plan.
- 6) Proposals for building mounted solar thermal or photovoltaics panel (and associated infrastructure) installations in an appropriate position to maximise solar gain building will be supported and encouraged wherever possible, unless there is clear and demonstrable significant harm arising to the historic environment, in accordance with Policy NH13 - Historic environment and climate change and Policy NH8 - The historic environment.

### **Energy storage and grid reinforcement**

- 7) Proposals for standalone grid capacity upgrades, local smart grids, and development of grid-connected energy storages (especially if co-located with large-scale renewable energy generation installations), will be supported where they meet the requirements set out in criteria 3 of this policy.
- 8) Proposals for standalone renewable and low carbon energy generation are encouraged to provide at least an additional 10% of energy storage (e.g. battery storage) of the overall energy generation.

- 9) Proposals for, or developments which include, renewable energy and low carbon energy generation, should demonstrate how options for energy storage, smart grids, and energy sharing networks have been explored to reduce the need for grid capacity upgrades.

### **Community led renewable and low carbon initiatives**

- 10) Community led renewable and low carbon energy initiatives are encouraged and will be given positive weight in decision making. Evidence of community support should be demonstrated, with administrative and financial structures in place to deliver/manage the project and any income from it.
- 11) Community led renewable and low carbon energy schemes that provide a community benefit in terms of profit sharing, or proportion of community ownership and delivery of local social and community benefits will also be encouraged and will be given positive weight in decision making.
- 12) Commercial led renewable energy schemes with a capacity over 10MW shall provide an option to communities to own at least 5% of the scheme subject to viability.

### **Decommissioning renewable energy infrastructure**

- 13) Planning permission for renewable energy and low carbon schemes will be subject to a condition requiring an appropriate plans and mechanisms are in place for the decommissioning of renewable energy infrastructure at the end of its life, including the removal of the technology and restoration of the site to its original or accepted use and condition (within one year of the scheme becoming non-operational), and that materials removed will be re-used and recycled where practical. Any biodiversity net gain that has been achieved on site should also be retained in the decommissioning process at least long enough to meet the required minimum 30-year lifespan for mandatory biodiversity net gain laid out in national guidance.

### **Protection of existing renewable energy infrastructure**

14) New development should not result in adverse impacts to renewable energy infrastructure that cannot be mitigated, including:

- a) the technical performance of any existing or approved renewable energy generation facility;
- b) the potential for optimisation of strategic renewable energy installations; and
- c) the availability of the resource, where the operation is dependent on uninterrupted flow of energy (such as sunlight, wind speeds or water flows) to the installation.



## **Policy CE6 - Flood risk and drainage**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will help to protect communities from flooding by making sure that consideration of flood risk shapes decisions on development, minimising vulnerability and improving resilience to flood risk from all sources, both now and in the future. It will also help to ensure that developments incorporate effective sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), which store stormwater on site as an alternative to channelling it in a networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses, and can create features like ponds and wetlands that deliver benefits for people and nature.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

There are many potential sources of flood risk, such as rivers, rainfall on ground surfaces, rising groundwater, overwhelmed sewers and drainage systems, reservoirs, canals and lakes.

Climate change is altering weather patterns and increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, meaning that flood risk is expected to increase over time. Flooding can have huge impacts on communities, businesses, and infrastructure. It is therefore important that the Joint Local Plan takes appropriate steps to address this.

National planning policy provides a clear framework for addressing flood risk, which includes requirements for:

- a sequential, risk-based approach that steers new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding.
- evidence on flood risk to inform planning decisions, including a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) to inform plan-making and, where appropriate, site-specific flood-risk assessments to inform the consideration of planning applications.
- major developments to incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

The Planning Practice Guidance advises that to effectively address flood risk issues the following approach should be followed:

1. Avoid - apply a sequential approach to locating development, to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source.
2. Control - explore opportunities to control flood risk.
3. Mitigate - Use flood resistance and resilience measures to address any remaining risks, prioritising passive measures over active measures.
4. Manage residual risk - Consider further management measures to deal with any residual risk remaining after avoidance, control and mitigation have been utilised. Provide safe access and escape routes. Consider whether adequate flood

warning would be available to people using the development. Residual risks will need to be safely managed to ensure people are not exposed to hazardous flooding.

The councils intend to commission consultants to produce a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) to inform the Joint Local Plan, and the policy should take into account the recommendations highlighted within this new evidence. This will be available for the next stage of consultation (Regulation 19).

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

In advance of receiving the findings in the SFRA, we envisage a policy that:

- seeks to minimise the likelihood and impact of flooding from all sources
- allows the replacement of individual dwellings in flood zone 3b provided that appropriate measures are taken to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding
- ensures suitable arrangements are in place for future management and maintenance of drainage infrastructure
- ensures that surface water discharges from brownfield sites are restricted to as close to greenfield rates as feasible
- requires development to be considered against a new Joint Local Plan SFRA (or any updates that supersede this)
- incorporates recommendations from a new Joint Local Plan SFRA for managing flood risk in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse
- ensures multifunctional SuDS, which provide a range of benefits for people and nature and improve water quality
- requires major development to comply with the latest local standards and guidance for surface water drainage produced by the Lead Local Flood Authority (Oxfordshire County Council).

#### Why we prefer Option A

Since the current policies were adopted, national policy and guidance has been updated with amendments made to the sequential test. Consequently our policy should be updated to reflect the latest information and take account of recommendations from the latest evidence.

We have a desire to address flooding and flood risk more comprehensively through implementation of SuDS, especially due to the anticipated increase in flood risk from climate change.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Carry forward current policies.

The current policies are out of date due to the changes to the sequential test updated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In addition, by rolling forward the current policies we miss out on the opportunity to do more in terms of SuDS.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy CE6 - Flood risk and drainage**

1) Planning decisions will minimise the risk and impact of flooding through:

- a) directing new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding, taking all sources of flood risk and climate change into account;
- b) ensuring that all new development addresses the effective management of all sources of flood risk;
- c) ensuring that development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere; and
- d) ensuring wider environmental benefits of development in relation to flood risk.

2) The Sequential Test and where necessary the Exceptions Test should be applied at a site level to development proposed in areas at risk of flooding\*, taking all sources of flood risk and climate change into account, as identified in the SFRA.

3) A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be provided for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3. In Flood Zone 1 an FRA should accompany all proposals involving:

- a) sites of 1 hectare or more;
- b) land which has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems;

- c) land identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as being at increased flood risk in future; or
- d) land that may be subject to other sources of flooding.

Appropriate mitigation and management measures will be required to be implemented.

4) Replacement of individual dwellings on brownfield within zone 3b will only be allowed where the proposal includes a high standard of flood mitigation, where built footprint of a site is not increased and where risk is demonstrably decreased with mitigation measures to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding.

5) All development proposals must be assessed against the new Joint Local Plan Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (or any updates commissioned by the councils) and the Oxfordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to address locally significant flooding. Appropriate mitigation and management measures must be implemented and maintained.

6) All development will be required to provide a Drainage Strategy. Development will be expected to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems that are multifunctional, providing a range of benefits for people and nature as identified in Policy HP6 - Green infrastructure on new developments and ensure that run-off rates are attenuated to greenfield run-off rates. Higher rates would need to be justified and the risks quantified. Development should strive to reduce run-off rates for existing developed sites to as close to greenfield rates as feasible.

7) Sustainable Drainage Systems should seek to enhance water quality and biodiversity in line with the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Sustainable Drainage Systems should also seek to reduce the amount of water discharging to the wider network at source with opportunity taken to disconnect flows where possible, by using features such as water butts, swales and rain gardens rather than direct network connections from gullies and rain water pipes.

8) Major development must comply with the latest local standards and guidance for surface water drainage produced by the Lead Local Flood Authority (Oxfordshire County Council)\*\*

*\*Apart from proposals identified as exempt in the NPPF ie footnote 60*

*\*\*Current local standards can be found at Oxfordshire County Council (December 2021) Local Standards and Guidance for Surface Water Drainage on Major Development in Oxfordshire. V1.2: [www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/LOCAL-STANDARDS-AND-GUIDANCE-FOR-SURFACE-WATER-DRAINAGE-ON-MAJOR-DEVELOPMENT-IN-OXFORDSHIRE-Jan-22-2.pdf](http://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/LOCAL-STANDARDS-AND-GUIDANCE-FOR-SURFACE-WATER-DRAINAGE-ON-MAJOR-DEVELOPMENT-IN-OXFORDSHIRE-Jan-22-2.pdf)*

## **Policy CE7 - Water efficiency**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will help to ensure that development in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse uses water efficiently.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Ensuring that communities, habitats, wildlife and businesses have access to sufficient clean, fresh water is essential.

The Environment Agency has classified the area served by Thames Water (which includes South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse) as being in “serious water stress”<sup>14</sup>. Thames Water’s Water Resource Management Plan predicts that, without action, there will be a substantial shortfall between the amount of water available and the amount we need, both in the next 25 years and in the longer term<sup>15</sup>. They identify this as primarily due to population growth and climate change.

We need to make sure that occupiers of new development in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse use water resources carefully.

Paragraphs 8, 20b and 158 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) respectively state:

- Achieving sustainable development means the planning system has three overarching objectives - an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective, which includes using natural resources prudently.
- Strategic policies should make sufficient provision for water supply.
- Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for water supply.

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<sup>14</sup> Environment Agency (July 2021) Water Stressed Areas - Final Classification 2021. Version 1.0: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-stressed-areas-2021-classification](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-stressed-areas-2021-classification)

<sup>15</sup> Thames Water (April 2020) Shape Your Water Future. Our Water Resources Management Plan 2020-2100: [www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/regulation/water-resources/water-resources-management-plan-overview.pdf](http://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/regulation/water-resources/water-resources-management-plan-overview.pdf)

## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that:

- moves towards the new, tighter water efficiency standard of 100 litres per person per day as set out in the government's Environmental Improvement Plan, exceeding the current building regulations
- requires major non-residential development to meet water efficiency standards set out by a recognised accreditation scheme like BREEAM
- encourages developers to be ambitious and to strive for exemplar water efficiency standards wherever possible
- encourages development to incorporate water saving measures such as smart meters, water saving fixtures and fittings, rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling systems
- encourages development at site allocations and major development to maximise water efficiency through community-scale rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling schemes.

### Why we prefer Option A

In January 2023 the Government launched the Environmental Improvement Plan, containing new potential water efficiency standards for new homes with a baseline of 105 l/p/d, with a higher standard of 100l/p/d where there is a local need. By pursuing these higher standards this option would help to ensure that development uses water resources efficiently, for example by incorporating water saving features such as smart meters, water-efficient fixtures and fittings, rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling systems. It would ensure that residential development complies with the tightest water efficiency standards, which we believe is justified given the Thames Water area is classified as being in serious water stress.

It would also introduce water efficiency standards for major non-residential development. It would encourage developers to be ambitious, striving for exemplar water efficiency standards and encouraging community-scale rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling schemes at site allocations and major development, where they are likely to be most effective.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Set water efficiency requirements at 110, which is the level required by Building Regulations.

This option is not preferred as our area is under significant water stress and the council wants to take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change through introducing the most stringent standards for new development.

### **Option C - Alternative**

Do not set water efficiency requirements for non-residential development.

This would retain most elements of Option A but would remove the proposed requirement for major non-residential development to demonstrate they are meeting water efficiency standards using a recognised accreditation scheme like BREEAM.

This could miss opportunities to help maximise water efficiency in the districts for non-residential developments, particularly as the Building Regulations do not set specific water efficiency requirements for kinds of building like schools, shops, offices, leisure facilities, industrial and scientific premises.

### **Option D – Alternative**

Require development at strategic site allocations to maximise water efficiency through community-scale rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling schemes.

This would retain most elements of Option A, but instead of encouraging development at site allocations and major development to implement community-scale rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling schemes this would become a requirement that development must provide.

There are a number of benefits that community-scale rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling schemes can provide, compared with schemes for each individual building. However, to date they have been implemented with mixed experience in the UK. Evidence suggests that there is greatest potential to implement these systems successfully in larger new build

developments.<sup>16</sup> The potential to require community-scale rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling schemes at any new and/or carried forward site allocations and major development could be considered. However, we think further evidence would be required in relation to technical feasibility and potential viability implications in order to support this.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### **Policy CE7 - Water efficiency**

- 1) All new homes must be designed to high water efficiency standards, with water use not exceeding 100 litres per person per day, or any future tighter standard that may replace this.
- 2) Every new home with a garden must be fitted with at least one water butt (unless a community rainwater harvesting scheme is implemented that would make this redundant).
- 3) As a minimum, major non-residential development must demonstrate compliance with water efficiency standards set out in a recognised accreditation scheme like BREEAM.  
*(More detail, such as specific standards to be achieved, will be proposed at the next stage of consultation when further evidence is available.)*
- 4) Development should strive to maximise water efficiency as far as possible. Compliance with exemplar water efficiency standards (such as the Royal Institute of British Architects “2030 Climate Challenge” water use targets) is encouraged.
- 5) Development at site allocations and major development should maximise water efficiency through community-scale rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling schemes wherever possible.

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<sup>16</sup> Ricardo (September 2020) Independent Review of the Costs and Benefits of Rainwater Harvesting and Grey Water Recycling Options in the UK. Final Report for Waterwise: [database.waterwise.org.uk/knowledge-base/independent-review-of-costs-and-benefits-of-rwh-and-gwr-options-in-the-uk/](https://database.waterwise.org.uk/knowledge-base/independent-review-of-costs-and-benefits-of-rwh-and-gwr-options-in-the-uk/)



## Policy CE8 - Water quality and wastewater infrastructure

### What will this policy do?

This policy will help to protect and enhance the quality of waterbodies<sup>17</sup> where they, or their catchments, are wholly or partially located within South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. This includes ensuring that there is sufficient wastewater<sup>18</sup> infrastructure capacity to serve development.

### Why is this policy needed?

Waterbodies in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse include the River Thames and globally rare chalk streams. These waterbodies provide a range of social, environmental and economic services including providing water supplies for homes and businesses, supporting a diverse range of habitats and wildlife, contributing to the districts' special character, heritage and identity, and providing opportunities for sports, leisure and recreation.

According to the 2022 Thames River Basin Management Plan assessment<sup>19</sup>, only 31 of the 501 surface waters surveyed by the Environment Agency in the Thames basin are at “good” ecological status or potential. The majority are rated as “moderate” (334), with 117 “poor” and 19 “bad”. In comparison to the 2015 assessment, the ecological status of the surface waters has declined, with fewer rated as “good”. In terms of groundwater; out of the 47 groundwater bodies sampled, 30 are at “good” quantitative status (i.e. water quantity) but only 18 are at ‘good’ chemical status. Since 2015 there has been an improvement in water quantity of groundwaters, but fewer of the groundwaters sampled have “good” chemical status.

The quality of watercourses can be affected by a range of factors including pollution and changes to water levels and flows. Climate change will also have an impact on water quality as drier summers and wetter winters alter water levels and flows. Warmer weather will also change water temperatures, which can affect delicate ecosystems.

Development can affect water quality in a range of different ways. For example:

- ii. development can result in increased demand for water, which means that more water is taken from waterbodies. This can change water levels and flows and may increase the concentration of pollutants.

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<sup>17</sup> Waterbodies include surface waters (such as rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, canals and reservoirs) and groundwater (water stored underground).

<sup>18</sup> Wastewater includes water that has been used, for example in homes or by businesses, as well as rain that falls on roofs, roads and pavements.

<sup>19</sup> [www.gov.uk/guidance/thames-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/thames-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022)

- iii. development can result in more rainwater draining from roads, pavements, car parks and driveways, which can carry pollutants such as silt, grit, bacteria from animal faeces, and oil. This pollution can enter surface water sewers that discharge directly into rivers and streams.
- iv. some development, for example industrial uses, can cause specific concerns (for example in relation to chemicals used).
- v. development can result in more wastewater going to treatment works, which means that more treated wastewater is released back into the environment. This can also increase the concentration of pollutants.

Where there is insufficient infrastructure capacity, wastewater (which includes waste from toilets) may be released directly into rivers and streams with no/minimal treatment via storm overflows. This can cause significant harm to human health and to nature. The use of storm overflows is meant to be a last resort to avoid systems becoming overwhelmed and the risk of wastewater backing up into people's homes (for example during unusually heavy downpours of rain). However, the councils are extremely concerned about how often and how long storm overflows are currently being used and are actively engaging with Thames Water on this issue. It is essential that there is sufficient infrastructure capacity to serve new development to avoid the use of storm overflows moving forward.

Paragraphs 180(e), 20(b) and 191 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) respectively state that planning policies should:

- contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.
- make sufficient provision for wastewater.
- ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.

There are also legal requirements relating to water quality. The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 seek to prevent the deterioration of surface waters and groundwaters, to protect, enhance and restore waterbodies to "good" status, and achieve compliance with standards and objectives for protected areas. The Environment Act 2021 has also introduced new standards and requirements related to water quality.

We are commissioning a Water Cycle Study to inform the Joint Local Plan. This will include assessment of:

- whether sufficient water resources will be available to serve development.
- whether there is sufficient wastewater infrastructure capacity to serve development and, if not, what new or upgraded infrastructure will be required and the timescales for delivering this.
- opportunities and impacts related to the water environment.

We will publish the Water Cycle Study at the next stage of consultation (Regulation 19).

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

Have a policy that:

- ensures development protects and enhances water quality
- ensures any potential negative impacts on water quality are appropriately assessed and mitigated
- ensures development does not prevent legal requirements being met
- ensures there is adequate wastewater treatment capacity to serve development
- ensures where wastewater infrastructure capacity constraints are identified, development is not occupied until the necessary infrastructure upgrades have been completed
- prevents new connections of surface water to a designated foul water sewer.

This policy could be combined with a policy on water efficiency in future versions of the Joint Local Plan.

#### Why we prefer Option A

This option will help to protect and enhance water quality. It will ensure that the potential impacts of development on water quality are properly assessed and mitigated. It will also help to ensure that there is adequate wastewater infrastructure capacity to serve development.

This option would sit alongside other preferred options that would also help to protect and enhance water quality, such as policy options on water efficiency, flood risk and drainage.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Do not include legal requirements within the policy.

This would be the same as Option A, but it without reference to specific legal requirements.

Compliance with legal requirements is a matter of law. These requirements would still apply, with or without reference in the Joint Local Plan. Therefore, it could be considered unnecessary to refer to specific legal requirements within a Joint Local Plan policy. However, our preference is to include reference to specific legal requirements for clarity and completeness.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy CE8 - Water quality and wastewater infrastructure**

##### **Protecting and enhancing water quality**

- 1) Development in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse must protect and enhance water quality, including through:
  - a) the use of green infrastructure, including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS);
  - b) utilising natural means of water quality improvements where possible, with mechanical water quality improvement devices only being used in situations where insufficient water quality improvement can be achieved through natural means;
  - c) maximising water efficiency; and
  - d) identifying and implementing opportunities to remedy historical water contamination issues, where appropriate.
- 2) Where development may have an adverse impact on water quality, evidence must be provided that identifies potential impacts (including for human health, the natural environment and amenity) and suitable mitigation. Engagement should be undertaken with the Environment Agency to agree the scope and content of the evidence required. Mitigation must be in place before any environmental effects occur. Where appropriate, water quality monitoring should be undertaken and submitted to the council to ensure that mitigation is effective.

##### **Meeting legal requirements**

- 3) Development, individually or cumulatively, must not prevent the future attainment of “good” status under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017.
- 4) Where there are impact pathways on habitats of national or international importance, development must not prevent a protected waterbody achieving the objectives set out in the Common Standards Monitoring Guidance (or any future standards/guidance that may supersede this).

### **Wastewater Infrastructure**

- 5) There must be adequate wastewater treatment capacity to serve development.
- 6) Applications for major development must be supported by a Sewage Capacity Assessment.
- 7) Where wastewater infrastructure capacity constraints are identified, development must not commence until all infrastructure upgrades plans have been agreed and programmed (between developer and Thames Water or other utility provider). In addition, development must not be occupied until the necessary infrastructure upgrades have been completed. The council will apply Grampian conditions, where appropriate, to ensure that adequate sewerage capacity is in place before new homes are occupied in order to protect water quality.
- 8) No new surface water connections are to be connected to a foul sewer. For brownfield sites, where existing connections are proven, the drainage strategy should seek to either remove these if feasible or attenuate existing flows to as close to the QBar greenfield rate as feasible or to a rate acceptable to Thames Water whichever is the lower.
- 9) In the case of extensions to buildings, developments are encouraged to take the opportunity to upgrade the drainage of the existing building as well as the extension, by disconnecting roof drainage from the surface water sewer network and incorporating soakaways, water butts and greywater recycling schemes.
- 10) All development will be required to confirm suitable arrangements for future maintenance and management. All below ground drainage serving more than one property should be designed to adoptable standards and offered to an OFWAT approved statutory water authority for adoption.
- 11) In areas where high groundwater could potentially affect the drainage system, specific measures should be incorporated in any new network provided to reduce the risk of groundwater affecting the drainage system.

## Policy CE9 - Air quality

### What will this policy do?

This policy will help to protect and enhance air quality in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

### Why is this policy needed?

Air pollution can have significant impacts on public health, habitats and wildlife, and the climate. We need to protect and enhance air quality in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse to help support healthy communities, nature recovery and addressing climate change.

The councils regularly monitor air quality across the districts. There are currently three designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in South Oxfordshire at Henley-on-Thames, Wallingford and Watlington. There are also currently three designated AQMAs in Vale of White Horse at Botley, Abingdon-on-Thames and Marcham. In these areas air pollution levels exceed national objective levels, primarily due to traffic congestion, historic settlement layouts (with narrow streets and street canyons) and limited alternative routes and modes of travel. The councils each have Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs) that set out how air quality will be improved in the AQMAs.<sup>20</sup> The action plans are currently being updated and the new joint AQAP advises that we expect to revoke the Wallingford AQMA in the shorter term, and depending on future air quality data, also revoke the Abingdon and Watlington AQMAs. The councils have also produced developer guidance that sets out how the AQAPs can be implemented through planning processes.

Vale of White Horse District Council has signed up to UK100<sup>21</sup>, a network of local leaders who have pledged to lead a rapid transition to net zero and clean air. UK100 is campaigning for the government to do more on air quality, including adopting the World Health Organisation's recommended air pollution limits as legally binding targets to be achieved by 2030.

To protect and enhance air quality in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse we can:

- ensure that air quality impacts associated with development are properly assessed and addressed.
- identify opportunities to protect and enhance air quality in the districts (for example through design, the provision of green infrastructure, and traffic and travel management).

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<sup>20</sup> South Oxfordshire District Council (2014) [Air Quality Action Plan](#). Vale of White Horse District Council (2015) [Air Quality Action Plan](#).

<sup>21</sup> [www.uk100.org/about](http://www.uk100.org/about)

- develop policies that help to address key sources of air pollution, such as policies that help to reduce emissions from vehicles (for example by seeking to reduce the need to travel and by encouraging travel by sustainable modes) and policies that help to reduce emissions associated with the construction and operation of buildings (for example by ensuring buildings are energy efficient and by providing for renewable energy generation).

We plan to undertake an Air Quality Impact Assessment that will test how any development proposed in the Joint Local Plan will affect air quality. We will also undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment that will consider the potential impacts of the Joint Local Plan on our most important biodiversity sites. Where negative air quality impacts are identified, these assessments will consider how air quality impacts might be avoided or appropriately mitigated. Both will be published at the next stage of consultation on the Joint Local Plan (Regulation 19). Air quality will also be considered through the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Paragraphs 180, 191 and 192 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) require planning policies to:

- prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of air pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve air quality.
- ensure new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.
- sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of AQMAs, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, as far as possible at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that:

- ensures that where there is a risk of negative impacts on air quality and/or exposure to poor air quality this is appropriately assessed and addressed

- ensures that addressing negative impacts on air quality and/or exposure to poor air quality follows a hierarchical approach of:
  1. avoid
  2. minimise
  3. mitigate
  4. compensate (as a last resort)
- identifies opportunities to protect and enhance air quality in the districts (for example through design and the provision of green infrastructure).

### Why we prefer Option A

Option A adds detail to the framework provided by national planning policy and guidance, helping to provide clarity and consistency by setting out how air quality impacts should be assessed and addressed as part of development proposals in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

This option would sit alongside other preferred options that seek to address key sources of air pollution, such as policies that help to reduce emissions from vehicles (for example by seeking to reduce the need to travel and by encouraging travel by sustainable modes) and policies that help to reduce emissions associated with the construction and operation of buildings (for example by ensuring buildings are energy efficient and by providing for renewable energy generation).

### Option B - Alternative

Do not set out when air quality assessments will be required.

Same as Option A but without setting specific requirements to assess air quality impacts.

Positives:

- This could help to reduce the requirements and costs associated with development.
- In some cases, air quality assessments will already be required as part of an Environment Statement or appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations, so a policy requirement may not be needed.
- It could be difficult to set an appropriate threshold for requiring air quality assessments as each development is unique.



**Negatives:**

Where air quality assessments are not already required as part of an Environment Statement or appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations, the potential air quality impacts associated with development may not be fully understood. Opportunities to avoid or mitigate impacts may be missed.

**Option C – Alternative**

Do not have an air quality policy.

Not having an air quality policy in the Joint Local Plan means that we would need to rely entirely on national planning policy and guidance. This approach would miss opportunities to provide additional detail on how air quality impacts should be assessed and addressed as part of development proposals in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse linked to the councils' Air Quality Action Plans and developer guidance.

**Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

**Policy CE9 - Air quality**

**Protecting and enhancing air quality**

- 1) Development in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse must protect and enhance air quality through:
  - a) design that seeks to avoid negative impacts on air quality and/or exposure to poor air quality, both during construction and over the lifetime of development;

- b) where it is not possible to entirely avoid negative impacts on air quality and/or exposure to poor air quality, design measures should be used to minimise negative impacts/exposure as far as possible, both during construction and over the lifetime of development;
- c) provision of appropriate green infrastructure; and
- d) regard to the councils' latest air quality developer guidance.\* Development, on its own or cumulatively\*\*, should not result in the creation of any new areas that exceed national air quality objective levels or delay the date at which compliance will be achieved in areas that are currently in exceedance of national air quality objective levels.\*\*\*

2) Development in or affecting an Air Quality Management Area must be consistent with the latest Air Quality Action Plan.

#### **Assessing air quality impacts**

- 3) Where development would introduce sensitive receptors<sup>22</sup> in areas of existing poor air quality and/or where major development is proposed an Air Quality Assessment will be required.
- 4) Development that involves significant demolition, construction or earthworks or that could result in significant dust impacts will be required to submit a dust assessment as part of the Air Quality Assessment.

#### **Addressing air quality impacts**

- 5) If, after using design to avoid and minimise negative impacts on air quality and/or exposure to poor air quality, an Air Quality Assessment indicates that risks remain, proportionate mitigation will be required to reduce impacts/exposure to an acceptable level.
- 6) Where mitigation cannot fully eliminate risks and it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest, as a last resort, compensation in the form of contributions towards the delivery of measures identified in the Air Quality Action Plan will be secured via a planning obligation.

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<sup>22</sup> Sensitive receptors include uses such as nursing homes, schools, nurseries and crèches, hospitals, children's playing areas and playing fields.

7) Where specific measures are required to manage dust, these will be secured either as part of a Construction Management Plan (if related to major development) or by condition (if related to minor development).

*\* Current guidance: South Oxfordshire District Council Air Quality Developer's Guidance: [www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/01/Air-Quality-Developer-Guidance-South-Oxfordshire.pdf](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/01/Air-Quality-Developer-Guidance-South-Oxfordshire.pdf). Vale of White Horse Air Quality Developer's Guidance: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/environment-and-neighbourhood-issues/air-quality/air-quality/](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/environment-and-neighbourhood-issues/air-quality/air-quality/).*

*\*\* The appropriate scope of any assessment of cumulative impacts will be considered on a case-by-case basis to be agreed with the council.*

*\*\*\* National objectives are set out in The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010. If national objectives are not met, or are at risk of not being met, an Air Quality Management Area must be declared.*

## **Policy CE10 - Pollution sources and receptors**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will seek to ensure that new development considers any potential adverse impacts from existing and potential sources of pollution and mitigates these where appropriate.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

It is crucial that new development is designed and located appropriately so that no adverse impacts arise from either existing or potential pollution sources, such as:

- vi. noise or vibration
- vii. dust, smell, heat, odour, gases and other emissions
- viii. contamination of the site or its surroundings and hazardous substances nearby
- ix. artificial light.

“Pollution” is one of the most common adverse impacts, and includes 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. The term “pollution” covers a variety of potential sources listed above, including noise, vibration, odour and dust, as well as other relevant pollutants such as light and air pollution which are covered by their own policies.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 191 states that “planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development”. It is therefore important that the Local Plan includes a policy on pollution in order to ensure that firstly, new development does not cause significant adverse impacts in terms of pollution, but also that the development itself is in a suitable location so that it is not adversely impacted by pollution, in line with national policy.

Regarding noise pollution specifically, NPPF paragraph 191(a), states that policies should “mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life”. Additionally, paragraph 193 of the NPPF introduces the “agent of change” principle. This is where “the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or ‘agent of change’) should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the

development has been completed”. As a result, this policy should also introduce a requirement that relates to the agent of change principle, to ensure that the responsibility of mitigating existing noise and other nuisance-generating uses is placed on the new development.

Regarding hazardous substances, we are 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. NPPF provides further advice on how the planning system deals with hazardous substances stating in paragraph 45 that “local planning authorities should consult the appropriate bodies when considering applications for the siting of, or changes to, major hazard sites, installations or pipelines, or for development around them”. This policy will help to ensure that the health and safety of occupants is prioritised when applications involving hazardous substances are considered.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that:

- ensures that occupiers of new development proposals will not be subject to individual and/or cumulative adverse effect(s) of pollution.
- does not permit development likely to be adversely affected by pollution.
- ensures that new development proposals do not result in significant adverse impacts on human health, the natural environment and/or the amenity of neighbouring uses.
- in terms of noise pollution (and other nuisance-generating uses), implements the “agent of change” principle.

#### Why we prefer Option A

We prefer this option because it would set clear requirements on how new development should respond to, and plan for, potential adverse impacts from existing and potential future sources, such as noise, odour, hazardous substances, and more. It also clearly lists the potential existing and future sources so that these are considered in new development proposals and requires mitigation to be undertaken where potential impacts are identified. It also implements the “agent of change” principle, ensuring that existing

development will not carry the burden of potentially costly mitigation measures as a consequence of new development being located in close proximity.

**Option B - Alternative**

Have no policy on pollution in the Joint Local Plan and instead rely on national policy/guidance in the NPPF/planning practice guidance.

We do not prefer this alternative option because it would not provide clear requirements on how new developments should respond to the adverse effects of pollution and other adverse impacts and prevent these impacts which could arise as a consequence of new development. It would also not reflect the vision we have for the plan to create places “where people are safe from pollution”.

**Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

**Policy CE10 - Pollution sources and receptors**

**Impact of existing pollution on new development**

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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 are not limited to:

- a) noise or vibration;
- b) smell, dust, odour, gases and other emissions;
- c) air pollution, contamination of the site or its surroundings (see Policy CE12 - Soils and contaminated land) and hazardous substances nearby;
- d) artificial light (see Policy CE11 - Light pollution and dark skies)
- e) land instability; and
- f) any other relevant types of pollution.

#### **Impact of new development on health, nature and neighbouring environments**

- 4) Development proposals must 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. Both individual and cumulative impacts of development will be considered when assessing development proposals. 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 sources of pollution:
  - a) noise or vibration;
  - b) smell, dust, odour, gases and other emissions;
  - c) air pollution, contamination of the site or its surroundings (see Policy CE12- Soils and contaminated land) and hazardous substances nearby;
  - d) artificial light (see Policy CE11 - Light pollution and dark skies)
  - e) land instability; and
  - f) any other relevant types of pollution.

#### **Agent of Change**

- 5) Planning proposals must acknowledge the agent of change principle and ensure new development is designed to mitigate any potential adverse impacts from established noise and other nuisance-generating uses. Proposals must ensure these uses are able to continue to operate and grow without restriction.

#### **Hazardous Substances**

- 6) Proposals for development which involves the use, movement or storage of hazardous substances will be referred to the Health and Safety Executive and/or the Environment Agency.
- 7) Proposals for development within the vicinity of an installation or pipeline involving hazardous substances or activities will be referred to the Health and Safety Executive and/or the Environment Agency.
- 8) In the case of either 6 or 7, development will only be permitted if the impact on health and safety of occupants of that development is acceptable.
- 9) The council will seek to reduce the potential for conflicting land uses and promote safety of people and protection of the environment.

#### **Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) Harwell**

- 10) All development proposals within the site of NRS Harwell will be required to consult the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR). The following proposals for development within the Outer Consultation Zone (OCZ) for NRS Harwell (as shown on the Policies Map) will also be required to consult ONR:
  - a) any new residential development of 200 dwellings or greater;
  - b) any re-use or re-classification of an existing development that will lead to a material increase in the size of an existing development (greater than 500 persons);
  - c) any new non-residential development that could introduce vulnerable groups to the OCZ; and
  - d) any new development, re-use or re-classification of an existing development that could pose an external hazard to the site.



## **Policy CE11 - Light pollution and dark skies**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will seek to minimise light pollution across our districts and protect our darkest skies from the impacts of light pollution. Where possible, the policy will support the restoration and improvement of areas to enhance and or extend the districts' dark skies.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Light pollution is known to have a significant impact on both wildlife and humans. As our districts are predominately rural, it is important to minimise light pollution to reduce the impact on our environment, nature, people and landscapes. The darkest areas of our districts are those areas with little to no light pollution, often known as “dark skies” areas. Their darkness is an important element of landscape character and tranquillity, and as a result they are particularly vulnerable to light pollution. In order to ensure we protect the dark skies in our districts, we commissioned a Dark Skies Assessment. This identifies the darkest areas of our districts which need the strongest protection from light pollution, as well as identifying how polluted the other areas of our districts are from light, so we can prevent it worsening in all areas.

Paragraph 191(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires planning policies and decisions to “limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation”. By identifying the darkest areas within our districts through the Dark Skies Assessment, we will be able to implement a policy for the first time that will not only be able to limit the impact of light pollution in our brightest areas, but also protect the darkest areas of our districts that we have established are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of light pollution. The assessment will give us policy recommendations on how we can achieve this.

It is also important to recognise that there is demand for artificial lighting for the purposes of sports, security and for safety. The Dark Skies Assessment will also consider these circumstances where lighting is required and provide recommendations regarding how best to incorporate this type of lighting in new development to ensure it has minimal impact on the surrounding environment, whilst also serving its intended purpose.

## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### Option A - Preferred

Include a policy that:

- ensures all new development is designed to minimise light pollution
- includes clear design criteria as well as considerations to be met by all proposals involving external lighting schemes
- protects the darkest areas in our districts identified through our Dark Skies Assessment, by only permitting proposals for external lighting in exceptional circumstances and sets clear requirements to reduce light spill through glazing
- where possible, encourages development proposals to support the restoration and improvement of areas to enhance and or extend dark skies
- recognises the need for artificial lighting for the purposes of sports, security and safety, but ensures that in these circumstances that the impact of light pollution on the surrounding environment is fully considered and minimised.

### Why we prefer Option A

We prefer this option because it recognises the importance of minimising light pollution across our districts, particularly in the darkest areas. It would ensure that new development minimises light pollution by providing clear criteria and considerations on how external lighting schemes can be designed to minimise their pollutive impact. It will also help to protect the darkest areas of our districts by only permitting proposals for external lighting in those areas in exceptional circumstances. Additionally, it also recognises the value some artificial lighting holds for the purpose of sports, security and safety, but ensures the light pollution generated for these uses is minimised. This option is reflective of national planning policy requirements, as well as national guidance on light pollution.

### Option B - Alternative

Keep requirements on light pollution within the general pollution policy.

Under this option, the proposed pollution sources and receptors policy (Policy CE10) would be all the Joint Local Plan contains on light pollution. The plan would not provide any specific requirements on minimising light pollution or on protecting dark skies. We do not prefer this option because we have good coverage of dark skies in the districts and these are worthy of protection. Having a separate policy on light pollution and/or dark skies will set clear and tailored expectations around how we expect new

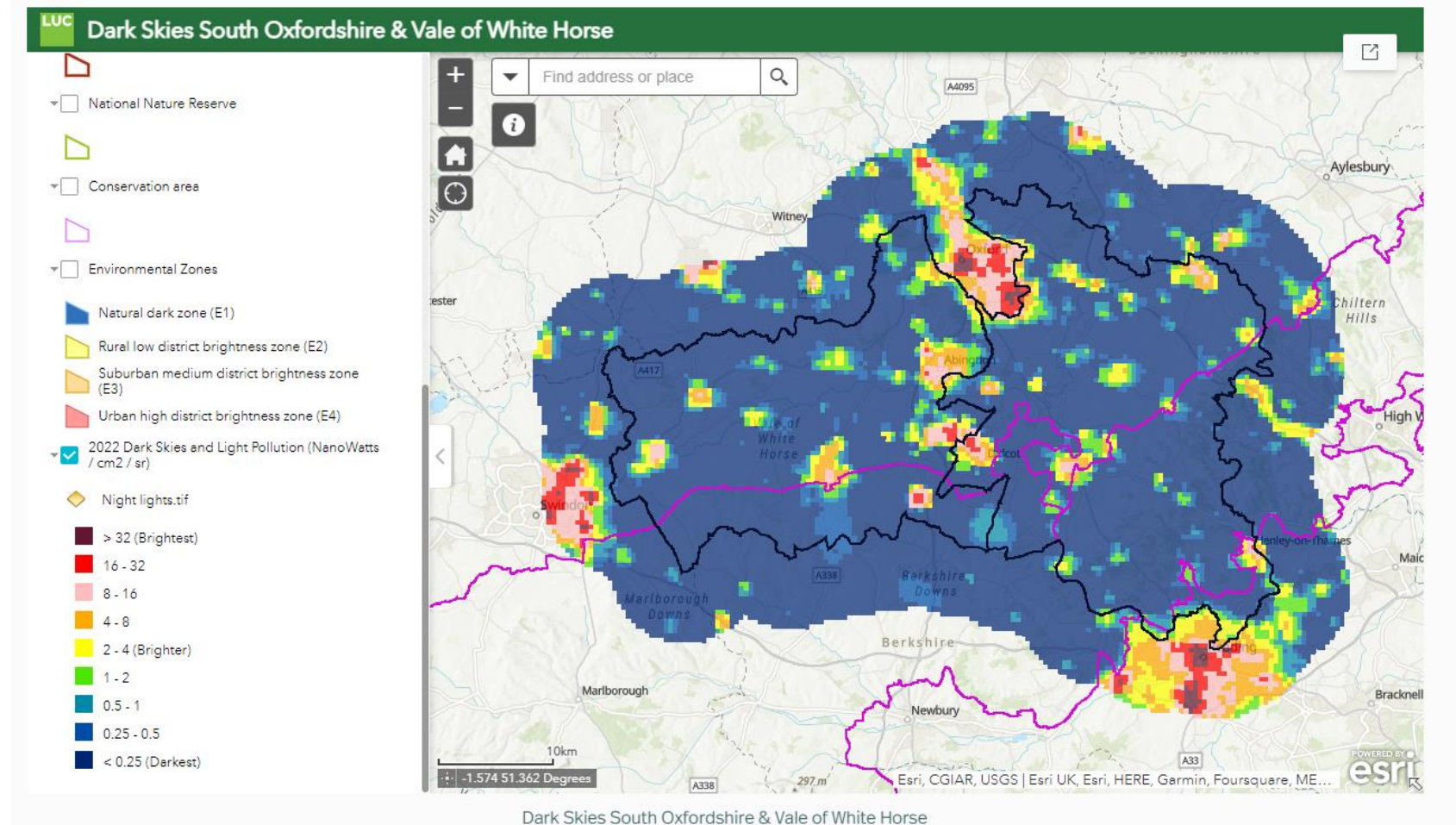
development proposals to respond to the impacts of light pollution. Having a separate policy will also help to provide necessary emphasis on the importance of protecting our darkest skies as well as generally minimising light pollution throughout our districts.

**Option C – Alternative**

Have no policy on light pollution and/or dark skies in the Joint Local Plan and instead rely on national policy/guidance in the NPPF/planning practice guidance.

This alternative option is not preferred as it would not provide clear requirements on how new developments should minimise the impacts of light pollution and protect the darkest skies in our districts. This could lead to light pollution worsening across our districts, particularly in those identified dark skies areas which could have an adverse impact on the environment, nature, people and landscapes.

## South and Vale Dark Skies Map [interactive map when shown on online consultation platform]:



You can view this map in more detail online at:

[luc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e837b7ad4d5448bb89b9e4de5c8adea7](http://luc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e837b7ad4d5448bb89b9e4de5c8adea7)

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy CE11 - Light pollution and dark skies**

- 1) All proposals for development should be designed to minimise light pollution, both external lighting and as a consequence of light leakage from the interior of buildings.
- 2) Proposals for external lighting schemes will be permitted if they meet the following criteria:
  - a) the lighting proposed is the minimum appropriate for its purpose;
  - b) they meet the principal lighting guidance (set out in the Dark Skies/Light Impact Assessment) relevant to their Environmental Zone as shown on the Policies Map\* (or equivalent up to date document);
  - c) it is demonstrated by illuminance contour diagrams that the minimum number, intensity and height and timing of lighting necessary to achieve its locationally appropriate purpose is proposed;
  - d) it has been designed to minimise light glare, light trespass, light spillage and sky glare, and would not dazzle or distract drivers or pedestrians using nearby highways, through using the best available technology to minimise light pollution and conserve energy;
  - e) the lighting scheme would not be visually detrimental to its immediate or wider setting or to landscape character, particularly intrinsically dark landscapes and would be of appropriate colour temperature for its location; and
  - f) it does not adversely impact living conditions;
  - g) it does not have an adverse impact on attractive and/or sensitive views or from vantage points;
  - h) it is designed to minimise disturbance to wildlife, biodiversity and their food sources; and
  - i) any development affecting protected species or habitats or in close proximity, follows relevant specific guidance on lighting.
- 3) Proposals for external lighting within areas of dark skies will only be permitted where they adhere to the above requirements and where they can demonstrate that there will be no significant adverse effects on the visibility of the night sky or its intrinsically dark landscapes.

- 4) Within National Landscapes (formerly AONBs), proposals for development should reflect the guidance set out in the North Wessex Downs Position Statement on Dark Skies and Artificial Light\*\* and supporting guidance found in Dark Skies of North Wessex Downs AONB: A Guide to Good External Lighting\*\*\*, as well as lighting guidance set out in the Chilterns AONB Management Plan\*\*\*\* (or any future equivalent guidance of those listed).
- 5) In addition to other requirements set out in this policy, proposals within areas of the dark light environmental zone (E1) will be required to meet the following principles to reduce internal light spill through glazing:
  - a) glazing should not exceed 25% of the wall area\*\*\*\*\*;
  - b) avoid large single continuous areas\*\*\*\*\* of glazing such as multi-floor to eaves glazing;
  - c) glazing should not be on roofs or ceilings without sufficient mitigation;
  - d) a maximum target upper visible light transmission (VLT) limit of 0.65 +/-0.05 should be applied in all glazing applications; and
  - e) high impact commercial greenhouses should be avoided.
- 6) Where possible, development proposals are encouraged to support the restoration and improvement of areas to enhance and or extend dark skies, and/or upgrade existing sources of light pollution on, and/or in the vicinity of the development to reduce light pollution in the area.

\* *Currently not shown on the Policies Map but can be found in consultation material [see map above]. To be added to Policies Map at Regulation 19 stage.*

\*\* [www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Position-Statement-on-Dark-Skies-and-Artificial-Light-Final.pdf](http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Position-Statement-on-Dark-Skies-and-Artificial-Light-Final.pdf)

\*\*\* [www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Lighting\\_Guide\\_07-05\\_MEDRES.pdf](http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Lighting_Guide_07-05_MEDRES.pdf)

\*\*\*\* [www.chilternsaonb.org/what-we-do/future-proofing-the-chilterns/management-plan/](http://www.chilternsaonb.org/what-we-do/future-proofing-the-chilterns/management-plan/)

\*\*\*\*\* *Using Elemental Method Energy Efficiency as reference (Building Regulations)*

\*\*\*\*\* *>50% glazing on a single elevation is becoming "large".*

## **Policy CE12 - Soils and contaminated land**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will seek to protect and enhance soils, and the ecosystem services they provide, as well as addressing land contamination issues.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Soil is a valuable natural resource. It performs a number of important ecosystem services including supporting biodiversity, food growing, carbon sequestration and water storage. However, often soil is not given the consideration it deserves. We can improve this by protecting land with the best quality soils from development and, in places where development is permitted, having clear requirements to avoid harm to soils such as pollution, loss and compaction.

We also need to ensure that our communities and natural environment are protected from land contamination risks.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning policies should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing soils;
- recognising the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land;
- preventing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil pollution; and
- remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 180.



## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that:

- protects the districts' best and most versatile agricultural land
- identifies opportunities to protect and enhance soil during construction
- ensures land contamination risks are appropriately assessed
- ensures land contamination is appropriately remediated/mitigated

Rely on national policy and guidance, instead of setting detailed policy requirements on land stability.

### Why we prefer Option A

Option A recognises the value of the districts' best and most versatile agricultural land and identifies opportunities to protect and enhance soils in accordance with national planning policy and guidance. It would help to provide clarity and consistency by setting out how land contamination should be assessed and addressed as part of development proposals in line with the Oxfordshire Planning Advice Note - Dealing with Land Contamination During Development: A Guide for Developers.

### Option B - Alternative

Require soil surveys and soil management plans for developments over a specified size threshold.

This would be in addition to Option A.

Undertaking a soil survey would provide information on a site's soil quality and functions. A soil management plan could then be prepared to help ensure that soils are appropriately protected during the construction process. However, this could be a substantial additional burden on developers if chemical analysis and physical assessment were required. This could go further than current requirements for assessing land contamination, and therefore may be disproportionate. Further guidance on the information developers would be expected to provide and how this information would be assessed by the councils would be required to implement this policy approach.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Set detailed, locally specific policy requirements on land stability.

This would be in addition to most elements of Option A, but instead of relying solely on national planning policy and guidance in considering land stability issues we would also have a detailed policy approach specific to South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

Land stability has not been identified as a significant issue in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. (Land stability tends to be a particular issue in ex-mining and coastal areas.) Therefore, a detailed policy approach on land stability in the Joint Local Plan is unlikely to be necessary, appropriate or proportionate. Land stability would instead be considered on a site-by-site basis, where relevant, in accordance with national planning policy and guidance.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy CE12 - Soils and contaminated land**

##### **Protecting and enhancing soils**

- 1) Development in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse must protect and enhance soils and the ecosystem services they provide by:
  - a) avoiding 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 higher quality;
  - b) taking opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict or contaminated land;
  - c) taking opportunities to reuse soil on-site wherever possible and, where there is excess soil, consider opportunities to share soil to avoid loss to landfill;
  - d) maximising permeable surfaces that allow water to infiltrate and soil to respire;

- e) minimising soil compaction, the addition of low-quality fill dirt, burying waste on site and the erosion of unprotected topsoil, particularly on sloped ground during construction, particularly on areas identified for the provision of green infrastructure; and
- f) protecting, separating, and preserving the topsoil during construction by avoiding mixing, inverting or burying it, and where topsoil is to be stored, the size of the bunds should be limited to avoid anoxic conditions in the centre of large bunds which degrade soils.

### **Assessing land contamination**

- 2) Where land is known or suspected of being contaminated, any planning application will require at least a Phase One Contaminated Land Preliminary Risk Assessment prepared in accordance with the councils' latest guidance.\*\*
- 3) Where there is currently no information to suggest that contaminated land may be present, any planning application proposing uses that are particularly vulnerable to contamination\*\*\* must be accompanied by a Contaminated Land Questionnaire.\*\*\*\*
- 4) Development should be designed to ensure that it will not contribute to land contamination. The individual and cumulative impacts of development on human health, groundwater and surface water, and the wider natural environment will be considered when assessing development proposals.

### **Addressing land contamination**

- 5) If a proposal would otherwise result in an unacceptable level of risk to human health, groundwater and surface water and/or the wider natural environment from land contamination, applicants must provide proportionate remediation or mitigation to reduce risk to an acceptable level.

\* *The best and most versatile agricultural land is land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.*

*\*\* The councils' current guidance is: The Oxfordshire Contaminated Land Group Consortium (December 2020) Oxfordshire Planning advice note: Dealing with contamination during development: A guide for developers. Version 4: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/07/Oxfordshire-Planning-Advice-Note-Revision-Dec20-v2.pdf>*

*\*\*\* Uses classed as particularly vulnerable to land contamination include residential housing, nursing homes, allotments, schools, nurseries and crèches, children's playing areas and playing fields.*

*\*\*\*\* The Contaminated Land Questionnaire is available on the councils' websites: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/07/2020-Contaminated-Land-Questionnaire.pdf](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/07/2020-Contaminated-Land-Questionnaire.pdf).*

## Policy CE13 - Minerals safeguarding areas

### What will this policy do?

This policy will help to ensure that when planning applications are determined, decisions consider how best to safeguard our minerals.

### Why is this policy needed?

Minerals form as a result of natural geological processes. They have an essential role in providing the infrastructure, buildings, energy, and goods that communities need. However, they are also a finite natural resource, which needs to be carefully managed.

Oxfordshire County Council is the mineral planning authority. The county council determines planning applications for minerals development and produces the Minerals and Waste Local Plan<sup>24</sup>. The Minerals and Waste Local Plan identifies Minerals Safeguarding Areas, which are areas with known minerals resources where it is desirable to avoid non-minerals development from needlessly preventing the future extraction of mineral resources. It also identifies Minerals Consultation Areas, where district councils need to consult the county council on planning applications for non-minerals development. In South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse these are mainly protecting natural deposits of sand and gravel.

Paragraph 216(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) says we should:

- adopt appropriate policies so that known locations of specific minerals resources of local and national importance are not sterilised by non-mineral development where this should be avoided (whilst not creating a presumption that the resources defined will be worked).
- set out policies to encourage the prior extraction of minerals, where practical and environmentally feasible, if it is necessary for non-mineral development to take place.

Planning Practice Guidance says that whilst district councils are not mineral planning authorities, we have an important role in safeguarding minerals in three ways:

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<sup>24</sup> The Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy was adopted by Oxfordshire County Council on 12 September 2017: [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/minerals-and-waste-policy/core-strategy#paragraph-5893](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/minerals-and-waste-policy/core-strategy#paragraph-5893). Oxfordshire County Council has commenced the preparation of the New Minerals and Waste Plan. Saved policies in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (1996) are also relevant: [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/minerals-and-waste-policy/minerals-and-waste-local-plan](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/minerals-and-waste-policy/minerals-and-waste-local-plan).

- i) having regard to the local minerals plan when identifying suitable locations for non-mineral development in local plans;
- ii) in those areas where a mineral planning authority has defined a Minerals Consultation Area, we should consult the mineral planning authority and take account of the local minerals plan before determining a planning application on any proposal for non-minerals development within it; and
- iii) when determining planning applications, we should take account of minerals safeguarding and the views of the mineral planning authority on the consequences of preventing minerals extraction.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that:

- directs development that would prevent or otherwise hinder the possible future extraction of minerals away from Minerals Safeguarding Areas
- where development in Minerals Safeguarding Areas cannot be avoided, encourage developers to extract minerals prior to non-minerals development taking place
- highlights the need to consider the Minerals and Waste Local Plan in determining planning applications for non-minerals development in Minerals Safeguarding Areas
- highlights the need to consult the mineral planning authority (Oxfordshire County Council) on all planning applications for development within a Minerals Consultation Area.

#### Why we prefer Option A

Option A will help to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to safeguarding minerals in the determination of planning applications in line with national planning policy and guidance.

#### Option b - Alternative

Do not have a policy on mineral safeguarding areas.  
This would not align with national planning policy and guidance.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy CE13 - Minerals safeguarding areas**

- 1) The mineral planning authority, Oxfordshire County Council, will be consulted on all planning applications for development within a Minerals Consultation Area.
- 2) Development that would prevent or otherwise hinder the possible future extraction of minerals will be directed away from Minerals Safeguarding Areas.
- 3) Where development in Minerals Safeguarding Areas cannot be avoided, developers are encouraged to investigate mineral resources within the development site and to extract minerals prior to non-mineral development taking place, where this is proportionate, practical and environmentally feasible.
- 4) Consideration will be given to the Minerals and Waste Local Plan in determining planning applications for non-minerals development in Minerals Safeguarding Areas.

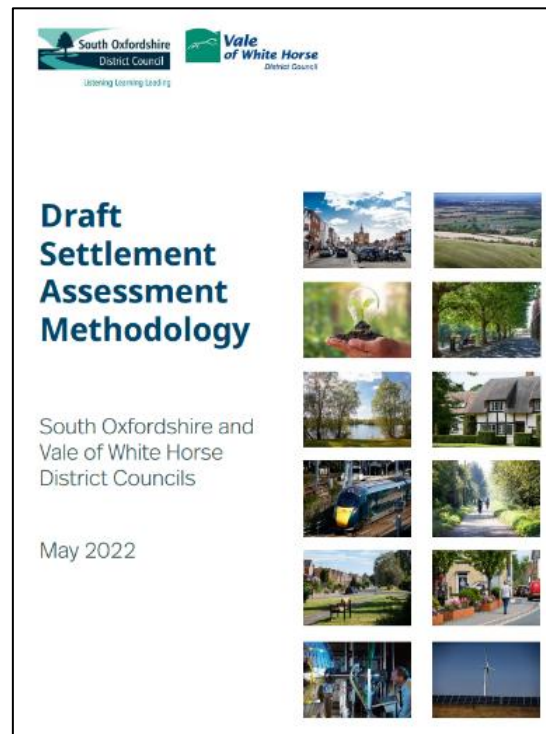
## 5. Spatial strategy and settlements

### Introduction

#### You told us

We didn't present our proposed spatial strategy at the Issues stage, however we did ask you about our Draft Settlement Assessment Methodology. Your feedback helped us to finalise the right set of services and facilities to include in the Settlement Assessment. We then developed a questionnaire and invited all town and parish councils to participate actively.

We have considered all feedback when developing our policy options, selecting our preferred option and proposed policy wording, which are presented in this chapter.





## **Policy SP1 - Spatial strategy**

### **What will this policy do?**

The spatial strategy is an important policy at the heart of the plan. It sets out clearly where new development will be promoted and where it will be limited to meet the objectives of the plan, like encouraging sustainable travel and protecting our communities and the environment.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) gives some guidance on developing a spatial strategy. It says that local plans should:

- include an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design of places
- look ahead over a minimum period of time of 15 years, with a vision to look further ahead (at least 30 years) for larger scale development
- provide a clear strategy for bringing sufficient land forward, and at a sufficient rate, to address objectively assessed needs over the plan period, in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development
- informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development
- set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration
- plan for and allocate sufficient sites to deliver the strategic priorities of the area.

The NPPF is clear that where Green Belts are defined, they should only be altered in exceptional circumstances when preparing a local plan. Green Belt boundaries were substantially revised in the last local plans to accommodate development, but there are currently no such exceptional circumstances in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse to warrant this again. We are reviewing the potential for any additions to the Green Belt that could be made in this Joint Local Plan.

As well as our own Joint Local Plan Vision, the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision<sup>25</sup> to 2050 is a long-term vision for long term sustainable development, prepared by the all the councils in Oxfordshire working together through the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. We can help deliver the vision alongside our own, by ensuring that we reflect it within the spatial strategy of the local plan.



**Our aim is to utilise the unique opportunities and assets in Oxfordshire to realise sustainable growth, and shape healthy, resilient communities in which it is possible for all residents to thrive and which can be an exemplar for the rest of the UK and other locations internationally.**

**If we are successful, by 2050 Oxfordshire will:**

-  be a globally competitive economy which is sustainable, diverse and inclusive, generating high-quality, productive and knowledge-based employment for our communities. It will utilise the county's strengths and resources, including its world-class universities and world-leading research, innovation and technology assets. There will be improved educational attainment and a skills system aligned to the needs of business and communities, helping to provide the conditions in which all Oxfordshire's people can benefit and thrive.
-  have transformed movement and connectivity within the County and beyond. There will be greater digital connectivity and physical mobility in and between places in ways that enhance environmental, social and economic wellbeing, with an emphasis on sustainable travel, including walking and cycling.
-  be the first generation to leave the natural environment in a better state than that in which we found it. The natural environment will be more biodiverse, support social, economic and ecological resilience and have the capacity to adapt to change.
-  have flourishing, diverse and vibrant communities rooted in pride with our local, national and international connections and a strong sense of civic identity. Individuals and families will support each other in partnership with sustainable public services, a thriving voluntary and community sector and be connected to dynamic and socially responsible businesses.
-  have a healthier and happier population with better physical and mental health. Young people will feel confident, positive and excited about their future and people will spend more of their later life active, in good health and with care available in their communities to meet their changing needs.
-  have energy efficient, well-designed homes, sufficient in numbers, location, type, size, tenure and affordability to meet the needs of our growing economy, young people, residents and future generations.
-  enjoy a built and historic environment which is rich and diverse, comprising high-quality places where people want to live, work, visit and invest. Our rich and distinctive internationally recognised heritage assets, visitor economy and vibrant cultural offer will have been further enhanced and there will be improved access to them.
-  be a more equal place, supported by inclusive growth that gives everyone a fair chance in life to prosper. Deprivation and disadvantage will have been tackled wherever it manifests itself in our urban and rural areas, and discrimination will have been removed.
-  have achieved carbon neutral status, and be accelerating towards a carbon negative future, removing more carbon than it emits each year. Energy production will be sustainable.

4 Oxfordshire's Strategic Vision | for Long-Term Sustainable Development

<sup>25</sup> [futureoxfordshirepartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Strategic-Vision\\_V0.7.pdf](https://futureoxfordshirepartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Strategic-Vision_V0.7.pdf) May, 2021

There are a lot of similarities between South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse's spatial strategies in the current adopted local plans. Both existing spatial strategies look to:

- focus growth within Science Vale, especially at the garden communities at Didcot and Berinsfield and the employment sites at Culham Science Centre, Harwell Campus and Milton Park
- reinforce the role that settlements have for communities, through the services and facilities they enjoy
- address the housing need of Oxford City that it could not meet
- facilitate the role of neighbourhood plans.

Our new strategy will include some familiar elements of the previous spatial strategies such as:

- continuing to deliver development within Science Vale, especially at the garden communities
- keeping the viable and developable existing commitments and sites identified for housing and employment in the adopted local plans and neighbourhood plans
- supporting the viable and developable site allocations that haven't been completed yet to make sure they are brought forward in a way that meets the ambitions of the Joint Local Plan, so that the sites include the right balance of uses, support the needs for specialist housing, are accompanied by all necessary infrastructure, and deliver sustainable, safe and active travel infrastructure and services
- reflecting the Duty to Cooperate, by continuing with sufficient sites committed to address the agreed unmet housing needs of Oxford City
- promoting renewal and development of existing employment sites, brownfield sites within the built up area of Tier 1 to 4 settlements, so these sites continue to provide valuable job opportunities.

A lot of change has happened in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse in recent years, with a 14% increase in the number of homes in South Oxfordshire and 20% in the Vale between 2011 and 2021. In the last local plans, the councils made some difficult decisions to facilitate a lot of growth and allocated large strategic sites for development. Some of these haven't been built yet, and we understand that communities will want to see these sites delivered well.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse have joined together to create a new Joint Local Plan, and this provides a new wider geography for the spatial strategy. The districts are very similar in many ways, both are predominantly rural with National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) and Green Belt throughout, with some main towns and market towns and many villages of varying sites.

While the previous plans could only plan for their half of Didcot and Science Vale, we now have the opportunity to express this in the round. The new strategy is adapted to ensure we prioritise brownfield choices and direct brownfield growth to our most sustainable locations, in line with the settlement hierarchy.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

We want to guide new development to Science Vale, to our Garden Communities and to locations in the highest tiers of the settlement hierarchy (Tiers 1, 2 and 3) as set out in Policy SP1. In smaller settlements in Tier 4, some more specific brownfield development is also appropriate within the built-up area. This helps to reduce the need to travel and help people shift towards more sustainable travel patterns.

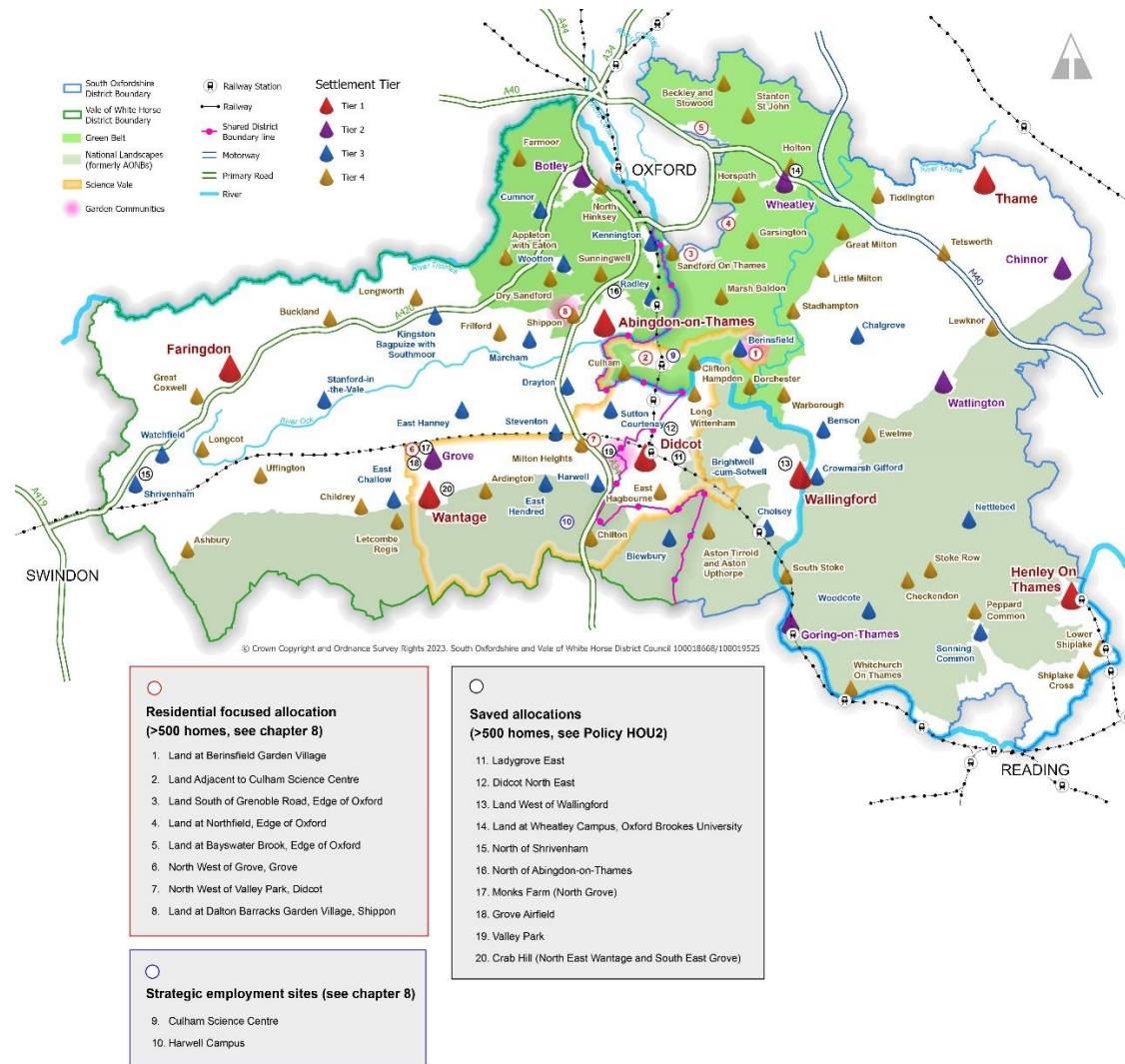
We also want to take opportunities for renewal and regeneration, by supporting the redevelopment of well-located brownfield land, and we will introduce some new site allocations to help support this aim, as well as supporting brownfield developments that come forward as windfalls where it helps to achieve our other aim to reduce the need to travel. We will also support the delivery of our viable and developable existing allocations, which align with our new spatial strategy. Site allocations have been reviewed to see how they perform against the new spatial strategy.

We want to support the preparation of new neighbourhood plans that will reinforce this spatial strategy, but also encourage ambitious projects if parish or town councils want to deliver more.

Our spatial strategy should protect National Landscapes and Green Belt. We have started a review to look for the potential to enhance and even possibly extend the Oxford Green Belt in our Districts.

A Key Diagram sets out our preferred spatial strategy in simple map form.

# Key diagram



If you find this, or any of our graphics, difficult to read, please email [planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk) and we will provide a text version.

## Why we prefer Option A

Option A is the best option to support the vitality of our most sustainable communities by promoting growth where there are jobs, services and well-connected facilities. For new development beyond what is already planned, we look to keep settlements compact by re-using brownfield land rather than growing settlements outwards onto greenfield sites. To do this, Option A uses the settlement hierarchy to support brownfield sites at higher tiers in the settlement hierarchy (Tiers 1, 2 and 3) plus some more specific brownfield development within Tier 4 settlements. Development elsewhere in the countryside is restricted. This strategy protects the remaining Green Belt and recognises the importance of protecting the National Landscapes.

This strategy supports the approach taken in the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan to promote development where there are the best chances of reducing the need to travel by private car. We want the Joint Local Plan to contribute towards the delivery of a net zero transport system.

Our strategy covers the period from 2021 to 2041 and as context to the strategy we need to meet our needs for homes and jobs, which are set out in Policy H1 and Policy JT1. We have already met the housing numbers required over the plan period thanks to the supply of sites in the last local plans, some of which are large strategic sites and new garden communities that will keep delivering well after the end of the last plan period. Option A focusses on making sure that the very difficult decisions to allocate large sites for development in our last local plans are seen through to completion where they remain viable and developable. Under Option A our new spatial strategy focusses on the delivery of those existing allocations, and the plan will review what would be needed to ensure we support their integration into a sustainable transport network, alongside how to achieve better self-containment. Each site is different, but broadly they are well located close to Tier 1, 2 or 3 settlements, with established opportunities to support good quality connectivity, or offer a chance for brownfield redevelopment near to a higher tier settlement in the settlement hierarchy. Some of the sites have opportunities for links to Oxford or other towns or larger villages or they are near key routes. The preferred strategy also encourages development for employment uses at existing allocated sites where viable and deliverable, other employment sites, and employment on brownfield land, where services and facilities already exist or are already planned (Tiers 1 to 4 of the proposed settlement hierarchy).

Since neighbourhood planning was introduced in 2011, our districts have been part of many years of successful local decision making through neighbourhood plans, and we want to support this into the future. In the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan, some towns and villages were given development targets for neighbourhood plans to achieve, so that communities could make

their own decisions about which sites should be developed. This last round of neighbourhood plans addressing the targets have mostly been completed, with just Thame to complete its neighbourhood plan review, which is well underway. We want to support neighbourhood plans to bring forward any outstanding planned development. Our preferred strategy encourages new neighbourhood plan production and gives communities flexibility to justify going further than the spatial strategy to support ambitious ideas to deliver something specific in their local communities where they want to. For example, Long Wittenham Neighbourhood Plan in 2022 allocated housing where none was required in order to deliver a much-wanted community hub.

### **Option B – Alternative**

Greenfield expansion at Tier 1, 2 and 3 settlements.

This option would permit some suitable greenfield sites adjacent to Tier 1, 2 and 3 settlements which would give more housing supply and choice at our most sustainable settlements.

This option would significantly over-supply the amount of housing beyond what is needed to meet local needs. This option is unlikely to help achieve the aims for carbon neutrality, reducing the need to travel or maximising brownfield redevelopment opportunities. It may add traffic on the roads and create pressure on community infrastructure, the delivery of which in some cases still needs to catch up from the last round of allocations. It may also slow down or undermine the delivery of housing and other development principles at our three Garden Communities.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Co-location of housing and employment, including development on greenfield sites.

This could be achieved by the Joint Local Plan setting development targets at settlements where co-location of housing and employment already exists (Tier 1 settlements), or it could be achieved by making new allocations at strategically important

employment locations. This option would be a choice to allocate more development than we need to deliver. As such it may add pressure on community facilities and transport networks.

This alternative is very likely to support new sustainable transport networks and connections because of our focus for development within Tier 1 settlements.

The current spatial strategies for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (and partly Option A) overlaps with this alternative, because some of the existing allocated sites fall within the Science Vale area where it could support co-location of housing and employment within that cluster of sites and Tier 1 settlements.

#### **Option D – Alternative**

More dispersed pattern of development including at smaller villages (Tier 4) within the settlement hierarchy.

This would involve setting development targets for parishes or settlements in the districts. This would reflect the approach in the current spatial strategy of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan to support more development at smaller settlements (the equivalent of Tier 4) as well as at Tiers 1, 2 and 3. This approach could support smaller villages and maintaining their vitality and it encourages a high level of participation in neighbourhood plan making.

We do not prefer this option because it is likely to lead to more homes being dispersed to places where there are fewer jobs, services and facilities, and is less likely to support a shift to more sustainable modes of transport including active travel like walking and cycling. Our housing numbers don't require us to make this ask again of neighbourhood plans.



## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### Policy SP1 - Spatial strategy

- 1) We will conserve and enhance the special qualities of our nationally protected landscapes, the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes.
- 2) We will maintain the openness of the Oxford Green Belt. Development in the Green Belt will be considered in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. Development on Green Belt land will be restricted to ensure it continues to fulfil the five purposes of the Green Belt. Substantial weight will be given to any harm to the Green Belt when assessing planning applications.
- 3) Within Science Vale, we will continue to deliver development, through housing at the sites allocated in this plan and sustainable economic development at Culham Science Centre, Harwell Campus and Milton Park.
- 4) At the garden communities of Didcot, Berinsfield and Dalton Barracks we will support housing and some economic development to achieve holistically planned new or regenerated settlements which enhances the natural environment, tackles climate change and provides high quality affordable housing and locally accessible jobs in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities.
- 5) We will support new development on well-located brownfield sites, and identify two new potential brownfield site allocations at Dalton Barracks and Crowmarsh Gifford.
- 6) For windfall housing developments, we will support sustainable locations that maximise brownfield land redevelopment opportunities and are appropriate to the site's location within the settlement hierarchy defined in Policy SP2. Development of the types described in Policy SP2 will be supported within the built-up area of highest tiered settlements of Tiers 1, 2, 3, with Tier 4 limited to brownfield sites, replacement dwellings or subdivision.

- 7) On brownfield land at Tiers 1 to 4 of the settlement hierarchy we will encourage employment proposals where they will secure the redevelopment of existing employment sites.
- 8) Development in the countryside, including areas outside of existing built-up areas, will not be appropriate unless specifically supported by other relevant policies as set out in the development plan or national policy, for example we will support rural exceptions site housing and rural workers' dwellings to come forward.
- 9) We will support the delivery of viable and developable existing site allocations and commitments in the local plans and neighbourhood plans that haven't been completed yet. All housing and employment sites are listed within Chapter 8 and Policy JT1.
- 10) We will allocate sufficient sites to meet the existing agreed unmet housing needs of Oxford.
- 11) We will support our communities with the preparation of neighbourhood plans that will reinforce the achievement of this spatial strategy, and we will support ambitious neighbourhood plans that may want to achieve something specific. Thame has an outstanding identified housing requirement of at least 143 homes\*. All other designated neighbourhood areas have a zero outstanding requirement, although communities can choose to exceed this when preparing neighbourhood development plans and neighbourhood development orders.
- 12) We will take a positive approach when considering development proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

*\* Correct as of 1 April 2023*

## **Policy SP2 - Settlement hierarchy**

### **What will this policy do?**

The settlement hierarchy categorises the settlements within South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse in terms of their access to services and facilities. The more sustainable settlements with close links between housing, jobs and services are ranked as higher tiered settlements, and the settlements with less access to services and facilities are classified as being lower tiered settlements in the hierarchy. Each tier of settlement has a different strategic role which is identified within the spatial strategy.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

The settlement hierarchy will reflect the government's core planning principles, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), of genuinely plan-led sustainable development that takes account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of the larger urban areas while recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and smaller villages.

The NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, taking local circumstances into account, reflecting the character, needs and opportunities of each area (paragraph 9). The NPPF goes on to state that, in order to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby (paragraph 83).

The settlement hierarchy reflects these NPPF principles and considers local circumstances, character, needs and opportunities alongside indicators of service provision and accessibility when appraising the role and rank of different settlements in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

### **Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)**

#### **Option A - Preferred**

The preferred option for the settlement hierarchy merges the existing district settlement hierarchies to make them consistent across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. It updates the underlying information about services and facilities for each settlement. The preferred option focuses on the inclusion of the most sustainable settlements within the settlement hierarchy,

and consequently the smaller and less sustainable settlements are classed as being within the countryside. This leads to a settlement hierarchy with 4 distinct tiers of settlements.

The preferred option followed a settlement assessment methodology focussing on the range and scale of services and facilities within each of the settlements within the districts, while also considering the proximity and connectivity between settlements through cycling, walking and public transport.

The settlement assessment reviewed the services each settlement contains to get an up-to-date reflection of facilities, with some settlements moving to a higher (relative) tier in the merged hierarchy and other settlements which have lost services and facilities, moving to a lower (relative) tier. Some settlements with few services and facilities, which were contained within the previous district hierarchies are not now considered to be sustainable settlements and are consequently classed as being within the countryside within the updated settlement hierarchy.

### **Why we prefer Option A**

The settlement assessment is based on an updated methodology which takes into account proximity and connectivity to support the aims of the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. The settlement hierarchy identifies clear and distinct tiers of settlements and can then be used within other policies to direct development to the most sustainable locations.

We focussed the weighting of the assessment on the services and facilities each settlement contained, with consideration then given to the ability to connect to the facilities and services in other settlements. This ensures that the methodology acknowledges the importance of having sustainable connectivity between settlements and identifies where smaller settlements are in proximity to higher tiered settlements and may use sustainable methods of transport to access their services and facilities. But we ultimately put a higher weighting on settlements containing the services and facilities and therefore we focus on those places that are likely to generate fewer trips outside of the settlement.

We want to support a shift to more sustainable modes of transport including active travel like walking and cycling, so we focus new development within the most sustainable settlements, and the smaller and less sustainable settlements are classed as being within the countryside.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Retain the existing settlement hierarchies.

This option would provide a continuity of settlement hierarchy tiers from the previous local plans. However due to the differences in the districts existing methodologies, this option would lead to 5 tiers of settlements within the hierarchy, with a lack of consistency across the districts and tiers. This option would not take account of any updated information about the current services and facilities at the settlements.

By retaining more settlements within the settlement hierarchy, the option could support more development at smaller settlements. This approach could support smaller villages and maintain their vitality as well as encouraging a high level of participation in neighbourhood plan making.

We do not prefer this option because it is not consistent across the districts, is out of date in terms of current levels of facilities as well as being likely to lead to more homes being dispersed to places where there are fewer jobs, services and facilities, and is less likely to support a shift to more sustainable modes of transport including active travel like walking and cycling.

### **Option C - Alternative**

Amend the methodology to increase the score of settlements which are well connected to other settlements.

This option is similar to Option A, but there is a change in the weightings used, with additional weight applied to settlements where the connections between settlements is available. This would likely lead to some settlements which are well connected or in close proximity to higher order settlements being classed in a higher and more sustainable tier themselves.

Settlements which do not necessarily have many services and facilities themselves, but are well located near to the services and facilities of a larger settlement would receive a higher score under this methodology. The connectivity of settlements is considered under the preferred option, but this option places additional weight on being able to travel between settlements.

By placing additional weight on connectivity, settlements in proximity to larger settlements, but are not self-sufficient and rely on other settlements for services and facilities would be classed as more sustainable under this methodology. We do not prefer this option because connection between settlements can vary over time for example through changes to the rural bus network. Proximity and connectivity are already taken into account as part of the preferred option.

#### **Option D - Alternative**

Not have a settlement hierarchy.

This option would mean that policies which currently refer to what type of development is appropriate in certain tiers would either have to become vaguer or include specific details about certain settlements. The current stepped approach to settlements directs development towards the most sustainable locations, so the removal of a hierarchy is likely to lose this nuance.

Furthermore, development proposals would be considered on a case by case basis to ascertain if the principle is appropriate in that location, which is inefficient. This option is not supported.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy SP2 - Settlement hierarchy**

Development will be required to comply with the spatial strategy set out in Policy SP1.

In addition to the kinds of development shown for each tier below, development may be supported by other relevant policies set out in the development plan or by national policy, for example through allocations (in this plan or neighbourhood development plans), on rural exceptions sites and rural workers' dwellings.

The settlement hierarchy is split into 4 tiers as shown in Figure 1. Each tier of settlement has a different strategic role as follows:

#### **Tier 1 Settlements**

Settlements which have the ability to support the most sustainable patterns of living through their current levels of facilities, services and employment opportunities. These settlements have a full range of services and a good level of accessibility by public transport.

There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the built-up area\* of Tier 1 settlements.

#### **Tier 2 Settlements**

Larger settlements or neighbourhoods to larger settlements with a broad range and level of access to facilities, services and local employment. These settlements provide opportunities for sustainable development for their own populations and a wider rural catchment area.

Within the built-up area\* of these settlements: brownfield development, infill development, backland development, replacement dwellings or subdivision\*\* may be appropriate.

#### **Tier 3 Settlements**

Large settlements with a level of access to facilities, services and local employment to provide the next best opportunities for sustainable development outside of Tier 1 and 2 settlements.

Within the built-up area of these settlements: brownfield development, infill development, replacement dwellings or subdivision may be appropriate.

#### **Tier 4 Settlements**

Settlements with a more limited range of employment, services and facilities.

Within the built-up area of these settlements: development is limited to brownfield sites, replacement dwellings or subdivision where appropriate.

#### **The Countryside**

Anywhere not included within the table below forms part of the countryside, as does land outside of the existing built-up areas of Tier 1-4 settlements.

Development in the countryside will not be appropriate unless specifically supported by other relevant policies as set out in the development plan or national policy, or comprising a replacement dwelling consistent with its location in the countryside.

*\* For Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements in Vale; the built-up area is defined by the Settlement Boundaries shown on the Adopted Policies Map. There is no settlement boundary defined for Botley, as the Oxford Green Belt provides a policy limit on development around the settlement.*

*\*\* Subdivision of a building rather than a plot*

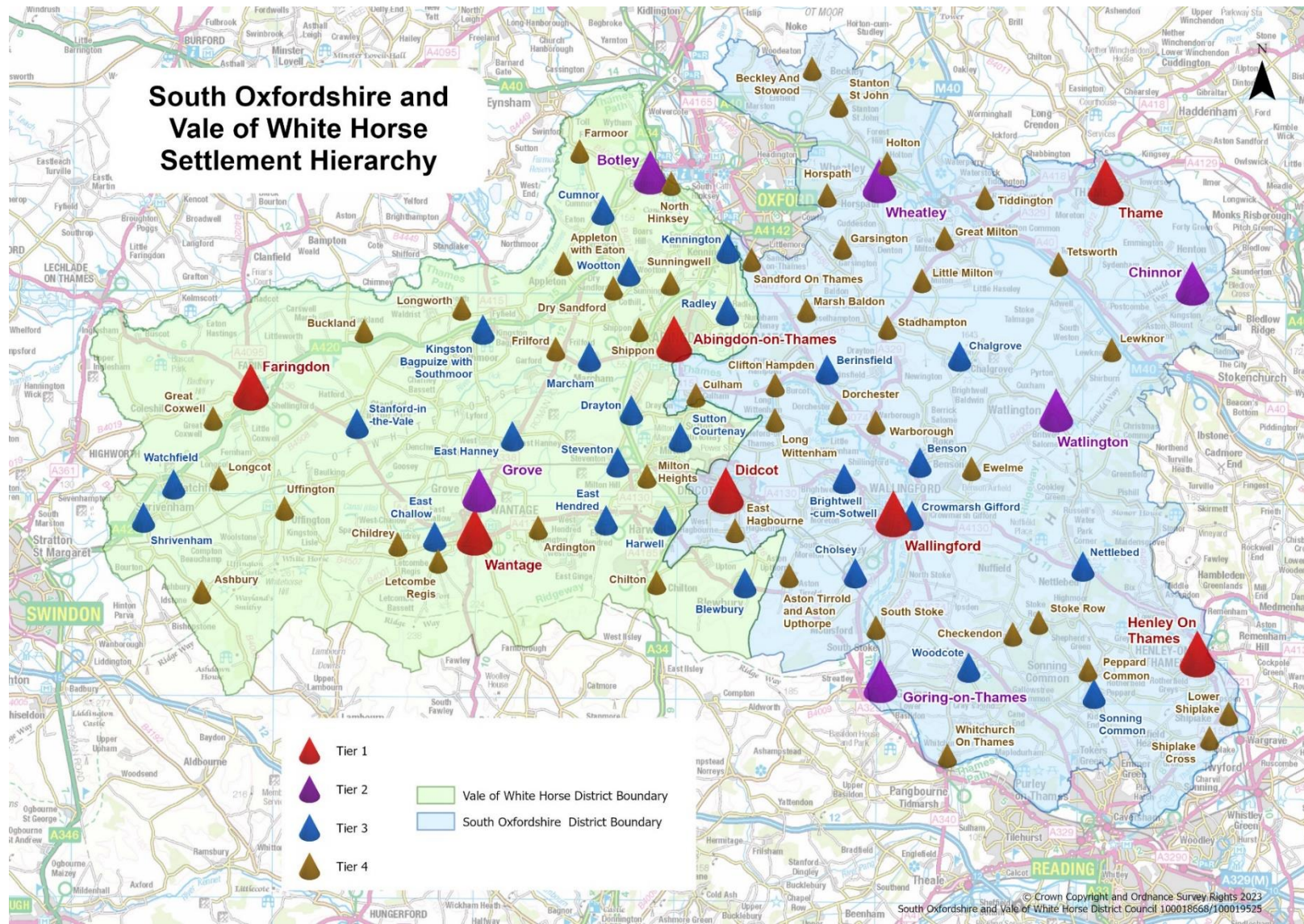


<b>Tier in Hierarchy</b>	<b>South Oxfordshire settlements</b>	<b>Vale of White Horse settlements</b>
1	Didcot Henley-on-Thames Thame Wallingford	Abingdon-on-Thames Faringdon Wantage
2	Chinnor Goring-on-Thames Watlington Wheatley	Botley Grove
3	Benson Berinsfield Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Chalgrove Cholsey Crowmarsh Gifford Nettlebed Sonning Common Woodcote	Blewbury Cumnor Drayton East Challow East Hanney East Hendred Harwell Kennington Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Marcham Radley Shrivenham Stanford-in-the-Vale Steventon Sutton Courtenay Watchfield Wootton
4	Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe Beckley And Stowood	Appleton with Eaton Ardington

Checkendon  
Clifton Hampden  
Culham  
Dorchester-on-Thames  
East Hagbourne  
Ewelme  
Garsington  
Great Milton  
Holton  
Horspath  
Lewknor  
Little Milton  
Long Wittenham  
Lower Shiplake  
Marsh Baldon  
Peppard Common  
Sandford-on-Thames  
Shiplake Cross  
South Stoke  
Stadhampton  
Stanton St John  
Stoke Row  
Tetsworth  
Tiddington  
Warborough  
Whitchurch-on-Thames

Ashbury  
Buckland  
Childrey  
Chilton  
Dry Sandford  
Farmoor  
Frilford  
Great Coxwell  
Letcombe Regis  
Longcot  
Longworth  
Milton Heights  
North Hinksey  
Shippon  
Sunningwell  
Uffington

Figure 1:



## **Policy SP3 - The strategy for Didcot Garden Town**

### **What will this policy do?**

The policy establishes the principles that any proposals for development within the Didcot Garden Town area should reflect.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Didcot has been designated a Garden Town since 2015 when the Government accepted a bid to deliver 15,000 new homes and 20,000 jobs in the area.

In 2017 the first Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan was published which identified potential new developments as well as setting out an ambition to deliver 60 individual projects throughout the garden town to introduce more green spaces, trees, gardens, sustainable technology, walking and cycling pathways connecting routes to town, railway station and large business parks.

Didcot Garden Town covers parts of both South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse districts, so the opportunity to plan this area holistically is an important advantage the Joint Local Plan can bring. The existing local plans contain a map showing the area covered by our Didcot Garden Town masterplan, and also a wider area surrounding Didcot called the “Area of Influence”. Although a lot of transformation and change has taken place in Didcot, many of the development proposals that the previous local plans identified for the Garden Town are still to be delivered. Since the previous local plans were adopted, around 22% of the 2017 Delivery Plan projects have been completed and many more are underway. The councils adopted a more focussed revised Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan in 2022<sup>26</sup>. Our local plan policy needs to explain what still needs to be delivered within the Didcot masterplan boundary and articulate how important the setting of the Garden Town is, particularly the “Area of Influence” and how any change here can help to deliver the Didcot Garden Town Principles. The specific schemes and projects included within the Didcot policy are explained in more detail within the Delivery Plan.

Delivering our principles is still important as Didcot continues to change and expand over this plan period, harnessing opportunities to build healthy, innovative, sustainable housing communities at Didcot, and a secure future in the advanced science and technology sectors. The new local plan policy also needs to say more about maintaining and enhancing the natural and landscape features and historic character in the wider Area of Influence, which was lacking in the current plans. To protect and enhance the

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<sup>26</sup> Revised Didcot Garden Town Plan 2022: [www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/07/Revised-DGT-Plan-2022.pdf](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/07/Revised-DGT-Plan-2022.pdf)

wider hinterland of Didcot Garden Town, development should come forward at the different settlements in the wider area of influence in accordance with our spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy.

Preparing this Joint Local Plan enables us, as two councils, to clearly set out our expectations for our town with the second largest population as it undergoes planned transformation and investment. We believe this will ensure the best outcome for the future of this Garden Town.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

To update the Didcot policy and principles that will apply to development within the Didcot masterplan area and to provide greater clarity within the Didcot policy about the importance of the surrounding Area of Influence.

Refer to and reflect the updated Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan 2022 and take on board any relevant policy changes in the emerging Joint Local Plan.

To include the masterplan boundary and Area of Influence boundary on the policies map, appropriately drawn to either administrative or physical boundaries.

#### Why we prefer Option A

There is still a significant amount of development planned around Didcot which has not yet come forward. Both Options B and C would fail to deliver the best quality development and provide enough emphasis on securing the delivery of the planned development and other facilities.

We prefer Option A because it enables the most up to date infrastructure planning and funding opportunities, projects and council-led opportunities to be factored into the Didcot policy and principles. There is also a lack of current planning policy guidance about the importance of the wider Area of Influence around the Garden Town, and Option A would update the policy to reflect the importance of ensuring that the Garden Town is delivered in a way that reflects the changes to infrastructure in the surrounding

areas and the important historic assets and other environmental assets that the area contains. This would best be done by reflecting the importance of the area as envisioned in the Didcot Delivery Plan.

### **Option B**

Maintain the previous local plan's Didcot policy and high-level development principles for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse and continue to use the adopted policies and the boundaries.

### **Option C**

Do not include any policy on Didcot Garden Town in the Joint Local Plan. Remove the principles from planning policy to guide the remaining development of Didcot Garden Town.

## **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

### **Policy SP3 – The strategy for Didcot Garden Town**

- 1) The Joint Local Plan identifies Didcot Garden Town as the gateway to and focus of sustainable development and regeneration for Science Vale. Proposals for development within the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan Area and the wider Area of Influence (as defined on the Policies Map) must demonstrate how they positively contribute to the achievement of the Didcot Garden Town Principles below so that every change helps deliver the larger vision for Didcot Garden Town:
  - a) Design - The Garden Town Masterplan area will be characterised by high quality, sustainable design that adds value to Didcot and endures over time; it will encourage pioneering architecture, innovative technological advances to contribute to healthy living and climate change resilience and careful urban design of the spaces in between, prioritising connected multi-functional green spaces over roads and car parks. All new proposals

should show the application of the councils' Joint Design Guide SPD or reflect any Design Review Panel outcomes to demonstrate best practice design standards.

- b) Local Character - The Garden Town Masterplan area will establish a confident and unique identity, becoming a destination in itself that is distinctive from surrounding towns and villages whilst respecting and protecting their rural character and setting. Didcot's identity will champion science and technology, natural beauty, and green living, in part delivered through strengthened physical connections and active public and private sector collaboration with the Science Vale in the wider Area of Influence.
- c) Density and tenure - The Garden Town Masterplan area will incorporate a variety of densities, housing types and tenures to meet the needs of a diverse community as set out in the Housing Needs Assessment. This will include high density development in suitable locations, such as in central Didcot and near sustainable transport hubs; higher density development will be balanced by good levels of public realm and accessible green space. Professionally managed homes for private rent (also known as build to rent) could play an important role in meeting housing need.
- d) Transport and movement – Within the Garden Town Masterplan area and the Area of Influence we will reduce reliance on motorised vehicles and promote a step-change towards active travel and public transport (bus and rail) through the creation of a highly legible, attractive and accessible movement network alongside the appropriate location of housing, employment and leisure facilities within the Masterplan area. The Garden Town will seek to improve opportunities for access to sport and physical activities through Sport England's Active Design Principles. We will improve cycling and pedestrian links across the Garden Town, between its surrounding villages, natural assets and the strategic employment sites.
- e) Heritage – Within the Garden Town Masterplan area and the Area of Influence we will conserve and enhance heritage assets, both designated and non-designated. This includes the Scheduled Monuments of the settlement sites north of Milton Park and east of Appleford and any archaeological remains and historic landscapes and/ or landscape features identified in the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record, the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment, other sources and/or through further investigation and assessment.
- f) Landscape and green infrastructure - New development in the Garden Town Masterplan area will enhance the natural environment, through enhancing green and blue infrastructure networks, creating ecological networks to

support a net gain in biodiversity and supporting climate resilience through the use of adaptation and design measures. Proposals in the Garden Town Masterplan Area will also seek to make effective use of natural resources including energy and water efficiency, as well as exploring opportunities for promoting new technology within developments. Innovative habitat planting and food growing zones will characterise the Garden Town and, in turn, these measures will support quality of life and public health.

- g) Social and community benefits - The planning of the Garden Town will be community-focused, creating accessible and vibrant neighbourhoods around a strong town centre offer of cultural, recreational and commercial amenities that support well-being, social cohesion and vibrant communities. The Garden Town will embrace community participation throughout its evolution. It will promote community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets where desirable.

2) Within the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan area development proposals will be required to address the following:

- a) deliver allocated housing and employment sites and permit new development in accordance with Policy SP1 - Spatial strategy and Policy SP2 - Settlement hierarchy;
- b) encourage safe, healthy and active spaces through green infrastructure led improvements to the public realm;
- c) support the implementation of a phasing plan for biodiversity enhancements in Didcot and explore each development sites potential for other blue and green infrastructure enhancements;
- d) compliment green infrastructure projects proposed by the Didcot's community, such as the Didcot Nature Charter, community gardens and tree planting and in major developments provide safe, well-designed allotments, orchards and other areas for the community to grow healthy food;
- e) support active travel and multi-modal sustainable infrastructure as well as alignment with planned infrastructure schemes including the Didcot Garden Town Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP); the Science Vale Active Travel Network; the Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN); the Didcot Garden Town Wayfinding Strategy; Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) schemes; the Didcot Central Corridor infrastructure schemes and Placemaking Strategy; and Northern Perimeter Road Phase 3 (NPR3).
- f) complement the regeneration of the Didcot Parkway mobility hub;
- g) support integrated parking for modes of transport that support the increase in public transport use, ensuring services for users, and consider links to mobility hubs;



- h) complement improvements to enhance connectivity and inclusivity for Didcot Parkway and satellite railway stations in the Area of Influence at Appleford and Culham, including innovative transport solutions such as the trialled Milton Park autonomous vehicles;
  - i) strengthen the retail offer in Didcot Town Centre and compliment the initiative to delivery “meanwhile” uses for spaces such as areas of derelict land or unused public realm or vacant retail units;
  - j) support placemaking through public arts improvements and the cultural offering, encouraging people to use restaurants and bars and to visit Didcot as a destination and development of legacy planning and stewardship options; and
  - k) deliver recreational provision for all abilities and a programme of activities to contribute to improving health statistics in Didcot, informed by the Leisure Strategy and the Active Communities Strategy.
- 3) The Didcot Area of Influence may be affected by proposals within the Masterplan boundary, and within the Area of Influence development proposals will be required to address the following:
- a) recognise that well-known and valued landscape features near to Didcot: Wittenham Clumps and the River Thames are notable features contributing to Didcot’s natural setting;
  - b) protect key views, ensuring important viewpoints towards features such as The Ridgeway and Wittenham Clumps remain;
  - c) consider the assessment of the access to green/open space on the outskirts of Didcot, and how the proposal can enable leisure and wellbeing benefits;
  - d) recognise the value placed on the green spaces around Didcot;
  - e) integrate blue infrastructure and Sustainable Drainage Schemes to support biodiversity and reduce flood risk;
  - f) maintain green gaps between villages including those identified and protected through neighbourhood plans, to preserve the character of the distinct areas and prevent future coalescence;
  - g) ensure enhanced connectivity and interlinked green spaces into the surrounding countryside with safe cycleways and pathways and in future driverless pods, including easy links to the nearby major employment sites of Culham Science Centre, Harwell Campus, and Milton Park;
  - h) promote walking and cycling connectivity noting that the wider boundary is within the scope of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP);
  - i) recognise that Didcot acts as a primary service centre for many surrounding villages and this relationship influences the town’s economy and transport network; and

- j) support economic growth generated by UK's leading cluster for commercialisation of science, building on the strengths of Culham Science Centre, Harwell Campus, and Milton Park to deliver an additional £1bn of annual gross value added to the UK economy.

## **Policies SP4 to SP9 - Strategies for Abingdon-on-Thames, Faringdon, Henley-on-Thames, Thame, Wallingford and Wantage**

### **What will these policies do?**

These policies establish the strategy for any neighbourhood plans or proposals for development to reflect within the Tier 1 settlements of Abingdon-on-Thames, Faringdon, Henley-on-Thames, Thame, Wallingford and Wantage.

### **Why are these policies needed?**

During the plan period we expect there to be some change within Tier 1 settlements, with brownfield developments expected to come forward within those settlements as well as the implementation of neighbourhood plans, and there is potential for new or updated neighbourhood plans too.

We need policies to clearly outline what is expected from development proposals within these settlements, and for applicants to consider and reflect on the requirements when they are planning and designing their schemes. Didcot is the other Tier 1 settlement and has a specific policy because of its status as a Garden Town.

Abingdon-on-Thames is recognised as the oldest continuously inhabited town in England. It is the largest populated settlement in South and Vale, and there are opportunities for regeneration within the Town Centre. There have been ambitions to regenerate parts of Abingdon town centre for many years and a recent regeneration masterplan, the Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework<sup>27</sup> has been developed.

Faringdon is a relatively small and historic market town with Saxon origins, focused around the Market Place. Faringdon has a neighbourhood plan in place which complements this Joint Local Plan policy.

Henley-on-Thames is a historic market town on the banks of the River Thames. It is an important service centre for the nearby villages in the Chilterns National Landscape (formerly AONB). As a market town it contains a good range of shops and services. Tourism, based on the town's riverside setting, its legacy of historic buildings and the festival and events that take place, are important to the economy and vitality of Henley-on-Thames. Henley-on-Thames has a Neighbourhood Plan in place to complement this policy and has some planned development still in the pipeline.

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<sup>27</sup> Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/central-abingdon-regeneration-framework/](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/central-abingdon-regeneration-framework/)

Wallingford is a smaller market town, also on the River Thames, which acts as an important local service centre for surrounding villages providing retail, education, health, sports and leisure facilities. Wallingford has a long and rich history that is reflected in its urban form and open spaces. Of particular significance are Wallingford Castle and the castle gardens and meadows. Wallingford has a neighbourhood plan in place to complement this policy and has some planned development still in the pipeline.

Thame is a historic market town which is an important local centre for nearby villages both in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, with a nearby railway station, Haddenham and Thame Parkway. It has a strong agricultural base with regular cattle and farmers' markets held in the town. It has a good range of independent shops, pubs and eateries. Thame had a pioneering neighbourhood plan, one of the first in the country, and an update is underway. Thame Neighbourhood Plan Review still needs to find a small amount of housing that was set for the settlement, as well as for other market towns, in the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

Wantage, originally Roman in origin became an important Saxon town and is most famous as the birthplace of King Alfred the Great. It is centrally located within the Vale of White Horse and is a gateway to the nearby North Wessex Downs National Landscape. As Vale's second largest settlement it is a key retail and service centre for residents.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

To have strategies for Tier 1 settlements that:

- set a framework for the key elements that each Town should aim to achieve, delivered through projects and proposals within neighbourhood development plans or through individual planning applications.
- are responsive to what the Towns require by reflecting the findings of the Retail Needs Study
- sets a framework for Thame to deliver its outstanding requirements - at least 143 homes (as of 1 April 2023).

#### Why we prefer Option A

Option A presents individual strategies for each of our Tier 1 settlement which will set a framework for neighbourhood plans and development proposals to consider. This approach of setting a high-level framework for things to be delivered, without being overly detailed or prescriptive, allows town or parish councils or other groups the freedom and flexibility to steer development. The

strategies set some high-level aims based on our evidence and feedback from the Issues consultation on what would improve the towns.

### **Option B**

More detailed strategies for Tier 1 settlements similar to the Didcot Garden Town Strategy, with detailed projects and proposals with sites to help deliver the policy.

This would potentially involve new site allocations or schemes without leaving much scope or freedom for decisions to be taken through neighbourhood plans.

### **Option C**

No specific town-based strategies, allow the rest of the development plan to guide development in these Tier 1 settlements.

This isn't our preferred approach because it would be a missed opportunity to focus on the key challenges and opportunities that our evidence base suggests would benefit the towns. If we chose Option C, it wouldn't be possible to emphasise how the Joint Local Plan's vision and objectives could be interpreted in each of the towns.

## **Proposed draft policies (for the preferred option)**

### **Policy SP4 - A strategy for Abingdon-on-Thames**

- 1) Neighbourhood development plans are expected to, and the council will support development proposals that:
  - a) support the regeneration of Abingdon-on-Thames Town Centre, with proposals that consider and generally complement the aims of the Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework;

- b) strengthen the night-time leisure offer and convenience retail offer within Abingdon Town Centre;
- c) provide new shared community office spaces in the Town Centre;
- d) provide other community or leisure uses within the Town Centre to help maintain the area as a community hub;
- e) improve or maintain air quality in the town centre, including any opportunities to reduce the traffic travelling through the town centre;
- f) improve accessibility around Abingdon-on-Thames by:
  - i) providing new secure cycle parking including covered cycle parking or storage, and bicycle charging and updating existing unsuitable cycle parking;
  - ii) enhancing existing pedestrian and cycle routes and links between them, particularly where they are identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan;
  - iii) creating new pedestrian and cycle links connecting with new development, particularly where they are identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan;
  - iv) enhancing bus services and supporting infrastructure, especially with links to Radley or Culham railway stations;
  - v) enhancing the quality of existing car parking including the provision of new electric vehicle charging points; and
  - vi) supporting the delivery of the A34 Lodge Hill slip roads.
- g) provide new employment opportunities and improve the building stock within existing employment sites and brownfield sites within the built up area;
- h) enhance the town's natural environment, exploring opportunities for urban greening in the town centre and green links for sustainable modes of transport between Abingdon-on-Thames and other major employment centres;
- i) conserve and enhance the town's heritage assets including the medieval street pattern, numerous timber-framed buildings, monuments and major buildings of more than local significance; and
- j) provide new, or enhanced community facilities in Abingdon-on-Thames that meet an identified need.

2) Neighbourhood development plans are encouraged to meet bespoke local needs.

### **Policy SP5 - A strategy for Faringdon**

- 1) Neighbourhood development plan reviews are expected to, and the council will support development proposals that:
  - a) strengthen the convenience retail and leisure offer and provide other community or service uses within the town centre to help enhance and maintain the area as a community hub and a vibrant night-time economy;
  - b) improve accessibility around Faringdon by:
    - i) providing new secure cycle parking including covered cycle parking or storage, and bicycle charging and updating existing unsuitable cycle parking;
    - ii) enhancing existing pedestrian and cycle routes and links between them, especially within the Town centre to improve pedestrian safety along narrow streets, particularly where they are identified in a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan;
    - iii) creating new pedestrian and cycle links connecting with new development pedestrian and cycle links;
    - iv) enhancing bus services and supporting infrastructure; and
    - v) providing new electric vehicle charging points.
  - c) provide new employment opportunities and improve the building stock within existing employment sites and brownfield sites within the built-up area;
  - d) enhance the town's natural environment, exploring opportunities for urban greening;
  - e) conserve and enhance the town's heritage assets including the medieval street pattern; and
  - f) provide new, or enhanced community and leisure facilities in the town including the new primary school South of Park Road, that meet an identified need.
- 2) Neighbourhood development plans are encouraged to meet bespoke local needs.

### **Policy SP6 - A strategy for Henley-on-Thames**

- 1) Neighbourhood development plan reviews are expected to, and the council will support development proposals that:

- a) strengthen the visitor economy and local retail offer within Henley-on-Thames Town Centre;
- b) strengthen and improve the attraction of Henley-on-Thames for visitors and provide new or improved leisure opportunities;
- c) enhance the town's natural environment, exploring opportunities for urban greening and conserve and enhance the town's heritage assets;
- d) improve accessibility around Henley-on-Thames by:
  - i) providing new secure cycle parking including covered cycle parking or storage, and bicycle charging and updating existing unsuitable cycle parking;
  - ii) enhancing existing pedestrian and cycle routes and links between them, particularly where they are identified in a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan;
  - iii) enhancing public transport (bus and rail) services and supporting infrastructure;
  - iv) creating new pedestrian and cycle links connecting with new development; and
  - v) providing new electric vehicle charging points.
- e) improve employment opportunities and building stock within existing employment sites and brownfield sites within the built up area;
- f) improve air quality in the town, including any opportunities to encourage active travel and reduce traffic to reduce air pollution;
- g) support the Henley College and Gillotts School to meet their accommodation needs; and
- h) provide new, or enhanced community facilities that meet an identified need.

2) Neighbourhood development plans are encouraged to meet bespoke local needs.

### **Policy SP7 - A strategy for Thame**

- 1) Neighbourhood development plan reviews are expected to, and the council will support development proposals that:
  - a) deliver at least 143 homes (as of 1 April 2023) in accordance with the spatial strategy;



- b) strengthen the visitor economy, evening economy and local retail offer including the markets within Thame Town Centre, supporting Thame as a hub and place for markets, outdoor eating and socialising as well as supporting appropriate opportunities to increase town centre living;
- c) improve the attraction of Thame for visitors and businesses;
- d) improve accessibility around Thame by:
  - i) providing new secure cycle parking including covered cycle parking or storage, and bicycle charging and updating existing unsuitable cycle parking;
  - ii) enhancing existing pedestrian and cycle routes and links between them, particularly where they are identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan;
  - iii) creating new pedestrian and cycle links connecting with new development;
  - iv) enhancing bus services and supporting infrastructure, especially with links to Haddenham and Thame Parkway station;
  - v) providing new electric vehicle charging points; and
  - vi) supporting mobility hubs at key destinations in Thame.
- e) enhance the town's natural environment, exploring opportunities for urban greening and conserve and enhance the town's heritage assets;
- f) provide new employment opportunities and improve the building stock within existing employment sites and brownfield sites within the built-up area; and
- g) provide new, or enhanced community facilities that meet an identified need.

2) Neighbourhood development plans are encouraged to meet bespoke local needs.

### **Policy SP8 - A strategy for Wallingford**

1) Neighbourhood development plan reviews are expected to, and the council will support development proposals that:

- a) strengthen the evening economy, retail and leisure offer within Wallingford Town Centre, as well as supporting appropriate opportunities to increase Town Centre living;
- b) enhance the town's provision of community or service uses;
- c) support measures that improve the attraction of Wallingford for visitors with emphasis on the River Thames and the town's heritage;
- d) support the market place as a focal hub and place for markets, outdoor eating and socialising;
- e) improve accessibility around Wallingford by:
  - i) providing new secure cycle parking including covered cycle parking or storage and bicycle charging and updating existing unsuitable cycle parking;
  - ii) enhancing existing pedestrian and cycle routes and links between them, particularly where they are identified in a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan;
  - iii) creating new pedestrian and cycle links connecting with new development;
  - iv) enhancing bus services and supporting infrastructure; and
  - v) providing new electric vehicle charging points.
- f) provide new employment opportunities and improve building stock within existing employment sites and brownfield sites within the built up area;
- g) enhance the town's natural environment, exploring opportunities for urban greening in the town centre;
- h) conserve and enhance the town's heritage assets;
- i) improve air quality in the town, including any opportunities to reduce traffic to reduce air pollution; and
- j) provide new, or enhanced community facilities that meet an identified need.

2) Neighbourhood Development Plans are encouraged to meet bespoke local needs.

### **Policy SP9 - A strategy for Wantage**

1) Neighbourhood development plans are expected to, and the council will support development proposals that:

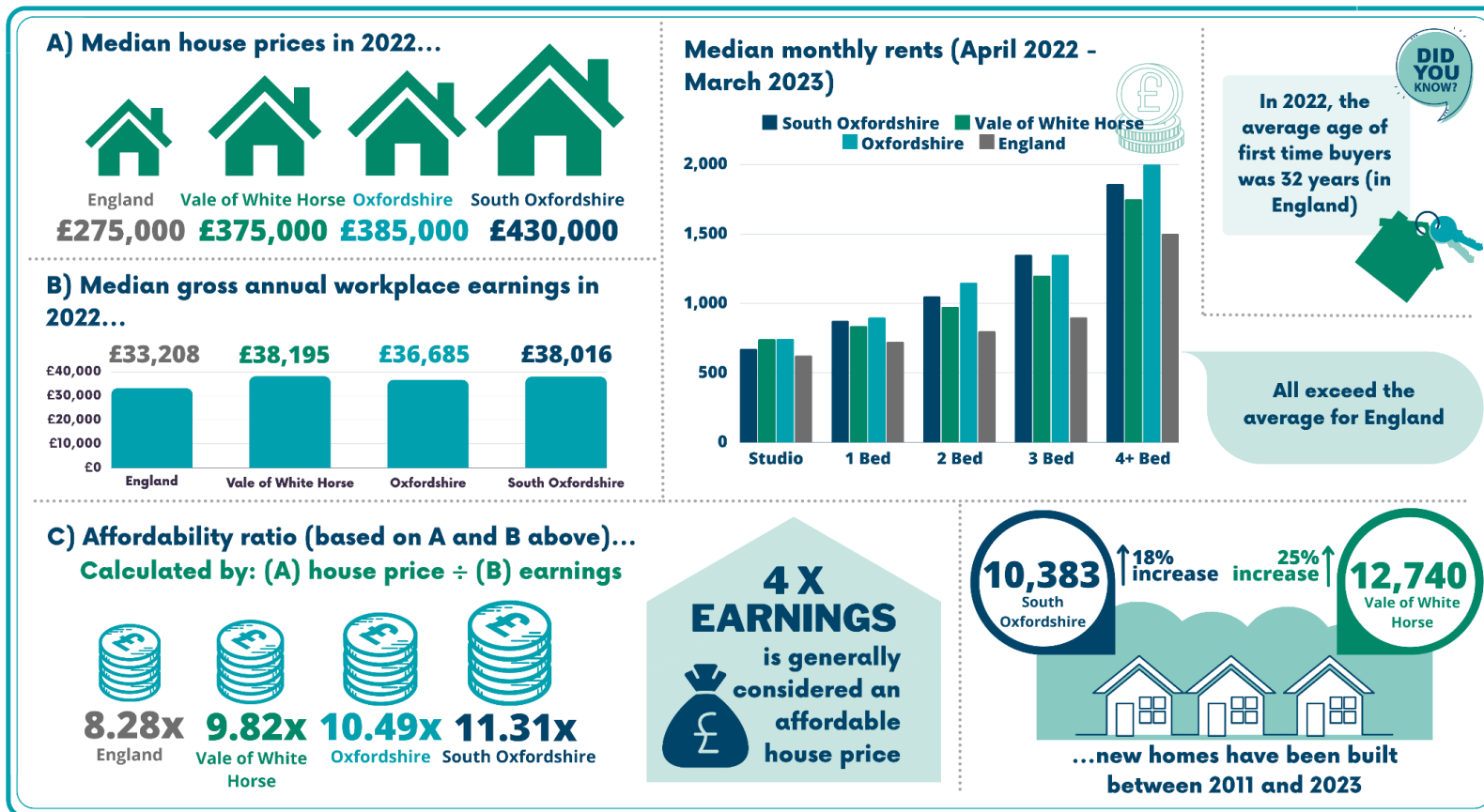
- a) strengthen the day and night-time economy offer within Wantage Town Centre;
- b) improve accessibility around Wantage by:
  - i) enhancing existing pedestrian and cycle routes and links between them, particularly where they are identified in a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan;
  - ii) enhancements to infrastructure where there are interactions between buses and pedestrians to improve the perception of safety and the experience for pedestrians around the narrow streets of the town centre;
  - iii) supporting appropriate pedestrianisation opportunities in the town centre which maintain access to bus services;
  - iv) improving navigation and wayfinding between Market Place, the Beacon Centre and Kings Park Shopping Centre;
  - v) providing new cycle parking including covered cycle parking;
  - vi) enhancing bus services and supporting infrastructure;
  - vii) providing new electric vehicle charging points; and
  - viii) supporting the delivery of the Wantage eastern link road, improvements along the A417, A338 and at the Frilford Lights junction.
- c) provide new employment opportunities and improve the building stock within existing employment sites and brownfield sites within the built-up area;
- d) enhance the town's natural environment, exploring opportunities for urban greening and conserve and enhance the town's heritage assets; and
- e) provide new, or enhanced community and leisure facilities that meet an identified need.

2) Neighbourhood development plans are encouraged to meet bespoke local needs.

## 6. Housing

### Introduction

Here are some facts and figures that help set the scene for this chapter.

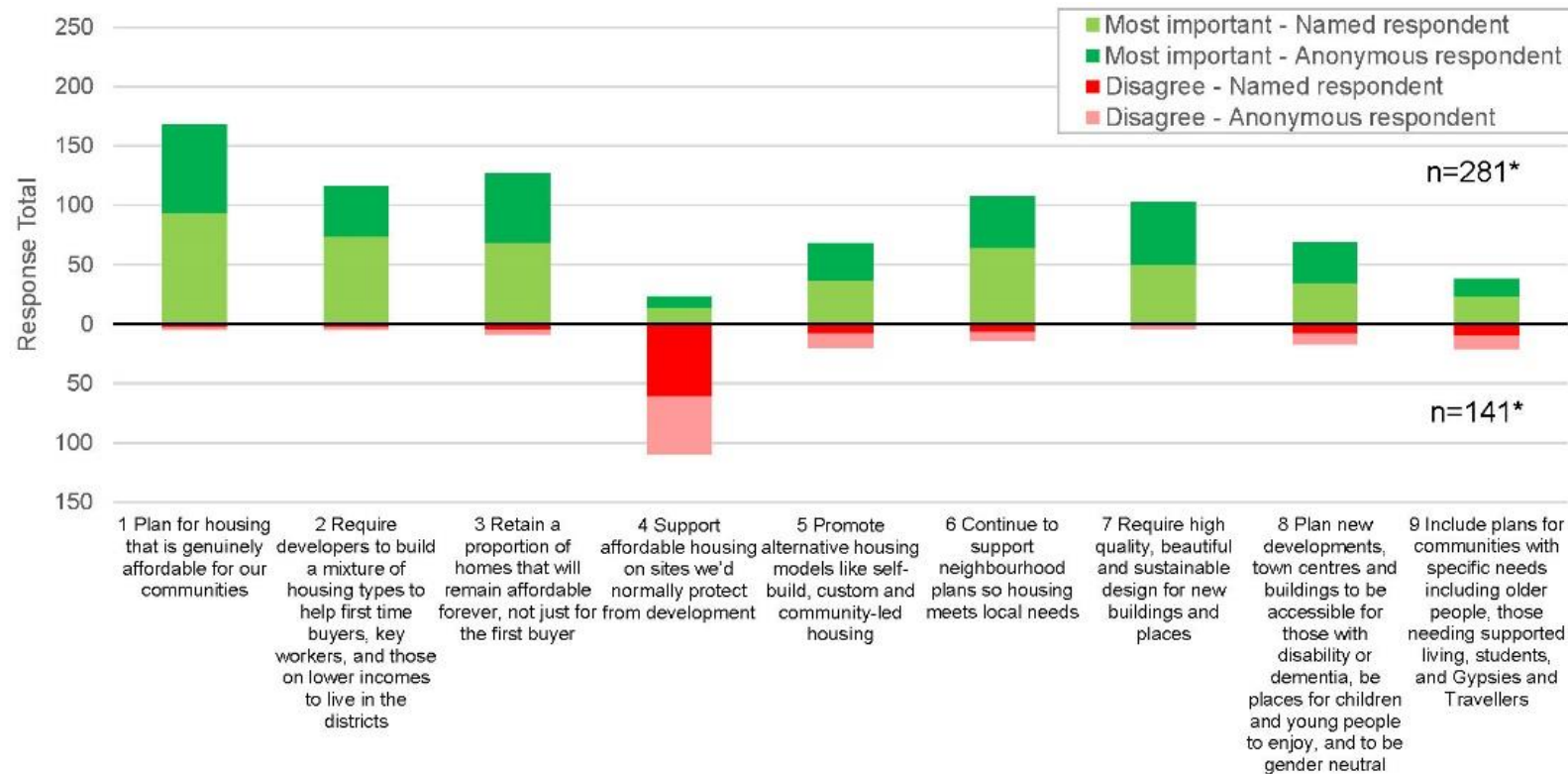


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## You told us

In response to our Issues Consultation, you told us that planning for housing that is genuinely affordable for our communities was important to you, as was retaining a proportion of homes that will remain affordable forever, not just for the first buyer.

We have considered all feedback when developing our policy options, selecting our preferred option and proposed policy wording, which are presented in this chapter.



\*n = the number of times this question was answered (combining named responses and anonymous responses)

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## Policy HOU1 - Housing requirement

### What will this policy do?

This policy will identify the housing requirement for the Joint Local Plan. It will identify a total housing requirement for each district over the plan period, as well as an annual housing requirement for each district.

### Why is this policy needed?

Government policy and guidance sets a role for local plans to assess and address the housing needs in the area. Housing is a key topic within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and there is significant guidance for local plan making and housing within the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The NPPF states that strategic policies in the local plan should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas<sup>28</sup>. It continues that local authorities should calculate their objectively assessed housing needs using the standard method set out in the PPG<sup>29</sup>. The outcomes of the standard method for assessing the housing need are an advisory starting point for setting the housing requirement for the plan, i.e. the housing targets that the councils will need to address in the Joint Local Plan and what we will monitor housing delivery against<sup>30</sup>. It is therefore a core, strategic requirement for local plans to identify, and plan for, housing needs in their area.

We have prepared a housing topic paper that accompanies this consultation and explains national policies and guidance in more detail, alongside the steps we have taken to respond to these.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Our preferred option

Using the standard method, with an increase to allow for existing agreed unmet need from Oxford City.

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<sup>28</sup> NPPF, Paragraph 11(b)

<sup>29</sup> PPG, Housing and economic needs assessment, Paragraph 010

<sup>30</sup> NPPF, Paragraph 61

South Oxfordshire has a standard method figure of 605 homes per annum\*. Over a twenty-year plan period (2021 to 2041), this results in a total housing need of 12,100 homes. In addition to this, we have previously agreed through the last local plan to accommodate 4,950 homes for Oxford's unmet need for the period 2021 to 2036. Therefore, between 2021 and 2036, the housing requirement is 935 homes per annum (our own needs, plus Oxford's unmet need). Between 2036 and 2041, the housing requirement will reduce in line with the standard method to 605 dwellings per annum. This makes the total housing requirement over the plan period 17,050 homes.

The Vale of White Horse has a standard method figure of 628 homes per annum\*. Over a twenty-year plan period (2021 to 2041), this results in a total housing need of 12,560 homes. In addition to this, we have previously agreed through the last local plan to accommodate 2,200 homes for Oxford's unmet need for the period 2019 to 2031. This equates to 183 homes per annum, which will continue to form part of the housing requirement from 2021 to 2031. Therefore, between 2021 and 2031, the housing requirement will be 811 homes per annum. Between 2031 and 2041, the housing requirement will reduce in line with the standard method to 628 dwellings per annum. This makes the total housing requirement over the plan period 14,390 homes.

\*Calculated using the 2022 affordability ratio. This figure will change each year.

## Why we prefer Option A

National policy expects councils to follow the standard method, unless there are exceptional circumstances for departing from it. At this time, we do not consider there are any exceptional circumstances that justify a departure from the standard method in setting our housing need. The Councils recognise that where there is an agreement to meet unmet needs from another area, the amount of any agreed uplift should be added to the local housing need (as derived from the standard method) when establishing the housing requirement. This uplift does not involve a departure from the use of the standard method or amount to exceptional circumstances for using an alternative method to identify needs, but is simply an addition to the need figure derived from the standard method in setting our housing requirement. Our housing topic paper explains in detail the alternative housing need scenarios we have considered and how we arrived at our conclusions.

### **Option B – Alternative**

Maintain existing levels of housing need.

Our current local plans derive their housing targets from the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2014). This results in an annual housing need for South Oxfordshire of 775 homes per annum, and 1,028 homes per annum for the Vale of White Horse. These figures do not include the agreed unmet housing need referenced in Option A, which would bring it up to 20,450 for South Oxfordshire and 22,394 for the Vale (or circa 1,130 per annum for South Oxfordshire and 1,211 for the Vale of White Horse). Following changes in national planning policies and guidance on how housing need is calculated, and the datedness of the SHMA's underpinning forecasts, we no longer consider these a sound basis for housing need.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Using only the standard method.

This option would use only the standard method for assessing our housing needs. It would involve the agreed unmet housing need in our current local plans for Oxford not forming part of our housing requirement going forward.

The councils do not consider this approach to be suitable because that would not honour the previous agreement. Furthermore, the NPPF advises that we should uplift our housing requirement above the standard method based housing need where we have already agreed to accommodate unmet housing need from a neighbouring authority (Oxford).



### **Option D – Alternative**

Reflecting the Oxfordshire Growth Deal in a new housing needs assessment.

As discussed in the housing topic paper, this option involves taking the view that the existing Oxfordshire Growth Deal represents exceptional circumstances to depart from the standard method and the council commissioning a new housing needs assessment. We would need to consider if the housing target still associated with the Growth Deal requires re-assessing, considering the SHMA upon which it is based is now nearly a decade old.

However, we do not think it is necessary to uplift the housing need again, because the Growth Deal is coming to an end, and all of South Oxfordshire's and the Vale of White Horse's housing to contribute to the Growth Deal has already been planned for and will be met through the existing, committed housing supply.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy HOU1 - Housing requirement**

1) During the plan period, provision will be made to meet the following requirements:

a) **South Oxfordshire housing requirement:** 17,050 homes between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2041, with the annual requirement as follows:

- i) 2021/22 to 2035/36 – 935 homes per annum
- ii) 2036/37 to 2040/41 – 605 homes per annum

b) **Vale of White Horse housing requirement:** 14,390 between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2041, with the annual requirement as follows:

- i) 2021/22 to 2030/31– 811 homes per annum
- ii) 2031/32 to 2040/41 – 628 homes per annum

2) This is not a joint housing requirement for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. For the purposes of determining whether a council can demonstrate a five year housing land supply, each district will measure its own supply against its own requirement.

## Policy HOU2 - Sources of housing supply

### What will this policy do?

This policy will identify the sources of housing supply for each district to address the need from Policy HOU1. We take the existing and new supply from the site allocations in Chapter 8 and add this to the committed supply of housing (sites that already have permission or are allocated in our neighbourhood development plans) and to the number of homes that have been built since the start of the plan period (1 April 2021).



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### Why is this policy needed?

Paragraph 75 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires the Joint Local Plan to include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period. This policy will demonstrate the overall trajectory of housing delivery between 2021 and 2041 and identify the various sources of that supply over the plan period.

The councils will be required to identify a supply of specific, deliverable housing sites to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against the housing requirement in the plan at the point that the examination of the local plan concludes<sup>31</sup>.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Our preferred option

Our preferred option is to include a policy in the plan that identifies the expected trajectory of housing delivery over the plan period. We will update the trajectory for each time we consult on the plan to reflect the latest information on likely delivery rates.

#### Why we prefer Option A

National policy at NPPF paragraph 75 requires us to identify the trajectory of housebuilding over the plan period. Our preferred option is for this policy to reflect the trajectories of the sites we are proposing to allocate in Chapter 8 (plus our other existing commitments such as planning permissions and existing neighbourhood plan allocations)

#### Option B - Alternative

Identify more housing supply.

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<sup>31</sup> NPPF, Paragraph 76

In addition to the sites, we have identified in Chapter 8, we would allocate more land for housing development. We do not currently think this option is appropriate, as both councils will already have an oversupply of housing against their needs. However, as we discuss later below, we may need to revisit this option to meet the housing needs of specific groups within the community – for example through allocating land for elderly accommodation, custom and self-build housing, and / or build to rent housing.

**Option C - Alternative**

Reduce the housing supply.

This option would involve de-allocating sites that we have identified in Chapter 8, to closely align the housing supply with the housing requirement. We do not think this option is appropriate, as reducing the housing supply could have a detrimental impact on our commitments to the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.

**Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

**Policy HOU2 - Sources of Housing Supply**

1) Within South Oxfordshire, the housing supply comprises the following:

<b>Source of supply</b>	<b>Net number of homes 2021-2041</b>
Completions as of 31 March 2023	2,336
Committed development as of 31 March 2023	
Sites with planning permission	5,380

Sites allocated by neighbourhood plans	708
Outstanding commitment for the Thame Neighbourhood Plan	143
Supply from allocations in the Joint Local Plan	10,417
Windfall allowance	2,775
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,759</b>

2) Within the Vale of White Horse, the housing supply comprises the following:

<b>Source of supply</b>	<b>Net number of homes 2021-2041</b>
Completions as of 31 March 2023	2,571
Committed development as of 31 March 2023	
Sites with planning permission	9,581
Sites allocated by neighbourhood plans	0
Supply from allocations in the Joint Local Plan	4,491
Windfall allowance	2,865
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,508</b>

3) The following sites with planning permission, allocated in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 or the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 (Parts 1 and 2) are saved and continue to form part of the housing supply. Their expected housing contribution is reflected in the sites with planning permission above (from 2021 to 2041). This local plan saves the existing policies in an appendix [*to be added at Draft Plan stage*] to assist in the determination of future applications on these sites.

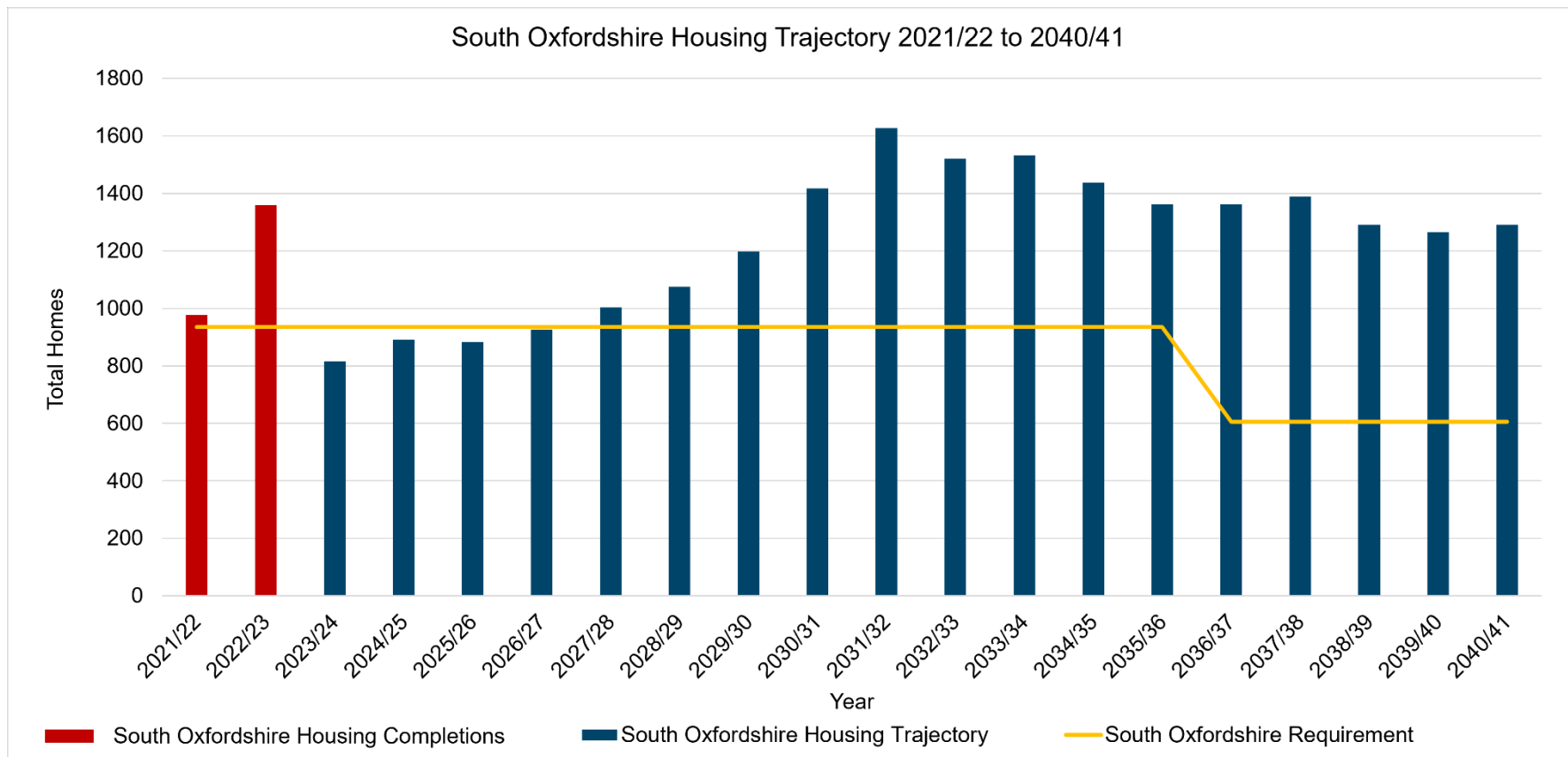
<b>Sites with policies saved from the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035:</b>	
<b>Site name</b>	<b>Total homes allocated by existing policy</b>

a	Ladygrove East	642
b	Didcot North East	2,030
c	Land West of Wallingford	555
d	Land at Wheatley Campus, Oxford Brookes University	500
e	Vauxhall Barracks, Didcot	300
f	Joyce Grove Nettlebed	15

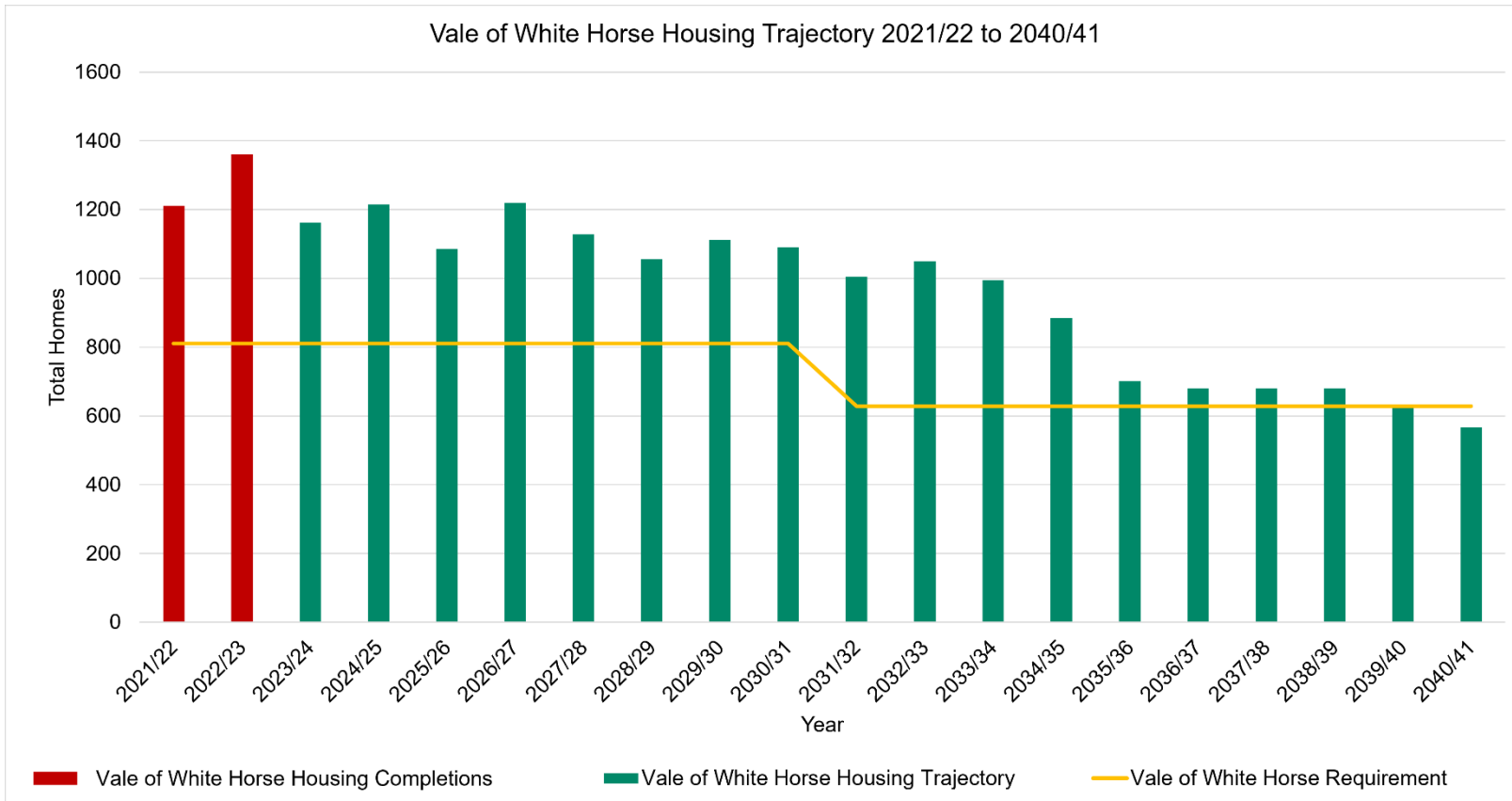
**Sites with policies saved from the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 (Parts 1 and 2):**

<b>Site name</b>		<b>Total homes allocated by existing policy</b>
g	North-East of East Hanney	80
h	South-West of Faringdon	200
i	Milton Heights	400
j	North-West Radley	240
k	South of Kennington	270
l	North of Shrivenham	500
m	West of Stanford-in-the-Vale	200
n	Land South of Park Road, Faringdon	350
o	North of Abingdon-on-Thames	800
p	South of Faringdon	200
q	Monks Farm (North Grove)	885
r	Grove Airfield	2,500
s	Valley Park	2,550
t	East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor	280
u	South-East of Marcham	90

v	Crab Hill (North East Wantage and South East Grove)	1,500
w	North-West of Abingdon-on-Thames	200
x	North of East Hanney	50







## Policy HOU3 - Affordable housing

### What will this policy do?

This policy sets out our approach to addressing high costs which can put housing out of reach of local people, by requiring developers to provide a proportion of affordable housing when they build homes.

### Why is this policy needed?

Our districts are attractive places to live and work with good transport links, National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) historic market towns and a thriving economy. However, what has made our areas an attractive place to live has also contributed to us becoming one of the least affordable areas to live in the country to both rent and buy a home.

We know that many people face difficulties finding an affordable home in our districts with median house prices and monthly rents in both districts being well in excess of national averages. A lack of affordable housing can have a detrimental effect on our economy, environment and the social well-being of our communities. This includes employers finding it harder to recruit and retain staff, increased emissions as people potentially commute further to work here, and the breakdown of social networks as people move away from friends, family and the communities they grew up in.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines what can qualify as an “affordable home”. There are five broad types:

**Highest Housing Need  
(supported rent)**

**Intermediate Housing  
(support to buy)**

**Social rent**

Form of low cost rent

Rent set by government formula linked to local wages. Typically, 50% - 60% of market rent

Affordable product for those on lower incomes who cannot afford market rents or to buy

**Affordable rent**

Form of discounted rent

Rents up to 80% of the local market rent

Affordable product for those who would struggle to afford full market rents or to buy

**First Homes**

Buy a market property at discounted rate (30, 40 or 50%), set locally.

Must make up 25% of affordable housing.

For first time buyers getting on the housing ladder

**Discounted market sales housing**

Home ownership product. Discount of at least 20% below local market value

Discount remains in perpetuity.

**Other affordable routes to home ownership**

Shared ownership: Part buy part rent. Opportunity to 'staircase' i.e. buy a greater share. For first time buyers to get on the housing ladder with a smaller mortgage and deposit.

Rent to buy: rented for a set period during which time the tenant saves enough for a deposit to purchase the property

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Affordable housing is only available for eligible households. Those seeking a rented property will need to apply to be on the councils' housing registers, while those seeking affordable home ownership will need to be eligible to join the "help to buy" scheme or qualify for a First Home. Therefore, while affordable housing provides an additional supply of cheaper housing, it does so only for eligible households. It does not mean that the homes sold on the open market will be more affordable, with the councils having little to no ability to regulate the sale cost of these properties.

National planning policy requires local authorities to make sufficient provision for affordable housing in local plans, explaining that plans should set out how developers should contribute to providing such housing, including the amount and types of affordable housing required. These affordable housing contributions should be based on evidenced need and not undermine the deliverability of the plan.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Our preferred option

##### 50% affordable housing policy

A policy that sets out a 50% affordable housing requirement for both South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse for:

- All new major housing developments (where there is a net gain of ten or more homes)
- All new housing developments of a net gain of 5 or more homes in the National Landscapes and Designated Rural Areas

The 50% affordable housing would be split as follows:

- 25% social rented
- 2.5% affordable rented
- 12.5% First Homes
- 10% Other routes to affordable home ownership

Ahead of our next public consultation, we will also assess the appropriate affordable housing contributions for the following development types, and include these standards within the policy:

- Specialist elderly accommodation
- Build to Rent developments

**Based on a development with 100 homes...**



-  **Market**
-  **Social rent**
-  **Affordable rent**
-  **First homes**
-  **Intermediate home ownership**

## Why we prefer Option A

### General approach

Our emerging evidence base is showing that there are high levels of affordable housing need in the districts. There is a core need, amounting to around 24% and 32% of South Oxfordshire's and the Vale of White Horse's total housing needs respectively. However, this number rises to around 40% for each council if we are to include households receiving housing benefits while living in private rented homes. We think this uplift would be justified because the housing market is clearly not meeting these households' needs.

In addition to this, national planning guidance states that we should consider the needs of those "...that cannot afford their own homes, either to rent, or to own, where that is their aspiration". Our housing needs assessment has considered the needs of households who can afford to rent privately, aspire to own their own home, but cannot afford to do so. If these households are included in our affordable need, then our affordable housing would rise to 77% of our housing need for each council. A significant proportion of these affordable homes would need to be offered as affordable routes to home ownership; such as shared ownership, relevant equity loans for custom and self-build housing, homes for sale at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent).

However, as the housing need assessment states:

"It is important to recognise that the figures for those who aspire to home ownership are based upon those households who currently can afford market rent. However, these households would not necessarily choose new build Affordable Home Ownership if it was available, as some may prefer to secure full ownership in the less expensive second-hand housing market. Similarly, some households may not ultimately need affordable home ownership if their circumstances change to such a degree that they are eventually able to buy without financial assistance. It is also important to recognise that the identified demand could only be realised if Affordable Home Ownership products can be delivered at prices that are truly affordable in the area, in line with local house prices and incomes".<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Joint Housing Needs Assessment, Paragraph 4.70

Therefore, these households do not strictly fall into affordable housing need as their need is being met by the private rental market. However, we consider it appropriate to uplift the affordable housing requirement by 10% to help address some of this additional demand for affordable home ownership models. Any further uplift is likely to negatively impact on the viability of development in our area. Our viability assessment will consider the impact of the affordable housing policy on housing delivery.

Furthermore, national guidance expects 25% of all affordable housing to be delivered as First Homes. These are a type of affordable housing that is offered for sale at a discounted market rate (which must be no more than £250,000) to eligible first-time buyers. The Stage 1 Joint Housing Needs Assessment demonstrates<sup>33</sup> there are sufficient households in the plan area who could benefit from this product to match the government target for First Homes. Under the government's First Homes scheme, developers must offer these homes to first-time buyers with a 30% to 50% discount on the market value. In our districts, the Joint Housing Needs Assessment has shown that developers would need to sell these at a 50% discount. Our proposed policy reflects this. However, we acknowledge that such a high discount could constrain development viability, particularly given our ambitious targets for the delivery of high levels of social rent. We will therefore test the viability of providing First Homes at this level of discount ahead of our next local plan consultation.

### **Affordable housing on specialist accommodation**

National planning policies and guidance expect plan makers to assess the need for specialist accommodation (such as for the elderly or build to rent), and the affordable housing need within those. Our preferred approach sets out how we will seek affordable housing contributions from these developments, but the Stage 2 Joint Housing Needs Assessment will identify the contributions and tenure mix we expect for the next local plan consultation.

Our Stage 2 report from our housing need consultant, Opinion Research Services (ORS), will help identify the appropriate affordable housing contributions that specialist elderly accommodation should provide. For this consultation, we have identified the approach the policy will take, but have represented the expected contributions with "X%" for now pending finalisation of the evidence base. When we launch our next consultation we will provide the required amounts in the policy.

### **Affordable housing in "designated" rural areas**

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<sup>33</sup> JHNA, Figures 57 and 58

The 1985 Housing Act<sup>34</sup> designates specific “rural” areas. In these areas, councils can set a lower threshold for the number of homes needed in a development to trigger affordable housing contributions. In rural areas, in line with national policy, our planning policies have historically restricted significant new development. Where development does come forward, it is often small-scale (fewer than 10 homes) and therefore falls below the threshold for providing affordable housing. However, changes to national policy in December 2018 now allow councils to lower the threshold for seeking affordable housing to 5 home proposals in these designated rural areas. Currently in our districts this only includes areas within the North Wessex Downs and the Chilterns National Landscapes. This policy will therefore require developers to make affordable housing contributions on developments of 5 or more homes in the designated rural areas in our districts (currently the two National Landscapes).

### **Option B - Alternative**

An alternative option would be to follow the same approach as Option A but include a requirement for 40% of homes on sites of 10 or more homes to be affordable (5 or more in the National Landscapes or Designated Rural Areas). This would comprise:

- 25% social rented
- 2.5% affordable rented
- 12.5% First Homes

We do not think this is appropriate as it fails to consider the aspirations of those who can afford to rent on the open market but cannot afford to buy a home.

### **Option C - Alternative**

An alternative option would be to follow the same approach as Option A but include a requirement for 75% of homes on sites of 10 or more homes to be affordable (5 or more in the National Landscapes or Designated Rural Areas). This would comprise:

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<sup>34</sup> Section 157(1)



- 25% social rented
- 2.5% affordable rented
- 12.5% First Homes
- 35% Routes to affordable home ownership

We do not think this is appropriate as it is likely to make development unviable.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### Policy HOU3 - Affordable housing

- 1) Development proposals for specialist elderly accommodation, C3 dwellings, and Build to Rent accommodation will provide affordable housing contributions where:
  - a) the development would result in a net gain of 10 or more dwellings or where the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more, or
  - b) the development would result in a net gain of 5 or more dwellings within a National Landscape and areas designated as Rural Areas
- 2) Developments of C3 housing that contribute to affordable housing under criterion 1 will provide 50% of dwellings on site as affordable homes across the following tenures:

	Market	Affordable
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		To rent		To buy	
		Social rent	Affordable rent	First homes	Intermediate home ownership
		South Oxfordshire	50%	25%	2.5%
Vale of White Horse	50%	25%	2.5%	12.5%	10%

- 3) Developments of specialist elderly accommodation that contribute to affordable housing under criterion 1 will provide X% of dwellings on site as affordable homes across the following tenures:

	Market	Affordable		
		To rent		To buy
		Social rent	Affordable rent	Intermediate home ownership
South Oxfordshire	x%*	x%	x%	x%
Vale of White Horse	x%	x%	x%	x%

- 4) Developments of Build to Rent housing that contribute to affordable housing under criterion 1 will provide X% of dwellings on site as affordable homes across the following tenures:

	Market	Affordable
		Affordable market rent

South Oxfordshire	x%*	x%
Vale of White Horse	x%	x%

- 5) In cases where the percentage calculation provides a part dwelling, a financial contribution will be sought equivalent to that part residential unit.
- 6) Where First Homes are sought, they will be required to be delivered at a 50% discount of market value.
- 7) Proposals delivering above these standards will be supported where they contribute to creating mixed and balanced communities.
- 8) Proposals for qualifying developments that do not provide affordable housing in accordance with the standards in criteria 2 or 3 will only be permitted where the applicant can satisfactorily demonstrate, through an open book viability assessment, that the level of affordable housing being sought would be unviable. In such circumstances, the council may support an alternative quantum and mix of affordable housing tenures identified in the open book viability assessment.
- 9) An overage clause will be sought in respect of future profits and affordable housing provision, where levels of affordable housing fall below policy targets.
- 10) Proposals where affordable housing is required must be designed to ensure:
  - a) affordable housing is indistinguishable in appearance from market housing on site;
  - b) affordable housing is distributed evenly across the site where it is provided alongside open market housing; and
  - c) that where affordable housing is clustered together on site, this should be proportionate to the scale of development and each cluster should not exceed a maximum of 15 units.

11) A financial contribution or off-site provision may be acceptable where it is robustly justified. This may relate to the whole or part of the requirement, this will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Design and layout of proposals by themselves are unlikely to justify a departure from onsite delivery.

12) Planning permission will be refused for development proposals where it appears that a larger site has been subdivided into smaller development parcels, or the site capacity has been reduced in order to avoid the requirements of the affordable housing policy.

*\* For this consultation, we have identified the approach the policy will take, but have represented the expected contributions with "X%" for now pending finalisation of the evidence base. When we launch our next consultation we will provide the required amounts in the policy.*

## **Policy HOU4 - Housing mix and size**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy sets out the standards that are expected for new homes in terms of the size, number of bedrooms, and accessibility and adaptability standards.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

It is important that the Joint Local Plan assesses the need, and provides for, different sizes and tenures of homes. This is because not everyone's needs can be met by housing provided by larger housebuilders who tend to dominate the supply. Paragraph 63 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that planning policies assess and reflect: "the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community". It gives examples of the different groups that such policies should cover: "those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes". Government's planning practice guidance expands on this, giving further advice on how local plans should address the needs of specific groups within the community.

We are aware that there is a sense that new housebuilding is dominated by larger properties with more bedrooms. Combined with the existing smaller homes we lose in our districts when people extend their properties, this could be leading to a dwindling stock of smaller homes; traditionally those more affordable properties for first time buyers. The Local Plan will need to investigate this matter further and consider if we need a planning policy to reverse such a trend.

To protect people's living conditions, national government publishes space standards that give the minimum internal space acceptable within homes. These standards set a minimum internal area (in metres squared) based on the number of bedrooms and number of people the home accommodates. Planning practice guidance advises that local authorities can consider if nationally described space standards should also apply within their area when considering the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required. In doing so, they should take account of the need, impact on viability of development, and whether a transitional period should apply. Currently, South Oxfordshire's and the Vale of White Horse's existing local plans require these national space standards to be met on some developments.

In addition to space standards, it is important that some dwellings are built to address the needs of those living with mobility issues (such as the elderly) or with a disability. The government sets specific design standards for accessible and adaptable dwellings,

and wheelchair user dwellings through Requirement M4(2) and M4(3) respectively of the Building Regulations. Government has recently consulted on changes to the Building Regulations, indicating that all dwellings will now be required to meet Category M4(2): Accessible and Adaptable dwellings. We have reflected this upcoming change in our preferred policy. Depending on the nature of these changes, we may not need a policy in the final Joint Local Plan to address this.

We have commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to prepare evidence for our housing needs through a Joint Housing Needs Assessment. This tells us how many homes and what type of homes we need to deliver over the plan period to meet the needs of our residents. This covers the size of home (i.e., the number of bedrooms) and how many of them need to be accessible, adaptable and wheelchair adaptable to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities.

Our Stage 2 report from ORS will identify the appropriate bedroom mix and accessible dwelling standards that new housing should provide. For this consultation, we have identified the approach the policy will take, but have represented the expected contributions with “X%” for now pending finalisation of the evidence base. When we launch our next consultation we will provide the required amounts in the policy.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Our preferred option

Our preferred option is to have a policy that:

- plans for the right size and type of homes, as evidenced through the Joint Housing Needs Assessment. This will be set at a level that is deliverable and viable. This will provide a mix of different sized homes from 1-bedroom up to 4 or more bedrooms. The requirement for each size will be set as a percentage of the total number of homes being delivered. This will be sought on all new residential developments
- considers whether the extensions / enlargements of smaller homes in the area have had an impact on the need for more smaller 1- and 2-bedroom properties
- requires all new residential developments to be built to Part M (4) Category 2: accessible and adaptable dwellings standards, as set out in Building Regulations consultation
- requires a percentage of total housing stock to be delivered as wheelchair accessible properties, in line with Part M (4) Category 3: wheelchair accessible dwellings (as set out in the Building Regulations)

- supports and encourages the provision of ground floor dwellings as part of mix to meet the needs of older people looking to move to more accessible homes.

### Why we prefer Option A

Option A is our preferred option because it will ensure a mix of new housing types, and hence diverse and inclusive communities, on new development sites. It will help to create sustainable, balanced communities and will provide homes to cater for the needs of older people and people with disabilities. This will ensure that we deliver a wide choice of high-quality homes based on current and future needs.

#### **Option B - Alternative**

To have a policy as set out in Option A above. However, we would not investigate whether the extension of smaller properties in the districts requires more 1- and 2-bedroom homes on new developments.

We do not think this option is appropriate as it would fail to ensure that planning policies set out the needs of different people in the community in accordance with Paragraph 63 of the NPPF.

#### **Option C - Alternative**

To have a policy that reflects only the Building Regulations consultation about building all new homes as accessible and adaptable (Building Regulations Class M4(2)). The policy would not specify a mix of bedroom sizes, instead leaving Planning Officers to negotiate an appropriate mix based on the applicant's evidence.

We do not think this option is appropriate as it would fail to ensure that planning policies set out the needs of different people in the community in accordance with Paragraph 63 of the NPPF.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### Policy HOU4 - Housing mix and size

- 1) All proposals for new specialist elderly accommodation, must provide a mix of sizes of new homes for each tenure type provided as set out on Tables H4.1 and H4.2 below:

Table H4.1: Specialist elderly accommodation mix requirements in South Oxfordshire				
	Social rent	Affordable rent	Affordable home ownership	Market housing
1 bedroom	x%*	x%	x%	x%
2 bedrooms	x%	x%	x%	x%
3 bedrooms	x%	x%	x%	x%
4+ bedrooms	x%	x%	x%	x%

Table H4.2: Specialist elderly accommodation mix requirements in the Vale of White Horse				
	Social rent	Affordable rent	Affordable home ownership	Market housing
1 bedroom	x%*	x%	x%	x%
2 bedrooms	x%	x%	x%	x%
3 bedrooms	x%	x%	x%	x%



4+ bedrooms	x%	x%	x%	x%
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- 2) Provision of ground floor dwellings as part of the mix of new residential developments are supported and encouraged as part of meeting the needs of older people.
- 3) All proposals for C3 homes, must provide a mix of sizes of new homes for each tenure type provided as set out on Tables H4.3 and H4.4 below:

Table H4.3: C3 Housing mix requirements in South Oxfordshire				
	<b>Social rent</b>	<b>Affordable rent</b>	<b>Affordable home ownership</b>	<b>Market housing</b>
1 bedroom	x%*	x%	x%	x%
2 bedrooms	x%	x%	x%	x%
3 bedrooms	x%	x%	x%	x%
4+ bedrooms	x%	x%	x%	x%

Table H4.4: C3 Housing mix requirements in the Vale of White Horse				
	<b>Social rent</b>	<b>Affordable rent</b>	<b>Affordable home ownership</b>	<b>Market housing</b>
1 bedroom	x%*	x%	x%	x%
2 bedrooms	x%	x%	x%	x%
3 bedrooms	x%	x%	x%	x%
4+ bedrooms	x%	x%	x%	x%

- 4) In accordance with emerging changes to the Building Regulations, all new homes will be built to at least M4(2) (Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings) (or any equivalent replacement standards).
- 5) All specialist elderly accommodation and C3 residential development must provide a percentage of homes to category M4(3) (wheelchair user adaptable dwellings), in accordance with Tables H4.5 and H4.6 below:

Table H4.5: Wheelchair user adaptable dwelling requirements in South Oxfordshire	
Affordable homes	x%*
Market homes	x%
Specialist elderly accommodation	x%

Table H4.6: Wheelchair user adaptable dwelling requirements in the Vale of White Horse	
Affordable homes	x%*
Market homes	x%
Specialist elderly accommodation	x%

- 6) Both current local plans for our areas require all affordable homes, and all 1- and 2-bedroom market homes to be designed to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards<sup>35</sup>. The councils are investigating whether evidence justifies extending these standards to cover more new homes in our districts (for example 3-bedroom market homes).

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<sup>35</sup> [Statutory guidance, Technical housing standards – nationally described space standards, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#)

*\* For this consultation, we have identified the approach the policy will take, but have represented the expected contributions with “X%” for now pending finalisation of the evidence base. When we launch our next consultation we will provide the required amounts in the policy.*

## Policy HOU5 - Housing for older people

### What will this policy do?

This policy will set out our approach to delivering homes that meet the needs of older people. Housing for older people generally refers to housing for those over 55 years of age, although different types of elderly accommodation can have higher age thresholds.

### Why is this policy needed?

The UK population is ageing, and people can expect to live longer than previous generations. We recognise the importance of providing a range of accommodation to meet the needs of our residents, including older people. We understand that the number of older people as a proportion of our residents is growing. We also see the importance of having the option to move to a smaller home, by downsizing, as this can help free up family housing.

Our housing need consultant, Opinion Research Services (ORS), is assessing the needs of the elderly population as part of their assessment of specialist housing needs. ORS will be engaging with key stakeholders such as care home operators and Oxfordshire County Council. The policy options below set out what we think the overall strategy for meeting these needs, once identified, should be. If the evidence identifies a need that cannot be met through this approach, we will consider what alternative approach(es) we could take to ensure we fully address the need.

Our Stage 2 report from ORS will identify the need for specialist elderly accommodation in the districts. For this consultation, we have identified the approach the policy will take, but have represented the expected need with “X” for now pending finalisation of the evidence base. When we launch our next consultation we will quantify the need in the policy.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Our preferred option

Our preferred option is to:

- focus housing needs for older people on development sites allocated for 500 or more homes (as set out in Chapter 8)
- in addition to the sites delivering 500 or more homes, have a policy that supports planning applications for older people’s accommodation in places that are consistent with the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy.

## Why we prefer Option A

The sites delivering 500 or more homes are of such a scale that they will provide new social and community infrastructure on site (including shops, public transport and public open space). Therefore, these sites will provide a suitable and sustainable location for elderly residents who are more likely to face mobility challenges than the general population. This approach will also ensure that we make efficient use of land, minimising the need for further greenfield allocations.

Alongside the specific supply that we will identify on these sites, we believe it is important to enable unplanned (or windfall) developments of such accommodation in suitable and sustainable locations that are consistent with the spatial strategy.

### **Option B - Alternative**

We could allocate sites to meet the remaining need for older person's accommodation if our planned allocations cannot address the needs for specialist elderly accommodation in full.

This option may not bring the benefits of co-locating elderly accommodation in locations where we are planning to deliver new infrastructure.

Under this option, we would prioritise well-located brownfield sites in our selection process to be consistent with the spatial strategy, but if we needed to find greenfield allocations, this could conflict with the strategy of the plan and might not maximise the efficient use of land.

### **Option C - Alternative**

This option involves asking neighbourhood plan groups to make site allocations for specialist elderly accommodation. It would involve setting a target for suitable Neighbourhood Development Plans to plan for a defined number of specialist housing units for older people. These are likely to be settlements in the higher tiers of the settlement hierarchy.

Delegating this decision to neighbourhood planning groups may not result in a timely identification of sites to meet the need. However, if the evidence demonstrates that the need for older persons accommodation cannot be met on our planned allocations this option may be needed.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### Policy HOU5 - Housing for older people

- 1) The Joint Local Plan will make provision for the following elderly person's accommodation needs:

	Sheltered housing		Extra care housing	
	Owned	Rented	Owned	Rented
South Oxfordshire	x*	x	x	x
Vale of White Horse	x	x	x	x

- 2) The following sites identified in this local plan will be expected to deliver elderly accommodation as follows:

	South Oxfordshire development sites			
	Sheltered housing		Extra care housing	
	Owned	Rented	Owned	Rented
Land at Bayswater Brook	x*	x	x	x
Land East of Berinsfield Garden Village	x	x	x	x
Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre	x	x	x	x
Land South of Grenoble Road	x	x	x	x
Land at Northfield	x	x	x	x

	Vale of White Horse development sites			
	Sheltered housing		Extra care housing	
	Owned	Rented	Owned	Rented
Dalton Barracks Garden Village	x*	x	x	x
Northwest of Valley Park	x	x	x	x
Northwest of Grove	x	x	x	x

- 3) Where not allocated by the development plan, proposals solely for homes designed specifically to meet the needs of older people will only be permitted where the site is located where residential development is supported by the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy as set out in Policies SP1 and SP2.

*\* For this consultation, we have identified the approach the policy will take, but have represented the expected need with “X” for now pending finalisation of the evidence base. When we launch our next consultation we will quantify the need in the policy.*

## **Policy HOU6 - Self-build and custom-build housing**

### **What will this policy do?**

Self-build and custom-build housing are a unique type of housing where the occupier will be heavily involved in the procurement, design, and construction of the home. It can cover a wide scale and tenure of properties, ranging from the large-scale “Grand Designs” style houses through to blocks of affordable flats where the occupiers design and construct the interior layout. Self-build and custom-build housing can be for individual households or associations of individual households.

In planning terms, self-build and custom-build will be delivered on “serviced plots”. A serviced plot of land is a plot of land that either has access to a public highway and has connections for electricity, water and waste water or, in the opinion of a relevant authority, can be provided with access to those during the course of the development.

We will need a policy that:

- identifies the need for self-build and custom-build in our districts;
- provides a set of sites to deliver self-build and custom-build plots to meet that need; and
- in addition to these sites, sets a framework for where the councils will support additional applications for self-build and custom-build housing.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Government’s policies strongly support self-build and custom-build housing. They believe that self-build and custom-build form an important part of new housing supply to help tackle the housing crisis. Consequently, the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act (2015) requires us to keep a register of individuals and associations who have expressed an interest in acquiring serviced plots for self-build and custom housebuilding. We must consider this register, and the demand for self-build and custom-build that it shows, when we are preparing the Joint Local Plan, indeed Paragraph 63 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear that we should plan for the needs of “people wishing to commission or build their own homes.”

Our register is currently open to anyone from the UK to sign up to. This means that our register will show some demand for housing from outside of our districts. We are currently updating the eligibility criteria for joining our registers to ensure that only those individuals who have a local connection to our area can join.



We have not yet identified the need for new self-build and custom-build plots across for the new plan period (2021 to 2041). Our emerging housing needs assessment will use the information from the register to project a need for such plots ahead of our next consultation. When we have identified the need, our policy will set out which sites we are allocating to address that.

It is also important that the policy identifies where we will support planning applications for self-build and custom-build housing beyond those allocated sites.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

Our preferred option is to include a policy that identifies and addresses the need for self-build and custom-build housing in our districts. We believe that the sites delivering 500 or more homes we have identified in Chapter 8 provide sustainable locations where we can achieve the delivery of self-build and custom-build plots. If the need for these plots exceeds what these sites can accommodate, we may need to consider allocating further sites.

Where we do require sites to provide self-build and custom-build housing, we will set a percentage of the total number of homes on site to be set aside as serviced plots. The policy will require the site promoter to market these serviced plots as follows:

1. firstly, as self-build or custom-build serviced plots for 12 months, then
2. subsequently as shell homes for 12 months, where the applicant can demonstrate that it was not possible to deliver the self-build and/or custom housebuilding plots.

Where the serviced plots, shell homes, or self-finish homes have been appropriately marketed and have not sold within this time period, they may be built out by the developer for conventional market housing.

The policy will also set out how we will respond to planning applications for custom and self-build housing not on these sites, providing advice on which locations we will support it and giving design guidance.

## Why we prefer Option A

Option A is broadly consistent with how the South Oxfordshire Local Plan addresses the need for self and custom builders. The current South Oxfordshire approach requires housing allocations delivering 500 or more homes to set aside 3% of the homes as plots for self and custom build housing. Option a will identify the needs of custom and self-builders and provide a similar pipeline of plots to address these needs on our large housing sites. Where these large residential sites provide self and custom build housing, the option allows for the developer to return these to standard housing if they cannot find a purchaser for the plot. This is to ensure that no empty plots of land are left when a development finishes if the site owner cannot sell the plots. To do this though, the site promoter will need to demonstrate that they have properly marketed the plots. This approach is consistent with how both South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse currently manage applications for self and custom build housing.

The policy does however introduce a new requirement for these serviced plots to be marketed first as plots, then as shell homes. We believe this is appropriate because serviced plots will continue to address the needs of 'traditional' self-builders identified on the council self-build register who wish to plan, design and construct their own dwelling and have the time / resources to do so. Secondly, shell homes provide the opportunity for a more accessible route into self-build where developers are responsible for key stages of the build but still allow initial occupiers control over the internal layout and finishes.

In addition to these specific sites, the policy will set out where the councils will support planning applications for self and custom build dwellings. This flexibility will allow more self-build and custom-build development if the sites of 500 or more homes fail to deliver enough plots.

For this consultation, we have identified the approach the policy will take, but have represented the expected contributions from sites with “X%” for now pending finalisation of the evidence base. When we launch our next consultation and have assessed the need for custom and self-build housing, we will provide the required amounts in the policy.

### **Option B - Alternative**

As with option A, we would have a policy that requires allocated sites delivering 500 or more homes to deliver a percentage of the homes as serviced plots. However, instead of a sequential marketing of plots as first serviced plots, then shell homes, we would require the site owner to instead market:

1. 50% of self-build and custom-build units as a serviced plot for self-builders or custom housebuilders, and
2. 50% of self-build and custom-build units as shell homes or self-finish homes.

We do not prefer this option as it isn't flexible enough to respond to the numbers of applicants and the demand for housing types recorded on the councils' self-build and custom housebuilding register. Whilst this option may respond to the current snapshot of demand at the start of the Joint Local Plan period, it doesn't offer the flexibility to change should the demand change over time.

### **Option C - Alternative**

As with options A and B, we would have a policy that requires allocated sites delivering 500 or more homes to deliver a percentage of the homes as serviced plots. However, instead of a sequential marketing of plots as first serviced plots, then shell homes, we would require the site owner to instead market plots as either serviced plots or as shell homes / self-finish homes, having regard to the need shown on the councils' self-build and custom housebuilding register.

We do not prefer this option as it would be wholly reliant of defining and reporting on the annual percentage split each base year. This gives rise to potential uncertainty for developers regarding required types of self-build, custom-build or self finish. Having regard to the time it takes to plan, apply and approve schemes over the required number threshold, it may be that demand defined in one base year no longer exists by the time these plots come to market.

## **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

### **Policy HOU6 - Self-build and custom-build housing**

- 1) The councils will grant planning permission for self-build and custom-build housing where:

- a) it is allocated in the development plan; or
  - b) it is located where residential development is supported by the spatial strategy (see Policy SP1); or
  - c) it is brought forward as part of an identified allocated housing site (see part 3 of this policy); or
  - d) it forms part, or all of a rural or first home exception site (see Policy HOU12); or
  - e) it forms part of, or all of a community led housing development (see Policy HOU13); or
  - f) it is a rural worker's dwelling(s) (see Policy HOU17); or
  - g) it is a replacement dwelling (see Policy HOU8).
- 2) Proposals for major self-build and custom housebuilding development (a net gain of ten or more self-build and custom-build dwellings or five or more in the National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) and designated rural areas) must also:
- a) deliver 50% affordable self-build or custom-build plots in accordance with Policy HOU7; and
  - b) deliver an appropriate mix of plot sizes in accordance with Policy HOU4.
- 3) The housing development sites listed below are required to provide X%\* of the residential units as serviced plots for self-build and custom-build, appropriately designed and incorporated into the masterplan, and as part of the first planning application for their allocated use:

South Oxfordshire		
Site	Percentage of homes allocated to bring forward as serviced plots	Projected number of serviced plots**
Land adjacent Culham Science Centre	x%*	x
Land East of Berinsfield Garden Village	x%	x
Land South of Grenoble Road, Edge of Oxford	x%	x
Land at Northfield, Edge of Oxford	x%	x
Land at Bayswater Brook, Edge of Oxford	x%	x
Land at Oxford Brookes Campus, Wheatley	x%	x

Total		
The Vale of White Horse		
Site	Percentage of homes allocated to bring forward as serviced plots	Projected number of serviced plots**
Land at Dalton Barracks, Shippon	x%*	x
Northwest Grove	x%	x
Northwest Valley Park	x%	x
Total		

4) Where permission is granted or self-build and custom-build plots, those plots for sale must be marketed:

- a) as self-build and / or custom housebuilding serviced plots; or
- b) as shell homes where self-build and or custom housebuilding serviced plots under a) have been suitably marketed for a period of 12 months and have not sold.

5) Where an applicant can demonstrate that a unit has been suitably marketed for 12 months as a market self-build or custom housebuilding plot (including to those on the relevant council's self-build and custom housebuilding register), then 12 subsequent months as a shell home, and it has not sold, the council will permit applications to build these plots as standard market housing. Where a plot was a substitute for/contribution toward the site's affordable housing provision (see Policy HOU7), the plot must be developed as another form of affordable housing.

*\* For this consultation, we have identified the approach the policy will take, but have represented the expected contributions with "X%" for now pending finalisation of the evidence base. When we launch our next consultation we will provide the required amounts in the policy.*

*\*\*Based on x% of the total number on allocated sites, this could vary depending on final planning application number.*

## **Policy HOU7 - Affordable self and custom-build housing**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will set out how and where we will permit self-build or custom-build homes to be delivered as affordable homes.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Self-build and custom housebuilding plots can also provide a route for affordable housing to help those in housing need. Our current policies in the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Local Plans set out that self-build and custom housebuilding properties could provide market or affordable housing. We want to provide more detail in our new plan on how and where we would support this, and what measures should be put in place to ensure the property remains an affordable home in perpetuity.

### **Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)**

#### **Option A – Our preferred option**

We think it is important to have a policy that sets out when an application for self-build or custom-build housing would need to contribute to affordable housing delivery in our districts. There are many ways to this, for example through selling plots at a discount rate, constructing shell homes to lease to affordable tenants, or making a financial contribution to delivering traditional models of affordable housing elsewhere.

Furthermore, the policy should set out the circumstances where we would support a developer delivering affordable self-build and custom-build plots in lieu of traditional forms of affordable housing (see Policy HOU3). Our policy would only support this where both the council and the applicant have agreed that it would not be viable to provide standard affordable housing.

To ensure that these properties remain affordable for future purchasers, all affordable self-build or custom-build plots will need to be restricted in size to ensure they remain affordable (as opposed to large scale “Grand Design” style projects). We will therefore condition such developments to be no larger than 108 sqm in gross internal area (the same as a 3 bed, 3-person home according to the national space standards). We will also remove the permitted development rights (i.e., changes you can make to your home without planning permission) on affordable self-build and custom-build homes.

## Why we prefer Option A

We prefer this option as it will set out clear guidance on when self-build and custom housebuilding can be considered as a route to affordable home ownership, providing an opportunity for some members of the community with a local connection to be able to build their own home and solve their need for affordable housing.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Provision for affordable self-build and custom-build housing on sites just for self-build and custom-build, but not in lieu of standard affordable housing on sites built by standard housebuilders.

On developments which are entirely self-build and custom-build plots, and that are over the threshold size for providing affordable housing under Policy HOU3 (a net gain of 10 or more plots, or 5 or more plots in a National Landscape (formerly AONB) or designated rural area) allow the 50% affordable housing to be provided as affordable self and custom build plots. But do not allow housebuilders and developers to provide this in lieu of standard affordable housing, so that the maximum amount of standard affordable housing is secured.

We do not think this is appropriate because it reduces the opportunity for some members of the community with a local connection to be able to build their own home and solve their need for affordable housing.

### **Option C - Alternative**

No provision for affordable self-build and custom-build housing.

Do not allow for self-build and custom-build as a form of affordable housing, and instead require traditional models of affordable housing from self-build and custom-build sites.

This misses an opportunity for some members of the community with a local connection to be able to build their own home and solve their need for affordable housing.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy HOU7 - Affordable self and custom-build housing**

- 1) The council will support provision of affordable self-build and custom housebuilding plots on major self-build and custom-build sites under Policy HOU6 where:
  - a) it is a suitable site to provide affordable self-build and custom-build housing;
  - b) no plot for an affordable self-build and custom-build dwelling will exceed the nationally described space standard for a 3 storey, 3-bedroom (6 bedspace) dwelling (currently 108m<sup>2</sup> gross internal floor space);
  - c) the purchasers and occupiers of these affordable plots, whether individuals, couples, or group purchasers, must be on the council's affordable housing register; and
  - d) there is an agreed mechanism to ensure the self-build or custom-build dwelling remains affordable in perpetuity.
  
- 2) The council will accept provision for affordable self-build and custom-build housing on other housing sites in lieu of a portion of traditional affordable housing where:
  - a) criteria 1 (a) to (d) apply; and
  - b) the council has agreed that is not viable\* to provide the appropriate amount of affordable housing under Policy HOU3;
  - c) and a significant majority of the affordable housing required under Policy HOU3 is delivered as traditional affordable housing.
  - d) no plot for an affordable self-build and custom-build dwelling will exceed the nationally described space standard for a 3 storey, 3-bedroom (6 bedspace) dwelling (currently 108m<sup>2</sup> gross internal floor space);
  
- 3) Any plots brought forward as affordable self-build or custom-build should be suitably marketed to those on both the council's housing register, and its self-build and custom housebuilding register for a period of not less than 3 months before being suitably marketed to the wider public for a period of not less than 12 months. Where an applicant can demonstrate that a unit has been suitably marketed for 15 months (3 months to council self-build and



custom housebuilding register, 12 months to wider public) and it has not sold, a legal agreement attached to the original permission will require that the plot must be developed as another form of affordable housing.

- 4) The councils will remove permitted development rights from units permitted as affordable self-build and custom-build dwellings.

*\* Viability studies are to be assessed on an “open book policy”. Applicants must be able to demonstrate clear and robust viability evidence.*

## Policy HOU8 - Replacement dwellings in the countryside

### What will this policy do?

Outside of our settlements the joint local plan will restrict the scale of new housebuilding. However, the plan will support proposals for replacement homes outside of these settlements. This policy will include criteria to help determine planning applications to replace an existing dwelling that is outside the built-up area of a Tier 1-4 settlement, in the countryside.

### Why is this policy needed?

We need this policy to help guide the process of replacing dwellings and to ensure that where dwellings are demolished and replaced, they are done so in a way that is appropriate to its surroundings. We are prioritising the re-use, retention and retrofit of existing dwelling, and avoiding substantial demolition unless necessary and fully justified. However, we understand in some circumstances the existing dwelling may not be suitable for re-use, retention or retrofit. In such circumstances the proposals will need to set out how materials arising from the demolition are re-used on site and/or recycled, in accordance with Policy CE3 (Reducing Embodied Carbon). This is because knocking down and replacing a dwelling – without reusing the materials onsite – can take up significantly more carbon than reusing, retaining, or retrofitting the existing dwelling.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Our preferred option

Have a policy that supplements the settlement hierarchy (Policy SP2) by expanding on the criteria we will use to assess planning applications for replacement dwellings in the countryside.

### Why we prefer Option A

Option A provides clarity of the specific circumstances that affect replacement dwellings in the countryside.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Less restrictive policy with more limited criteria. Allow more planning judgements to be made based on the circumstances of the site and the planning permission being sought.

We do not prefer this approach as it does not provide certainty for applicants on what we expect.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy HOU8 - Replacement dwellings in the countryside**

- 1) Proposals for the replacement of an existing dwelling located outside the built-up areas of Tier 1-4 settlements will be permitted provided that:
  - a) the development takes place in accordance with Policy CE3 (Reducing embodied carbon) prioritising the re-use, retention and retrofit of existing buildings;
  - b) the residential use of the existing dwelling has not been abandoned;
  - c) the existing dwelling is not subject to a temporary or time limited planning permission;
  - d) it is for a new dwelling which replaces an existing dwelling and only on a one-for-one basis;
  - e) it is situated on the site of the original dwelling unless an alternative site can be shown to have equal or greater benefits for the locality; and
  - f) any replacement dwelling must not be materially larger than the dwelling it replaces (excluding garages and outbuildings) if it is within the Green Belt.

2) Replacement dwellings outside the built-up areas of settlements must not have a greater impact on the character of the site and its surroundings than the existing dwelling due to its scale, height, size and form. Light coloured materials that are more visible in the landscape should be avoided. Consideration must be given to the amount of glazing used in any replacement dwelling, and the impact of glazing on reflectivity and light pollution. In the National Landscapes (formerly AONBs), the councils will give great weight to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area, wildlife and cultural heritage.

## Policy HOU9 - Sub-division of houses

### What will this policy do?

The policy will set the criteria where we support the sub-dividing buildings or plots to create a new home/homes.

### Why is this policy needed?

This policy will set out the circumstances when the sub-division of an existing dwelling or plot into two or more dwellings will be permitted. The sub-division of existing houses into flats can help to provide some smaller, more affordable housing. It can also represent a more effective use of land by including more housing into the same space. However, the sub-division of houses can sometimes have harmful impacts on the character of an area and the amenity of neighbours and future occupiers.

The sub-division of dwellings relates to the creation of separate units, usually flats, with their own facilities and living spaces. This is different from Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's) which will have separate bedrooms but shared facilities. Our approach to determining applications for Houses in Multiple Occupation is set out in Policy HOU15.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Our preferred option

We will have a policy that sets out what we will consider when determining planning applications to sub-divide a building or plot.

### Why we prefer Option A

Option A provides clarity of the specific circumstances that affect the sub-division of buildings or plots.

#### Option B - Alternative

No policy for sub-dividing buildings or plots.

We would have no specific policy for this topic, instead relying on our design policies to determine such applications. We do not prefer this approach as it does not provide certainty for applicants on what we expect.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy HOU9 - Sub-division of Houses**

- 1) The sub-division of dwellings will be permitted provided that:
  - a) it is in a location supported by the settlement hierarchy (Policy SP2);
  - b) each dwelling will be completely self-contained;
  - c) each dwelling is appropriate in terms of the size of the property and the proposed internal layout, size and private amenity space; and
  - d) there would be no demonstrable harm to the amenity of the occupiers of the proposed development and neighbouring properties.

## Policy HOU10 - Meeting the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

### What will this policy do?

This policy sets out our approach towards the provision of pitches and plots to meet the accommodation need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are 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, we use different terminology 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 Showperson’s “yard”.

### Why is this policy needed?

We have a statutory duty to ensure that we plan for the housing needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, by virtue of ethnicity or nomadic lifestyles, have particular accommodation needs that traditional bricks and mortar housing cannot address.

We have a duty under the Housing Act 2004<sup>36</sup> to undertake regular assessments of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers either living in or resorting to their area<sup>37</sup>. The Act also requires local housing authorities to include the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in any housing strategy they produce<sup>38</sup> and to take any such strategy in to account in exercising their functions, including in preparing a Local Plan.

Our policy will address the accommodation need of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople within the plan area. We are commissioning a study jointly with the other Oxfordshire authorities that will identify the accommodation needs for Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople (GTAA) in the plan period. This assessment will tell us the number of pitches or plots each council needs to identify in the plan. Depending on the number of pitches we need to provide, it could be possible that allocations carried forward in the Joint Local Plan and if required existing Gypsy and Traveller sites in our districts could be expanded or intensified to meet the need. If they don't have capacity to do so, other residential site allocations of 500 or more homes set out in

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<sup>36</sup> Section 225 of the Housing Act 2004

<sup>37</sup> Under the Local Housing Needs Assessment process set out in Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985

<sup>38</sup> In line with Section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003

Chapter 8 could address any residual need in full by providing pitches as part of the residential developments. However, if the need for pitches outstrips what our existing traveller sites and what the allocated housing sites can deliver, we may need to consider allocating new, alternative sites for Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople accommodation.

Our GTAA will identify the need for new pitches and plots in the districts. For this consultation, we have identified the approach the policy will take, but have represented the expected need and supply with “X” for now pending finalisation of the evidence base. When we launch our next consultation we will identify the need figure for each district along with the sources of supply for pitches and plots in the policy.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Our preferred option

The Oxfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) will identify each district’s needs for new pitches and plots arising during the plan period. Where a need is identified we will allocate sufficient sites to address this need as follows:

1. by allocating (or continuing to allocate) pitches / plots on residential site allocations in this plan (see Chapter 8). If this does not address the need, then in addition to this:
2. by intensifying and expanding existing and committed gypsy and traveller sites in our districts, where this satisfies key design and locational criteria (to be developed for the next consultation). If this does not address the need, then in addition to this:
3. by allocating additional, new sites for plots and pitches.

#### Why we prefer Option A

Option A follows our statutory duty to consider, and plan for, the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Subject to the level of need identified, we think it is first appropriate to allocate pitches or plots on residential site allocations carried forward in this plan. Some of these sites are already required by our policies to deliver pitches. We will assess whether the site allocations of 500 or more homes in Chapter 8 are capable of accommodating pitches or plots (or an increased number if they already planned to deliver some).



The Vale of White Horse Local Plan (both parts 1 and 2) does not allocate any sites for Gypsies, Travellers, or Travelling Showpeople. However, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 makes provision for 10 pitches to meet the identified need of Gypsies and Travellers<sup>39</sup> across 3 allocated sites:

- 4 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers at Didcot North East
- 3 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers at Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre
- 3 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers at Land at Chalgrove Airfield (no longer proposed to be allocated in this plan)

If the sites delivering 500 or more homes in Chapter 8 do not have enough capacity to meet our need for pitches and plots, then we will next consider if any other existing sites or yards across the districts could be intensified or expanded. This will co-locate compatible uses and should minimise landscape and visual harm. If, collectively, existing and committed Gypsy and Traveller sites and the residential allocations of 500 or more homes, cannot meet the need, we will then allocate land to address the remaining need.

Following this approach means we will have identified, and addressed, the needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople through a set of specific, achievable sites.

### **Option B - Alternative**

The Oxfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) will identify each district's needs for new pitches and plots arising during the plan period. We will allocate sufficient sites to address this need as follows:

1. By intensifying and expanding existing gypsy and traveller sites in our districts, where this is appropriate and consistent with the spatial strategy. If this does not address the need, then in addition to this:
2. By allocating additional, new sites for plots and pitches.

We do not think this option is appropriate as it would require more greenfield land allocated for development. Furthermore, the allocated sites delivering 500 or more homes in Chapter 8 (excluded from contributing to traveller needs under this option) are

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<sup>39</sup> The plan did not identify a need for plots to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople.

sustainable locations for residential uses. We should not discount them as potential sustainable locations to address our needs.

### **Option C - Alternative**

The Oxfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) will identify each district's needs for new pitches and plots arising during the plan period. We will address as much of this need as possible by intensifying and expanding existing gypsy and traveller sites in our districts, where this is appropriate. If this does not address the need, then in addition to this we will include a permissive "windfall" policy that identifies locations where we will support new pitches and plots. This would need to be consistent with the spatial strategy (Policy SP1) and the Settlement Hierarchy (Policy SP2).

We do not think this option is appropriate as it would not identify a specific set of sites to address our needs. Such a strategy may also weaken the councils' ability to resist applications for new traveller sites in locations not supported by our spatial strategy and the Settlement Hierarchy.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy HOU10 - Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople**

1) Provision will be made to meet the following requirements:

- a) **South Oxfordshire pitches / plots requirement:** XXX\* pitches / XXX plots between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2041

b) **Vale of White Horse pitches / plots requirement:** XXX pitches / XXX plots between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2041

2) This is not a joint pitch / plot requirement for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. For the purposes of determining whether a council can demonstrate a sufficient supply of pitches / plots, each district will measure its own supply against its own requirement.

3) The following sites will address the pitches / plot requirement:

Existing commitments carried forward in South Oxfordshire				
Site	Total number of pitches currently allocated	Total number of pitches proposed to be allocated	Total number of plots currently allocated	Total number of plots proposed to be allocated
Didcot North East	4	x*	0	X
Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre	3	x	0	x

Pitch and plot provision in South Oxfordshire		
Site	Net new number of pitches	Net new number of plots
Land at Bayswater Brook	x*	X
Land East of Berinsfield Garden Village	x	X
Land South of Grenoble Road	x	X
Land at Northfield	x	x

Pitch and plot provision in the Vale of White Horse		
Site	Net number of pitches	Net number of plots
Land at Dalton Barracks, Shippon	x*	X
Northwest of Valley Park	x	X
Northwest of Grove	x	x

*\* For this consultation, we have identified the approach the policy will take, but have represented the expected need and supply with “X” for now pending finalisation of the evidence base. When we launch our next consultation we will identify the need figure for each district along with the sources of supply for pitches and plots in the policy.*

## **Policy HOU11 - Proposals for/affecting Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople's sites**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy sets out our approach towards the provision of additional pitches and plots to meet the accommodation need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople not set out in Policy HOU10. It will also set out how we will consider proposals for development on existing authorised sites or yards.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

National policy is clear that where there is an identified need, this should be addressed through the allocation of sufficient sites to meet that need, Policy HOU10 will do this. We need this additional policy to set out the criteria we will use to assess planning applications for gypsy, traveller, and travelling showpeople sites and yards. We will also need the policy to set out where it may be appropriate to convert an existing site or yard into another use.

### **Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)**

#### **Option A - Our preferred option**

Policy HOU10 will allocate sufficient pitches/plots to address the identified need for each district, however applications may nevertheless come forward outside of this need. This policy will provide a basis for decision making where proposals come forward on sites not allocated in Policy HOU10 and form the basis for considering proposals that affect existing authorised sites.

The policy will set out the criteria that proposals for new pitches/plots will be considered against, including:

- location
- impacts of development on amenity, character etc.
- management arrangements
- design and appearance.

The policy will also seek to protect existing authorised sites from being lost unless certain criteria are satisfied.

## Why we prefer Option A

Option A is in line with our statutory duty to consider, and plan for, the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The Oxfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) will identify each district's needs for new pitches and plots arising during the plan period. Sufficient pitches/plots will be allocated to meet this need through Policy HOU10; however, we may receive planning applications for other sites during the plan period, and we require a policy basis for considering those proposals.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople have different accommodation needs that the settled community. Our preferred approach recognises these differences and sets out criteria for consideration that are specific to this form of development which proposals will need to demonstrate to gain support.

Through our preferred approach we will also resist where appropriate the loss of existing authorised sites. The policy will set out criteria for consideration when proposals affect an existing authorised site and when the loss of any pitches/plots may be supported. Without this policy our existing supply of suitable pitches/plots could be lost resulting in an under supply of pitches/plots despite the Joint Local Plan allocating additional sites for this use.

### **Option B - alternative:**

Policy HOU10 will allocate sufficient pitches/plots to address the identified need for each district, however applications may nevertheless come forward outside of this need. Where proposals for pitches/plots come forward outside of sites allocated in Policy HOU10 they will be considered against the general housing policies in the plan. Additionally, no specific policy will be in place to guard against the potential loss of existing sites or yards.

We do not think this option is appropriate as it would not identify a specific set of criteria for the consideration of proposals for pitches or plots. In doing so it would fail to recognise the difference between the delivery of bricks and mortar housing and accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Additionally, if a policy was not in place that sought to retain the existing level of provision on authorised sites these sites could be lost resulting in the need to find additional provision elsewhere in the districts.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### Policy HOU11 - Proposals for / Affecting Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople's sites

- 1) Additional proposals for pitches / plots for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople on land not identified under Policy HOU10, will be permitted where:
  - a) the proposed development is in an appropriate location (this criterion will be developed for the next consultation);
  - b) there would be no adverse impact on the amenity of future occupiers or existing neighbouring uses;
  - c) the scale and type of development is appropriate to its location considering character, local services, and facilities;
  - d) the site can be provided with safe electricity, drinking water, sewage treatment and waste disposal facilities;
  - e) arrangements are put in place to ensure the proper management of the site to seek to ensure community cohesion between the settled and traveller communities; and
  - f) there is clear demarcation of the site and pitch/plot boundaries using appropriate boundary treatments and landscaping which is characteristic of the local context pitches / plots do not extend to the site boundaries
  
- 2) Proposals that result in the loss of an authorised and permanent pitches or plots for residential use by Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will not be permitted unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that:
  - a) the site is no longer suitable for such use and equivalent or more alternative provision is made for pitches / plots on a site of equal or better quality with equal access to services. Alternative sites will be provided through planning conditions and legal obligations; or
  - b) there is no need for Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople pitches in the district.

## **Policy HOU12 - Rural and First Homes exception sites**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy sets out our approach to small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity to address the needs of local communities where sites would not normally be used for housing.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Like our urban areas, our rural areas communities also require access to affordable housing. The majority of affordable housing in the districts will be delivered under Policy HOU3 as a proportion of a mixed tenure development. However, in rural areas this approach may not be enough. In smaller communities, planning policies restrict significant new development and that means there are few schemes large enough to be over the threshold for us to require developers to provide affordable housing. A lack of affordable housing in rural areas means younger people particularly are often unable to access housing, resulting in the population of some villages aging and a risk of decline of rural service provision including schools, local shops, facilities and bus services.

National policy supports the development of affordable housing in locations where housing would not normally be supported, where it addresses an identified local need. These types of sites are called 'exception sites' and can either be 'rural' or 'First Homes' exception sites. A First Homes exception site is an exception site that delivers primarily first homes<sup>40</sup>. Exception sites are intended to be for affordable housing, however some proposals can include market housing, at the councils' discretion, to ensure the financial viability of the development. While national policy provides the framework for these sites to come forward, our plan can contain policies to provide further locally distinctive guidance. Given the rural nature of our districts, we intend to develop a policy that supports exception sites.

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<sup>40</sup> See Policy HOU3 for more information on First Homes



## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### Option A - Our preferred option

To expand on national policy and guidance, allowing affordable housing to come forward in areas where housing development would otherwise be restricted. Doing so would allow the policy to define the circumstances where the councils would support such affordable housing schemes, including:

- location within or adjoining settlements
- accessibility
- scale.

The policy will also set out the circumstances where it might be appropriate to include market housing as part of the development, to ensure the affordable housing can be viably delivered.

### Why we prefer Option A

We prefer Option A as it balances the need for affordable housing in rural areas with their ability to support sustainable development in accordance with the proposed spatial strategy.

National policy and guidance on 'rural' and 'First Homes' exception sites provide a high-level framework to enable these types of sites to come forward. This includes guidance on the types of locations where proposal would be unacceptable, the scale of development, types of homes that are expected to be delivered including when market housing may be appropriate, and how an applicant can demonstrate the need for such a proposal.

Our preferred option is to build on the national framework and provide clear local policy criteria that reflect local circumstances. This approach will assist landowners, parish councils, community groups and developers in identifying suitable sites and the need for such schemes locally, it will also form the basis for decision making and provide more certainty in the process.

### **Option B - Alternative**

To take a more restrictive approach to defining suitable locations where rural exceptions sites and First Homes exceptions sites would be allowed. This may include:

- linking the policy to the settlement hierarchy
- restricting schemes coming forward on land within specific planning designations such as Green Belt or within the National Landscape (formerly AONB).

This is not our preferred option as exception sites by their very nature are exception to normal development plan policy, in direct recognition of the affordable housing challenges faced by rural communities. We do not think it is appropriate to identify a more prescriptive approach to rural exception sites given the scale of the need for affordable housing in the plan area.

### **Option C - Alternative**

Do not include a specific policy on exception sites, instead proposals will be assessed against criteria set out in national policy and guidance.

The alternative of 'do nothing' and make decisions based on national policy and guidance is not considered to be appropriate as it would not provide a policy that reflects local circumstances, provide the clear guidance to assist in identifying suitable sites or provide the criteria to assess proposals locally. This approach would not provide the certainty needed to support sites coming forward or ensure decision making is carried out in a consistent manner across the plan area. Additionally, if national policy on exception sites is changed or removed this may further limit opportunities for this type of site to come forward. Ultimately a 'do nothing' approach may result in fewer exceptions sites coming forward or sites being permissioned that may be less suitable than if we had set more locally specific criteria.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### Policy HOU12 - Rural and First Homes exception sites

- 1) The councils will grant planning permission for affordable housing proposals on rural exception sites where:
  - a) they meet a clearly established local need identified through a robust housing needs assessment in accordance with a methodology agreed with the district council;
  - b) at least 75% of the site is brought forward as affordable housing;
  - c) it is located within a settlement\* or if it is in the countryside, it is adjacent to an existing settlement\*;
  - d) they are proportionate in scale to the settlement they are within or adjacent, not exceeding:
    - i. 5% of the number of dwellings in the existing settlement, and
    - ii. 1 hectare in size;
  - e) there are satisfactory arrangements to ensure that the benefits of affordable housing remain in perpetuity; and
  - f) they do not form an isolated development and have access to local services and facilities.
  
- 2) Proposals for First Homes exception sites will be permitted where:

- a) at least 75% of the homes on site are First Homes;
  - b) they meet a clearly established local need identified through a robust housing needs assessment in accordance with a methodology agreed with the council;
  - c) there are satisfactory arrangements to ensure that the benefits of affordable housing remain in perpetuity and that the dwellings remain available for local people;
  - d) they are proportionate in scale to the settlement, not exceeding:
    - i. 5% of the number of dwellings in the existing settlement, and
    - ii. 1 hectare in size;
  - e) they do not form an isolated development and have access to local services and facilities; and
  - f) is located outside designated rural areas, the Green Belt and National Landscape.
- 3) Where robust evidence establishes that viability issues would prevent the delivery of an exception site either First Homes or Rural which is 100% affordable, the minimum level of market housing required to make the development viable will be favourably considered where it would ensure the provision of additional affordable housing to meet local needs. Where market housing is provided it should be indistinguishable in appearance and be integrated into the site and not exceed a maximum of 25% of the units permitted.

*\* including settlements not listed in the settlement hierarchy (SP2)*

## Policy HOU13 - Community-led housing development

### What will this policy do?

This policy sets out our approach towards supporting community-led housing developments to come forward, to give local communities a greater say on how their local area is shaped.

### Why is this policy needed?

Community-led housing gives local people a leading role in addressing the need for housing in their area. Local communities can come together to plan, design and often manage their own developments, with the aim of creating homes that are designed to meet the specific housing needs of the people locally.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines community-led developments as:

*“A development instigated and taken forward by a not-for-profit organisation set up and run primarily for the purpose of meeting the housing needs of its members and the wider local community, rather than being a primarily commercial enterprise. The organisation is created, managed and democratically controlled by its members. It may take any one of various legal forms including a community land trust, housing co-operative and community benefit society. Membership of the organisation is open to all beneficiaries and prospective beneficiaries of that organisation. The organisation should own, manage or steward the homes in a manner consistent with its purpose, for example through a mutually supported arrangement with a Registered Provider of Social Housing. The benefits of the development to the specified community should be clearly defined and consideration given to how these benefits can be protected over time, including in the event of the organisation being wound up”.*<sup>41</sup>

Having a policy on community-led housing will give communities a mechanism for shaping the future of their areas. This policy will support community-led housing to come forward, community-led housing comes in many different forms, there is no standard model. Community led housing could be delivered as a mixed market and affordable housing scheme, solely affordable or designed to meet the needs of specific groups within the community. It could also involve more innovative delivery methods including self and custom housebuilding or propose alternative housing models like cohousing that focus on creating a community by providing a mix

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<sup>41</sup> NPPF, December 2023, Glossary “Community Led Developments”

of private dwellings and shared facilities/community spaces. This policy is needed to set out what proposals for such developments will need to demonstrate to receive planning permission.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred:

To identify in principle support for community-led housing proposals, setting out the circumstances where we will grant planning permission for such developments.

### Why we prefer Option A

Option A is our preferred option as we wish to champion and empower local communities to take an active role in helping to shape their communities. We already strongly support communities who wish to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans, which have been very successful with a high take-up rate.

Local communities are often best placed to know and understand the issues they face whether that's housing related or to do with the provision of services and facilities community/leisure or others. Policy Option A provides them with a tool to identify specific sites for community-led developments without needing to prepare a full Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The policy is to address locally identified needs and issues therefore we do not consider it appropriate to dictate what is needed and where it is needed, instead the policy provides support for proposal where certain key principles are met. It will be for the local communities themselves to shape proposals and ultimately support them.

Our preferred approach to community-led housing/development will function in a similar way to our exception site policy (Policy HOU12). The three distinguishing features being:

1. development will not be restricted to affordable housing (although where housing is delivered it will be expected to comply with policies H3 and H8);
2. the proposals must demonstrably include community involvement in their design and ongoing maintenance, and be supported by the local community; and

3. the benefits to the local community are clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Do not write a planning policy for community-led housing developments and assess proposals for such applications against national planning policies, and other relevant policies in the plan, for example Self and Custom-Build housing or rural exception sites.

This is not our preferred option as we wish to empower communities to take an active role in shaping the future of their communities and this best done through a specific policy on community led housing which set out the framework for these types of proposals to come forward.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy HOU13 - Community-led housing development**

- 1) The councils will grant planning permission for community-led housing where:
  - a) it is located within a settlement\* or if it is in the countryside, it is adjacent to an existing settlement\*;
  - b) it is proportionate in scale to the settlement they are adjacent or within, not exceeding:
    - i) 5% of the number of dwellings in the existing settlement; and
    - ii) 1 hectare in size; and
  - c) they do not form an isolated development and have access to local services and facilities.

2) Proposals for community led housing must also demonstrate that:

- a) the local community has been meaningfully engaged with, and involved in preparing the proposal, and there is a strong level of support for it;
- b) the proposed development will be well managed and financially viable;
- c) there are benefits to the local community, with satisfactory arrangements to ensure that the benefits are clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity; and
- d) they provide sufficient affordable housing in accordance with Policy HOU3 for proposals involving a net gain of 10 or more homes, or 5 or more in National Landscapes (formerly AONBs).

*\* including settlements not listed in the settlement hierarchy (Policy SP2)*



## **Policy HOU14 - Build to Rent proposals**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy sets out our approach towards proposals for Build to Rent which is a specific tenure type of development identified in national policy. The policy will be used to determine planning applications for Build to Rent developments.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Build to rent is a type of property within the private rented sector. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) glossary explains that:

Build to Rent: Purpose built housing that is typically 100% rented out. It can form part of a wider multi-tenure development comprising either flats or houses but should be on the same site and/or contiguous with the main development. Schemes will usually offer longer tenancy agreements of three years or more and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises Local Authorities as part of the plan making process to produce a housing need assessment to take into account the need for a range of housing types and tenures in their area including provisions for those who wish to rent. As set out earlier in this chapter, we have commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to prepare a housing needs assessment for the plan. Stage 2 of the assessment will report the need for Build to Rent developments in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse.

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms that such developments should, as a benchmark, provide 20% affordable housing contribution in the form of “affordable private rent”. This requires a minimum rent discount of 20% relative to local rental markets. However, local planning authorities can identify a different quantum of affordable housing from these sites. This is likely to be the case in our area as affordable housing contributions are already higher than 20% in our current local plans, with this new joint local plan proposing an increase in this percentage. Our evidence base, including viability testing, will identify a final affordable housing contribution for Build to Rent.

We need a policy to ensure that Build to Rent developments in our district provide an appropriate amount of affordable housing, and that the applicant has a plan for the long-term maintenance and stewardship of the proposal.

Our Stage 2 report from ORS will identify the appropriate bedroom mix and affordable housing contributions that Build to Rent proposals should provide. For this consultation, we have identified the approach the policy will take, but have represented the expected contributions with “X%” for now pending finalisation of the evidence base. When we launch our next consultation we will provide the required amounts in the policy.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Our preferred option

Set out criteria that proposals for build to rent applications must satisfy in order to benefit from policy support, including minimum rental periods, claw back mechanism, management and tenancy agreements and appropriate locations.

#### Why we prefer Option A

We prefer Option A as it allows us to identify appropriate local criteria for assessing build to rent developments in the plan area. We can set appropriate standards for affordable housing and bedroom mix to ensure build to rent developments respond to local needs.

#### Option B - Alternative

Do not have a policy on build to rent and leave it to the market to decide where and how to bring forward these developments. Under this option, we would assess applications for Build to Rent developments in accordance with other relevant housing policies, national policy and guidance.

This is not our preferred option as it would take away our ability to set locally specific requirement to manage where development can come forward and the form it takes.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### Policy HOU14 - Build to Rent proposals

1) Planning permission will be granted for Build to Rent developments where:

- a) It is in a location where residential development is supported by the settlement hierarchy (Policy SP2)
- b) It is delivered in accordance with an agreed management plan to include longer term tenancy and nomination arrangements
- c) it addresses the following bedroom mix:

i) Within South Oxfordshire:

	<b>Affordable market rent</b>	<b>Market housing</b>
1 bedroom	X%*	X%
2 bedrooms	X%	X%
3 bedrooms	X%	X%
4+ bedrooms	X%	X%

ii) Within the Vale of White Horse:

	<b>Affordable market rent</b>	<b>Market housing</b>
1 bedroom	X%*	X%
2 bedrooms	X%	X%
3 bedrooms	X%	X%
4+ bedrooms	X%	X%

d) It provides the following on-site affordable housing:

District	Percentage of units to be affordable market rent
South Oxfordshire	X%*
Vale of White Horse	X%

2) Where the applicant can demonstrate that the level of affordable housing being sought would be unviable, the councils may consider alternative tenure mixes and levels of affordable housing would be appropriate. Any departure from the tenure mix or percentage of affordable housing to be delivered will need to be supported by a viability assessment.

*\*For this consultation, we have identified the approach the policy will take, but have represented the expected contributions with “X%” for now pending finalisation of the evidence base. When we launch our next consultation we will provide the required amounts in the policy.*

## **Policy HOU15 - Houses in Multiple Occupation**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will set out criteria for determining proposals for converting houses to large Houses in Multiple Occupation (C3 to Sui Generis).

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) are a type of shared housing accommodation often associated with the private rented sector. HMO can provide a more affordable option for those who cannot afford to rent by themselves and are an important part of the overall housing stock. However, high concentrations of HMO can lead to substandard living conditions, as well as impacting on neighbours' amenity through increased parking pressures and bin storage. Where a lot of properties in an area are converted to HMO this can also result in a loss of family sized homes, and cumulatively, can change the character of an area. We tend to see HMO in parts of the districts adjoining Oxford, and in locations like Abingdon-on-Thames and Didcot.

Under national planning legislation, owners have permitted development rights to convert a property from a C3 use class building (a house) to C4 (a small HMO of 6 occupants or fewer) without planning permission. However, planning permission is required to convert a C3 house or C4 small HMO to a large HMO occupied by 7 or more people, which are in their own distinct planning use class known as 'sui generis'. This policy would therefore apply for applications for large HMOs.

### **Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)**

#### **Option A - Our preferred option**

Our preferred option is to develop a policy that can be used to determine whether applications for the creation of large HMO are acceptable. This will include restricting the number of large HMO in any particular area.

### **Why we prefer Option A**

Having a planning policy for the creation of large HMO will allow us to consider their specific impacts when assessing planning applications for their creation. If we do not have such a policy, it will be harder for the council to identify these issues when

determining planning applications. Even without a planning policy on this topic, HMO would still be able to be created in our district because smaller HMO generally sit outside planning controls. Restricting the number of large HMO in any one area will protect against HMO dominating the housing stock. Oxford City Council has introduced controls like this (and more) which means that buy to let owners may increasingly look to edge of Oxford locations for buying properties to create large HMO.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Consider the removal of permitted development rights (through an Article 4 Direction) in certain locations to allow the councils to consider conversion from houses to small HMOs through the planning application process.

Article 4 Directions need robust evidence and justification to remove people's permitted development rights, and they must apply to the smallest geographical area possible.

HMO with 5 or more occupants need a license from the council, and we keep a register of all HMO licenses granted in the districts. There are 69 HMO on the Vale of White Horse register, of which 17 are licensed for 7 or more occupants.

There are 55 HMO on the South Oxfordshire register of which 17 are licensed for 7 or more occupants.

We don't think such a restrictive policy would be appropriate at this stage, as we do not currently have the evidence to demonstrate that such a restrictive policy would be justified.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy HOU15 - Houses in Multiple Occupation**

- 1) The creation of a large House in Multiple Occupation (7 or more residents) (sui generis use class) will be permitted provided that the development:
  - a) would not harm the character of the area;
  - b) would not harm the amenity of the occupants of nearby properties;
  - c) is appropriate in terms of the size of the property and the proposed internal layout, access, private amenity space, bin storage and cycle and car parking provision; and
  - d) would not bring the proportion of large HMOs in a street to more than 20% of homes in 100 metres of street frontage measured in any direction from the property.

## Policy HOU16 - Residential extensions and annexes

### What will this policy do?

Planning permission is not always required for house extensions. Many extensions can be carried out under permitted development rights, but where it is needed, the following policy will apply. This policy also covers residential annexes that are attached to, or within the curtilage of, an existing house.

### Why is this policy needed?

Extensions to dwellings can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of a dwelling itself and the street or area in which it is set. A well-designed extension can enhance the appearance and value of a property, whereas an unsympathetic extension can have a harmful impact, create problems for neighbouring residents, and affect the overall character of the area.

This policy aims to achieve high-quality extensions to dwellings that respond to the needs of the occupants in a way that is sensitive to the character and appearance of the original dwelling and street scene.

Extensions present an opportunity to improve insulation and heating systems in a property or incorporate water saving devices. This can increase the sustainability of a home and lower its carbon footprint whilst reducing the cost of heating a home.

Residential annexes within the curtilage of existing dwellings can help to meet the needs of families, such as providing ancillary accommodation to support older or disabled relatives. These types of proposals will likely be subject to a condition restricting their use to ancillary accommodation in order to prevent annexes being turned into separate new dwellings.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Our preferred option

Our preferred option is to have a policy that sets out criteria for residential extensions and annexes.

### Why we prefer Option A

This is a continuation of our current policy approach and allows us to consider the impacts on these types of proposal.



### **Option B - Alternative**

Don't have a policy on householder extensions, instead relying on the councils' Joint Design Guide to inform decisions on these types of applications. This option is not preferred because it would not allow sufficient consideration to be given to proposals.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy HOU16 - Residential extensions and annexes**

- 1) Extensions to dwellings, or the erection and extension of ancillary buildings within the curtilage of a dwelling, will be permitted where:
  - a) the size, scale, location and design of the extension or ancillary building is subordinate to the original dwelling, and appropriate to the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
  - b) it would not result in an overdevelopment of the plot;
  - c) within the Green Belt, and within the countryside\*, the extension or the alteration of a building would be no greater than 40 percent of the volume of the original dwelling\*\*;
  - d) adequate and satisfactory parking is provided. Development should have regard to the Oxfordshire County Council parking standards, unless specific evidence is provided to justify otherwise;
  - e) there would be no demonstrable harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents; and
  - f) sufficient amenity areas are provided for the extended dwelling.

2) Proposals for detached or attached residential annexes will be permitted provided that:

- a) it has been demonstrated there is a strong functional relationship between the existing dwelling and the proposed annex;
- b) it would not constitute the creation of a separate, independent dwelling;
- c) the annex is within the curtilage of the existing dwelling;
- d) the size, scale, location and design of the annex is appropriate and subordinate to the existing dwelling. Within the Green Belt, and within the countryside, the annex would be no greater than 40 percent of the volume of the original dwelling;
- e) it is appropriate in size to meet its stated purpose;
- f) there would be no demonstrable harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents;
- g) sufficient amenity areas are provided for the existing dwelling;
- h) adequate and safe access is achieved; and
- i) the design and siting of the annex is capable of being reasonably integrated with the function of the original dwelling once the need for it has ceased, without creating an independent dwelling unit in the future.

3) Development should have regard to the Joint Design Guide.

\* Outside tier 1-4 settlements

\*\* '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.

## Policy HOU17 - Rural workers' dwellings

### What will this policy do?

This policy sets out our approach to assessing planning applications for rural workers' dwellings located in areas where we would not normally support residential development.

### Why is this policy needed?

We wish to support the rural economy and sustainable land-based businesses. In doing so we recognise that the nature of certain rural enterprises and their operational needs require a different approach to the delivery of housing and will support rural workers' dwellings in the countryside where certain criteria are met.

While national policy avoids the development of isolated homes in the countryside, it provides exceptions to this, including where there is an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside. The government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) expands on this, identifying what we should consider in defining a rural workers' dwelling. These include the need for a worker to live at or in close proximity to their place of work, the viability of the rural enterprise, the impact on the business of not providing the home, whether the need could be met through other ways, and whether the council should grant a temporary planning permission (instead of a permanent one).

We need this policy to provide more detail on the national criteria and provide a local context to the policy to ensure an appropriate balance is struck between the protection of the countryside and supporting a prosperous rural economy.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### **Option A - Our preferred option**

Provide a locally specific policy to assess proposals for rural workers' dwellings in the countryside that builds on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and PPG.

## Why we prefer Option A

Option A is our preferred option as it allows us to ensure an appropriate balance is struck between protecting the countryside and supporting a sustainable rural economy.

Our preferred option identifies how we will consider applications for rural workers' dwellings, demonstrating how we apply national policy at a local level. Applications will need to demonstrate:

- 1) the need for the dwelling(s);
- 2) why the dwelling(s) can't be provided in locations where our spatial strategy otherwise supports residential development;
- 3) that providing the dwelling(s) on site is essential for the continued viability of the associated business;
- 4) that the business the dwelling is supporting is viable in the long term;
- 5) whether the need can be met through appropriate improvements to existing accommodation on site; and
- 6) in the case of new enterprises, determining whether it is appropriate to grant permission for a temporary dwelling for a trial period.

By having our own policy, we can also take account the potential impact the development may have on landscape, character and any other relevant considerations. It also allows us to ensure any permission that is granted is appropriately conditioned to restrict occupancy to a business and remove permitted development rights.

We consider not having such a policy to be inappropriate as we would be reliant on national policy and guidance without local context or detail. It may also be changed or withdrawn over time which would affect our ability to properly assess applications.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Set locational specific criteria to limit rural workers' dwellings in higher sensitivity areas, for example restrict this form of development within the National Landscape (formerly AONB) and/or Green Belt. This would be contrary to national policy and may have a detrimental effect on the vitality of our rural communities as it would limit the ability of rural enterprise in those areas to meet their operational needs.

### **Option C - Alternative**

Do not include a locally specific policy to assess proposals for rural workers' dwellings in the open countryside instead rely on national policy and guidance to determine applications.

This is not our preferred option as it would take away our ability to set out locally specific requirements and standards.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy HOU17 - Rural workers' dwellings**

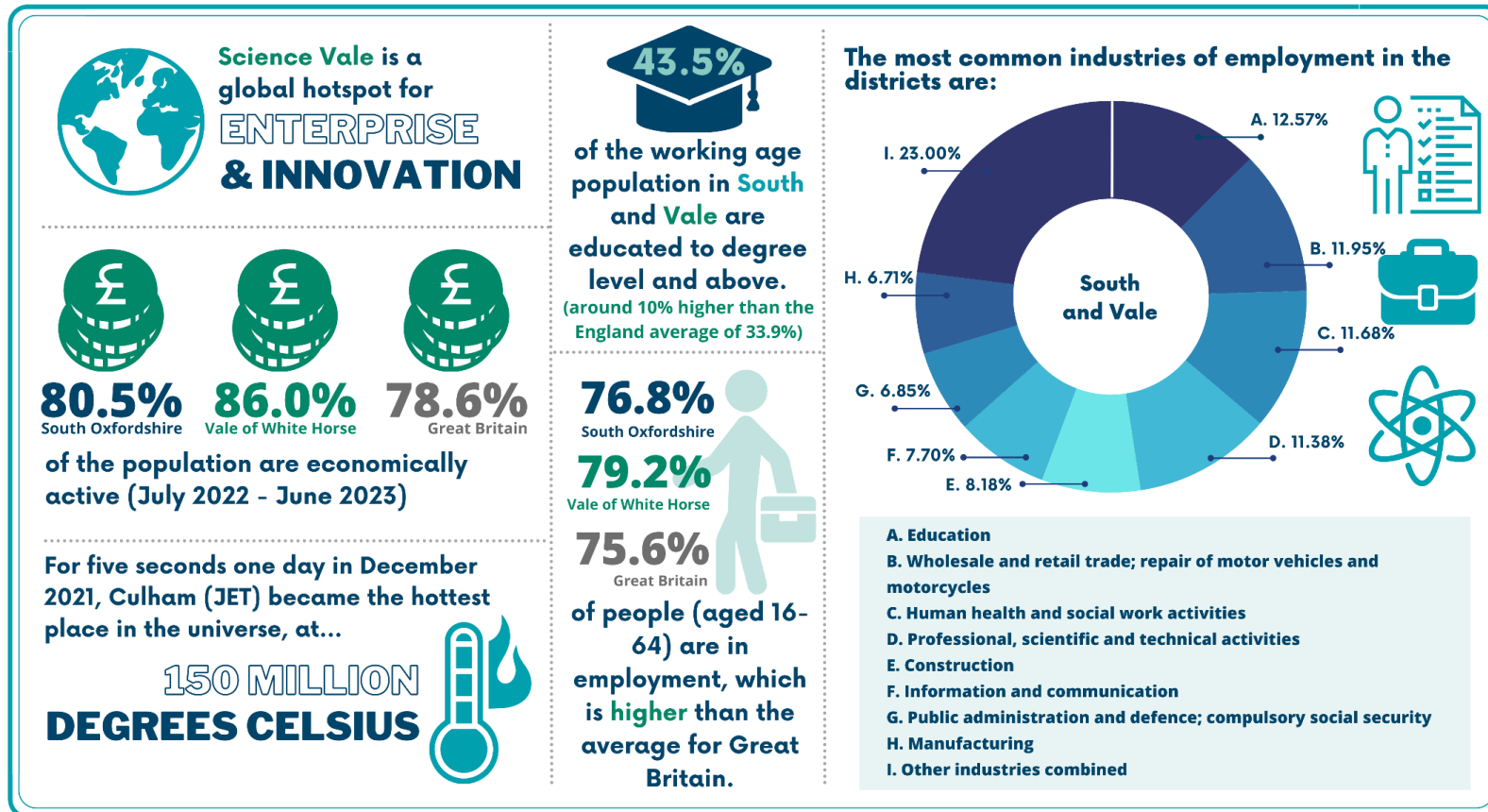
- 1) Applications for rural workers' dwellings within the countryside will be permitted where:
  - a) the applicant has demonstrated that there is a need for a rural worker to live at, or in close proximity to their place of work in order to be readily available at all times to enable the effective, safe and viable operation of the rural enterprise;
  - b) the applicant has demonstrated that the rural enterprise is economically and environmentally sustainable and is likely to remain financially viable for the foreseeable future;
  - c) the number of properties provided is proportional to the needs of the rural enterprise; and
  - d) the proposed dwelling respects the landscape, rural character and dark skies.
- 2) If a rural workers' dwelling is essential to support a new rural enterprise that has been operating for less than 12 months, planning permission will only be provided for the first three years for temporary structures such as a caravan, a low-impact wooden structure, or other temporary accommodation which can easily be dismantled or removed.

- 3) Where workers' accommodation already exists on a site, the applicant will need to demonstrate why it is not appropriate or possible to improve this to meet the newly arising need.
- 4) If structures are present on the site that can be upgraded and adapted to meet the need, these should be developed in preference to the erection of new buildings. Where this is not possible, the applicant will need to demonstrate why the existing structures cannot accommodate this need.
- 5) Planning permission will be subject to an appropriate occupancy condition, restricting its occupation to households where at least one person is directly employed on a permanent full-time basis by the associated rural enterprise.
- 6) Permitted development rights allowing extensions to properties will be removed.

## 7. Jobs and Tourism

### Introduction

Here are some facts and figures that help set the scene for this chapter.



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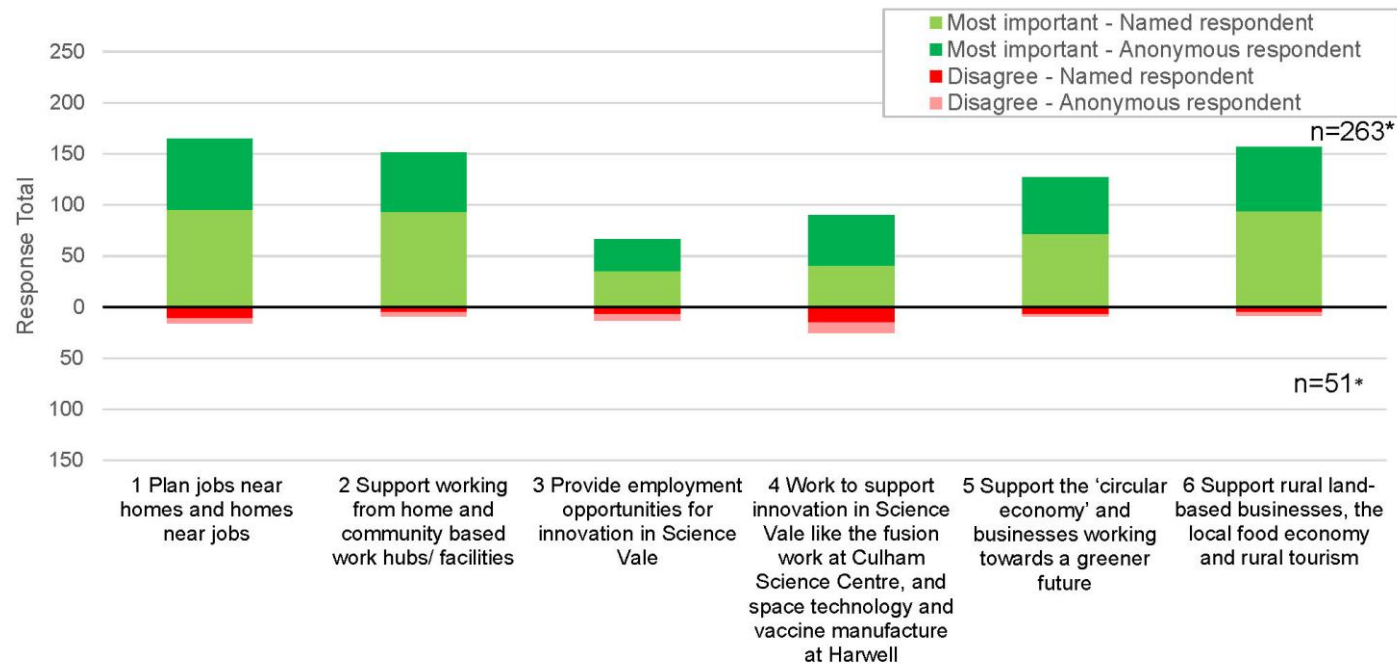
## You told us

In response to our Issues Consultation, you told us that:

- planning jobs near homes and homes near jobs;
- supporting working from home and community-based work hubs/ facilities; and
- supporting rural land-based businesses, the local food economy and rural tourism

were important to you.

We have considered all feedback when developing our policy options, selecting our preferred option and proposed policy wording, which are presented in this chapter.



\*n = the number of times this question was answered (combining named responses and anonymous responses)

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## **Policy JT1 - Meeting employment needs**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will set out how we will meet our needs for employment land over the plan period.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local plans should set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies. The NPPF also states that planning policies should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

Supporting the economy is a key element of delivering sustainable development, economic growth and prosperity. Our districts have strong local economies, and are home to some regionally, nationally and globally important employment areas, including Culham Science Centre for fusion energy, robotics and autonomous systems; Milton Park/Didcot Garden Town for life sciences and creative industries and Harwell Campus for space, health and energy. The area in our districts where these significant employment parks are located is known as “Science Vale”. It spans the Wantage/Grove area of the Vale of White Horse, across Harwell Campus and Milton Park through to Culham, Didcot and Berinsfield in South Oxfordshire.



The Oxfordshire Strategic Vision states that by 2050 Oxfordshire will become a “globally competitive economy which is sustainable, diverse and inclusive, generating high-quality, productive and knowledge-based employment for our communities”. We are well placed to achieve this in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse; we are already home to world leading and globally important industries and these sectors are growing. By planning positively, we can support our flourishing local economies.

Away from the large business and science parks, our market towns and villages support many jobs and small and medium sized businesses (known as SMEs). Micro-businesses (defined as companies employing up to nine employees) represent the vast majority of all businesses in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (90 per cent and 88 per cent respectively). Many of these businesses are likely to be run from home and so do not generate a high need for employment land. Small (between 10-49 employees) and medium (between 50-249 employees) businesses account for nine per cent of businesses in South Oxfordshire and 11 per cent in Vale of White Horse. There are a total of 25 large businesses employing over 250 people in South Oxfordshire and 40 such businesses in the Vale of White Horse. Providing job opportunities in our towns and villages means that people don't have to travel far for work, reducing car journeys and commuting times. It is therefore important to plan for a range of different sizes and types of employment space to meet the needs of all of our businesses and support the foundational economy. The foundational economy is the part of the economy that provides services and goods to meet people's basic and everyday needs (such as care and health services, food, energy, housing, and retail).

We have commissioned consultants to carry out an Employment Land Needs Assessment (ELNA), to provide an evidence base on the need for employment land in our districts. This assessment updates previous Employment Land Reviews that were prepared for both councils to support the current local plans.

The ELNA looks at three different forecasting scenarios (labour demand, past take-up and labour supply) to understand the potential range of future employment needs for office uses and industrial uses.

We can plan for the employment growth forecast under any of these three scenarios or take a hybrid approach by selecting one forecast for office uses and one for industrial uses. Based on the assessment of employment land in the districts, which includes assessing the property market, the supply of employment land and socio-economic characteristics of the districts, the ELNA recommends taking a hybrid approach and using the labour demand scenario for offices uses and the past take-up scenario for industrial uses.

This results in a requirement for 25.8 hectares of employment land in South Oxfordshire and 113.2 hectares in the Vale of White Horse. Our monitoring data shows that pipeline developments (sites that have planning permission for employment uses but haven't been built yet) meet a substantial amount of this requirement.

There are two Enterprise Zones in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse: "Science Vale Oxford" and the "Didcot Growth Accelerator". Some of our employment sites are located within, or partially within, these Enterprise Zones, such as Harwell Campus, Milton Park and Southmead Industrial Estate. Land that is still to come forward within the Enterprise Zones is treated as being in addition to the forecast requirement. There is still around 77 hectares of employment land to come forward within the Enterprise Zone at Harwell campus, and this explains why the total requirement for the Vale of White Horse is high compared to that for South Oxfordshire. How we have considered land within the Enterprises Zones in terms of working out the employment requirement is set out in the Jobs and Tourism Topic Paper.

Our evidence so far indicates that our requirements can be met on our existing allocations and we don't need to allocate any new sites.

It should be noted that for the market to function efficiently and to allow effectively for churn, choice and flexibility, it will always be necessary for the supply of land and premises to be in excess of projected future demand.

A small part of the allocation at Southmead Industrial Estate is located within an area of flood risk. Employment uses are classed as "less vulnerable", however comprehensive development of the site should be appropriate to the flood risk level.

### **Employment strategy**

Our strategy to address future requirements is to focus on the delivery of our existing employment site allocations, where they remain fit for purpose, as well as allowing the development of existing non-allocated employment sites and supporting the re-use of brownfield sites within our settlements for employment uses. Other elements of our employment strategy include the retention of existing employment sites (covered in Policy JT2), supporting sustainable economic growth in rural areas (covered in Policy JT5), supporting the provision of affordable workspace (covered in Policy JT3), and ensuring that large-scale development brings jobs and training for the local community through the use of Community Employment Plans (covered in Policy JT4).

There are some sites that were allocated in the current local plans to deliver employment land that have either not come forward yet (planning permission has not been granted) or that still have some of their requirement left to deliver (where part of the site has planning permission, but not all of it). Our preferred option is to roll forward these existing allocations with capacity, with

amendments proposed to their capacity to reflect what has been granted permission already. Our evidence to date indicates that we can meet our employment land requirements on these existing sites. These sites are listed in Policy JT1.

In addition to the sites that will meet our requirements, Policy JT1 also “saves” existing employment, or mixed-use, allocations. These are sites where planning permission has been granted but the site has not been completed yet. These sites contribute towards our supply of employment land and will be “saved” to ensure that the overarching policy framework remains in place, to inform any subsequent planning applications on these sites (such as reserved matters applications for outline planning consents).

We also recognise that some neighbourhood plans have made employment allocations to provide local jobs, and these also contribute towards the districts supply of employment land.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Our preferred option is to:

- continue to promote economic development in Science Vale
- direct new employment to our most sustainable locations
- plan for a range of sizes of sites to provide flexibility in the market and to meet the needs of different business, for example SMEs looking for smaller sites
- focus on the delivery of our existing allocated employment sites (where retained) that are still to come forward, or still have capacity for more employment development
- based on using a combination of the labour demand scenario and past take-up scenario, plan for an additional 25.8 hectares of employment land in South Oxfordshire and 113.2 hectares in the Vale over the plan period
- support the development of existing employment sites, to allow them to redevelop and adapt and for churn in the market
- support new employment sites coming forward on brownfield sites within settlements.

## Why we prefer Option A

Option A makes best use of land that is already allocated and responds to floorspace requirements as evidenced through the Employment Land Needs Assessment. It continues to focus jobs and innovation in Science Vale, while responding to our new stronger focus in the plan of reducing the need to travel and recycling brownfield land into new uses. Our preferred scenario is to use the labour supply scenario for office uses and past take-up scenario for industrial uses. The past take-up scenario is an appropriate representation of past performance, local market intelligence and development prospects for industrial uses. Office space is anticipated to grow to the end of the local plan period due to our districts being home to high-quality office environments and a hub for knowledge intensive uses. As such the level of growth anticipated for office uses under the labour demand scenario is a feasible projection in light of local market intelligence and development prospects.

### **Option B –**

The labour demand scenario:

An alternative option is to plan for the level of need identified in the ELNA under the labour demand scenario for both office and industrial uses. This would result in a lower need for industrial uses than the preferred option.

Option B is not preferred because this scenario forecasts a contraction in the supply of industrial uses, which is a considerable divergence from recent market activity and there is limited to no evidence to assume that the trajectory of the last decade will reverse to such an extent that additional land requirements for industrial uses will be negative to 2041.

### **Option C –**

The past-take-up scenario:

An alternative option is to plan for the level of need identified in the ELNA under the past take-up scenario for both office and industrial uses. This would result in a lower level of need for office uses.

Whilst this option also projects a growth in office space needs, Option C is not preferred because the level of office growth forecast under the labour supply scenario is the most appropriate due to our districts being home to high-quality office environments and a hub for knowledge intensive uses, making the labour demand scenario the most appropriate.

#### **Option D –**

The labour supply scenario:

Plan for the level of need identified in the ELNA under this scenario for both office and industrial uses. This would result in a lower level of need for office and industrial uses.

Option D is not preferred because the levels of growth forecast under this scenario do not align with evidence on recent market activity, development prospects and ambitions.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy JT1 - Meeting employment needs**

- 1) During the plan period, provision will be made to meet the following requirements:
  - a) South Oxfordshire requirement: **25.8 hectares** of employment land.
  - b) Vale of White Horse requirement: **113.2 hectares** employment land.

#### **Table JT1.1: Sources of supply**

Source	South Oxfordshire (hectares)	Vale of White Horse (hectares)
--------	------------------------------	--------------------------------

Sites with planning permission (pipeline)	11	63
Allocations in the Joint Local Plan	20	112.4
Allocations in neighbourhood plans	1	13.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>188.6</b>

Allocations in the Joint Local Plan comprise the following sites in Tables JT1.2 and JT1.3, and as shown on the Policies Map.

**Table JT1.2: South Oxfordshire allocations**

<b>Policy reference</b>	<b>Site name</b>	<b>Net amount of employment supply (hectares)</b>
AS11	Culham Science Centre	2.3
AS1	Berinsfield Garden Village	5
AS3	Grenoble Road	10
JT1a	Southmead Industrial Estate	2.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>

**Table JT1.3: Vale of White Horse allocations**

<b>Policy reference</b>	<b>Site name</b>	<b>Net amount of employment supply (hectares)</b>
JT1b	Milton Park	14
JT1c	Grove Technology Park	5.4
AS12	Harwell Campus	93
<b>Total</b>		<b>112.4</b>



The following sites with planning permission allocated in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 or the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 are “saved” and continue to form part of the supply. Their expected contribution to employment land is reflected in the sites with planning permission (pipeline) above. This local plan saves the existing policies in an appendix [to be added at the Draft Plan stage] to assist in the determination of future applications on these sites.

**Table JT1.4: Saved South Oxfordshire allocations**

<b>Policy reference</b>	<b>Site name</b>	<b>Amount of employment allocated by existing policy (hectares)</b>
JT1d	Monument Business Park, Chalgrove	2.25
JT1e	Hithercroft Industrial Estate, Wallingford	1.09

**Table JT1.5: Saved Vale of White Horse allocations**

<b>Policy reference</b>	<b>Site name</b>	<b>Amount of employment allocated by existing policy (hectares)</b>
JT1f	Didcot A	29
JT1g	Abingdon Science Park	0.7
JT1h	South of Park Road, Faringdon	3*

- 2) Proposals for employment development on unallocated sites will be supported within existing employment sites\*\* and on brownfield sites within the built-up area of Tier 1-4 settlements, where the development is of an appropriate scale and complies with other relevant policy considerations. Proposals for employment development elsewhere will not be supported, except as provided for under Policy JT5 - Supporting the rural economy or JT6 - Supporting sustainable tourism and the visitor economy.
- 3) Proposals for new employment development, on both allocated and unallocated sites, should provide for a range of sizes and types of premises, including flexible business space to meet current and future needs. We will support

proposals for premises that are suitable for small and medium sized businesses, including start-up/ incubator businesses, “pop-up” space and grow-on space, where proposals comply with other relevant policy considerations. We will assess the feasibility of proposals to meet the needs of SMEs.

*\* Outline planning permission has been granted incorporating 1500sqm of employment space*

*\*\* Existing employment sites covers all land/sites in existing employment use (within Use Classes E(g)i-iii, B2 and B8)*

## **Policy JT2 - Protecting our employment sites**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will set out our approach to dealing with proposals that affect land and buildings that are in employment use. It will ensure that, where planning permission is needed, existing employment land, as well as land that is allocated for employment in local and neighbourhood plans, is retained for employment use, subject to meeting a set of criteria. It will also set out our approach for ancillary uses on employment sites.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

To make sure that we have enough employment land to meet our needs and provide for the number of jobs needed over the plan period, it is important to retain existing employment space, as well as to protect any sites that we may identify to meet future needs. We do not want to lose existing employment land to speculative applications for other uses, as this could impact on the ability of the districts to meet the needs of businesses and consequently have a knock-on impact on the ambitions and success of the local economy. Protecting our existing sites will help us to grow and promote a balanced economy and local services and will put less pressure on needing to find new employment sites to replace ones that have been lost to other uses.

Changes to the Use Classes Order in September 2020 brought together several previously separate uses into one new use class: E Class. This E Class includes shops, restaurants, cafes, financial and professional services, some leisure uses as well as uses that previously fell under Class B1 (offices, research and development, light industrial uses). This means that planning permission is no longer needed to go from offices (and other types of employment land) to other uses within the same E Class. However, where planning permission is required, this policy will apply.

We also recognise that many uses that do not fall into the traditional definition of employment land can provide valuable and plentiful employment opportunities, particularly in the foundational economy. We will therefore take into account the number of job opportunities created by a proposed use when judging whether it can be considered to be an employment generating use. Where a proposal would involve the loss of employment land or buildings, we will require evidence to show that an employment use is not viable, and that there is no market interest in an employment use on this site. To comply with this requirement and to provide some guidance on how this part of the policy is assessed, we have set out below some criteria that must be met:

- The marketing period must be continuous and consecutive.
- Evidence of use of a reputable local or national agent with a track record of letting commercial space in the area.

- Evidence that full property details and particulars have been made available to enquirers on request.
- Evidence of a visible, well-maintained marketing board, including contact information posted in a prominent location on site in the form for the duration of marketing (subject to advertising consent if required).
- Proof of marketing material on the internet, including popular online property databases and local or specialist channels where appropriate.
- Existing lawful use of the advertised premises should be included in the marketing materials.
- Continuous marketing over at least 12 months from when the advertising board is erected, and the property is advertised online (i.e. not simply from when agents were appointed) to the date of the submission of the planning application.
- Evidence that the advertised rent / sales price is reasonable, reflecting market rates in the local area and the condition of the property; evidence should include a comparison to similar regional properties.
- Evidence from three independent agents to confirm the advertised price is reasonable.
- Evidence that lease terms are attractive and relevant to the current market including local comparisons.
- A commentary on the number and details of enquiries received, such as the number of viewings and the advertised rent at the time, including any details of why the interest was not pursued and other pertinent feedback.
- Details of any offers received and why a sale / letting did not complete (inc. reasons for refusal).
- Where the property is not vacant, we will require evidence that the existing tenant intends to move out.

Sufficient detailed information must be submitted alongside any planning application to demonstrate compliance with the policy. Evidence must be recent, reliable and consistent.

### **Ancillary Uses**

Providing facilities ancillary to the main business uses on employment sites can help to make them more attractive to incoming businesses and improves the quality of the working environment for employees. Ancillary facilities also help employment sites to develop sustainably by reducing the need for traffic movements. Examples of ancillary uses are childcare nurseries, convenience

shops to serve the employment site, hairdressers, gyms and cafes. The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 already has a policy that supports ancillary on employment sites, and we would like to continue with this approach across both districts.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Our preferred option is to:

- support the retention of employment sites (existing and allocated) (including those sites/areas that form part of a wider allocation) from loss to other non-employment uses
- have a protective policy and a clear set of criteria to determine planning applications against
- provide guidance on the level of marketing evidence that is needed to satisfy the policy requirement
- maximise opportunities for incorporating employment uses in any mixed-use schemes
- support proposals that would increase the amount and quality of existing employment sites through redevelopment and intensification
- allow ancillary uses on employment sites where they would be to serve people working on the site and would not compromise the vitality and viability of nearby settlements.

#### Why we prefer Option A

We prefer Option A because it will help to deliver the strategy of bringing forward existing allocated sites and will protect existing sites from being lost to other uses, helping to support the local economy and ensuring a sufficient supply of employment land. It will also help existing employment sites to invest and improve their premises and allow some ancillary uses where these will help create a more attractive workplace.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Have a more flexible policy that allows the loss of some employment sites to certain uses (such as housing) by having fewer criteria to meet.

This is not our preferred option as it could lead to a loss of employment space, and result in demand outstripping supply leading to businesses struggling to find suitable premises. If our supply of employment land is lost through applications to change the use, we would need to find new sites to replace what is lost.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy JT2 - Protecting our employment sites**

1) Where planning permission is required, proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of employment land\* (existing and allocated) to non-employment uses will only be supported where:

- a) the applicants can demonstrate that any employment use is no longer viable; and
- b) it is evidenced that there is no market interest in the site following one year of active and effective marketing\*\*.

2) Where evidence has been submitted that an employment-only use is not viable (on existing and allocated sites), proposals should demonstrate how employment opportunities have been maximised and incorporated into a scheme, where possible.

3) Proposals that improve the stock of existing employment land and premises, either through appropriate intensification of sites or through environmental improvement, carbon reduction measures or renewable energy generation, will be supported.

4) Proposals for ancillary uses on existing employment land will be supported if the following criteria are met:

- a) the proposal is primarily designed to provide for users of the employment site;

- b) the use is ancillary to the main business or employment function of the wider site; and
- c) the use, either alone or combined with other existing or proposed uses, would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of any town, local service centre or village.

*\* Falling within Use Classes E(g)i-iii, B2 and B8.*

*\*\* Guidance on the level of evidence that is needed to satisfy these criteria is provided in the supporting text.*

## **Policy JT3 - Affordable workspace**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy could seek a percentage of new employment floorspace to be provided as “affordable workspace”, offered at below market rate for qualifying businesses.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Our districts are home to many small and medium businesses that contribute to the success and vitality of the local economy. Previous evidence has highlighted the challenges that some businesses have in finding quality space of the right size, in the right location, and at the right price. Having an affordable workspace policy could be a way of securing some employment space for small and micro business and start-ups that need affordable space to set up and grow their businesses.

There could be a benefit of trying to secure some small-scale affordable business units in our towns, as a way to bring underused spaces back into use and support start-ups in more diverse sectors (such as creative and arts), which could contribute to town centre vibrancy and footfall.

We will gather evidence, through our Employment Land Needs Assessment and Viability Assessment to see if there are locations in the districts where an affordable workspace policy is needed and look at the types of developments that could be required to provide an element of affordable workspace, either through direct provision on site or through financial contributions.

### **Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)**

#### **Option A - Preferred**

Our preferred option is to have a policy that requires the provision of affordable workspace at a scale, and in locations where it can be delivered.

We will gather evidence, including viability evidence, to see whether an affordable workspace policy is needed, where it could be bought forward and how it could be implemented.



## Why we prefer Option A

Option A allows us to support small businesses by providing workspace at an affordable (below market) rate. It allows us to investigate how this could operate and whether it can be successfully delivered in our districts.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Have a policy that requires affordable workspace to be provided on site as part of large commercial schemes, over a set threshold. This would be in the form of requiring a certain percentage of floorspace to be provided as affordable. The threshold at which this would apply would be informed by viability evidence. The larger commercial schemes are more likely to come forward on our existing large employment sites, so this may limit the amount to come forward in our settlements.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Have a policy that seeks a financial contribution from larger commercial schemes used to fund the provision of affordable workspace in towns and villages. This would be subject to viability evidence.

### **Option D – Alternative**

Have a policy that focuses the provision of affordable workspace in areas of deprivation or have a policy that focuses provision of affordable workspace in town centres with the highest vacancy rates.

This option would focus provision where it could bring the maximum benefits, but would need sites to be available, and a mechanism for bringing them forward at an affordable rate.

### **Option E - Alternative**

Do not have a policy that requires any affordable workspace provision, either on site or through contributions.

This is our current policy position but we are keen to maximise opportunities to provide affordable workspaces so we will gather evidence to establish the best ways to achieve this.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy JT3 - Affordable workspace**

- 1) Proposals for affordable workspace will be supported within Tier 1- 4 settlements to assist start-up businesses and the community, artisan, creative and arts sectors.
- 2) Proposals for commercial uses are encouraged to include an element of affordable workspace. The council will seek to secure workspace at a rate below market value through either direct provision on larger schemes, or through the collection of financial contributions towards off site provision.

## **Policy JT4 - Community Employment Plans**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will set out the types of proposals that will need a Community Employment Plan (CEP).

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Community Employment Plans can play an important role in making sure that development brings jobs and training for the local community, sharing the benefits and prosperity locally. The council can do this by attaching a planning condition or obligation to a planning permission, requiring it to have a CEP. The measures contained within a CEP seek to mitigate the impacts of development through ensuring local people can better access employment, skills, and training opportunities arising from development. CEPs can also help to ensure that the jobs created by a development are filled by a local labour force with the appropriate skills. CEPs can reduce the need to source employees from outside of the area, reducing the need for longer distance commuting and promoting the principles of a circular economy.

The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) have produced a Developers Handbook for Community Employment Plans (2023) that provides best practice guidance to developers on production of CEPs.

### **Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)**

#### **Option A - Preferred**

Our preferred option is to have a policy requiring CEPs for all residential, commercial, retail or employment development schemes over a certain size (using a threshold of number of homes or amount of floorspace).

### **Why we prefer Option A**

Option A is a continuation of current policy in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 (Part 2). Our preferred option is to extend this policy across both districts.

**Option B - Alternative**

Have policy requiring CEPs but have a lower threshold.

This would increase the number of schemes that would need to provide a CEP, which could increase the number of opportunities for local training and jobs. However, it is easier to secure the benefits of a CEP on larger schemes, where there is more scope for training, apprenticeships and jobs. This is not our preferred option as it is less likely to be deliverable.

**Option C - Alternative**

Have policy requiring CEPs but have a higher threshold for the size of schemes that it should be applied to.

This would reduce the number of schemes that would need a CEP, which may result in fewer opportunities for local jobs and training, therefore this is not our preferred option.

**Option D – Alternative**

Don't require CEPs at all.

This is not our preferred option as it would be a missed opportunity to secure additional benefits from larger schemes in our districts that could benefit the local community. The policy is already working well in Vale of White Horse so it would be a backwards step to lose it.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy JT4 - Community Employment Plans**

- 1) The council will require the submission of a site-specific Community Employment Plan (CEP) for the construction and end-use of all major non-residential schemes (commercial, retail, employment development) over 1000 square metres and all residential schemes of over 500 homes, using a planning condition or legal agreement.
- 2) The CEP must be prepared in partnership with the relevant district council and Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver the agreed CEP. The CEP must cover, but not be limited to:
  - a) opportunities for local supply chain engagement;
  - b) apprenticeships, employment and training initiatives for all ages and abilities;
  - c) training or work experience initiatives for those from disadvantaged groups; and
  - d) social and environmental initiatives.

## **Policy JT5 - Supporting the rural economy**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy sets out our approach to proposals that support the rural economy and covers existing and new rural enterprises, rural diversification and equine development.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

National policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports the need for economic growth in rural areas to create jobs and prosperity. It seeks to support sustainable growth and expansion of businesses in rural areas, including the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. The NPPF also encourages rural diversification as a source of extra income to help rural businesses.

The re-use and adaptation of existing buildings in the countryside has an important role in meeting the needs of rural areas for jobs and sustainable rural enterprise. The re-use of rural buildings can reduce demands for new building in the countryside, avoid leaving an existing building vacant, boost the local economy and provide jobs.

Our districts are home to many land-based rural businesses, producing local food and local wood products. Having sustainable local food producers helps to tackle the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, and provides local employment, and we will support these businesses to grow, as well as encouraging the creation of new sustainable rural enterprises.

Our districts, and the Vale of White Horse in particular, are popular areas for equestrian activities with a number of equestrian related businesses operating here. This policy therefore supports proposals for new equestrian use and related buildings in the countryside, provided they can provide safe access to the premises for horse riders and are appropriate to the landscape and the surrounding environment.

### **Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)**

#### **Option A - Preferred**

Our preferred option is to have a policy that:

- recognises the importance of the rural economy in our districts

- provides a framework for rural businesses to expand and adapt and encourages the creation of new rural enterprises
- provides guidance on how planning applications for equestrian development will be determined

### Why we prefer Option A

Option A provides a policy framework to support the rural economy and rural businesses, whilst also protecting the countryside and ensuring economic growth is sustainable. Our preferred option reflects the features of our local economies.

### Option B – Alternative

Rely on the NPPF to guide appropriate development in rural areas without having a local plan policy.

This is not preferred because it does not highlight the local importance of our rural economies.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### Policy JT5 - Supporting the Rural Economy

- 1) Development that supports the sustainable growth of existing businesses (including the diversification of agricultural or other land-based rural businesses), and the creation of new sustainable land-based or agricultural businesses in the countryside\* will be supported where:
  - a) it respects the landscape character, visual quality, biodiversity and tranquillity of the countryside, particularly within the National Landscapes (formerly AONBs);

- b) it is in keeping with the scale and character of the locality and, where possible, is achieved through the conversion, re-use or extension of existing buildings;
  - c) it has no unacceptable environmental impact from light, noise or air pollution;
  - d) it has minimal impact on local communities, particularly in relation to levels of disturbance from increased traffic movements and vehicle parking;
  - e) it maximises opportunities to access the site by sustainable modes, including via public transport, walking or cycling; and
  - f) it is supported by a business plan demonstrating that it is viable into the future, where such proposals include the erection of new buildings.
- 2) New non-agricultural or non-land-based businesses will not generally be supported in the countryside\* unless covered by Policy JT6 - Sustainable tourism and the visitor economy and JT7 - Overnight visitor accommodation.
- 3) Any proposals for the enclosure of adjoining land as part of the re-use of a building will be an important consideration, especially in terms of potential impact on the landscape.
- 4) Proposals for the keeping, rearing, training and livery of horses on a commercial basis will be permitted where:
- a) the proposed premises will have safe access from the site to public bridleways, gallops or other exercise areas in order to avoid conflict between horses and other public highway users; and
  - b) the proposal does not unacceptably impact upon the landscape character, highways, and the amenity of its neighbours.
- 5) 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, planning permission is unlikely to be granted for the conversion of buildings erected as the result of a temporary permission or under permitted development rights, where they have clearly not been genuinely needed or used for agriculture.

\* *Outside settlements which fall within Tiers 1 to 4 of the settlement hierarchy*



## **Policy JT6 - Supporting sustainable tourism and the visitor economy**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will provide guidance on our approach to supporting the development of sustainable tourism and the local visitor economy in both rural parts of the districts and in our town centres.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Paragraph 88 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) says that planning policies and decisions should enable “sustainable rural tourism and leisure development, which respects the character of the countryside”.

In Chapter 7 of the NPPF there is also policy guidance on ensuring the vitality of town centres including meeting needs for culture and tourism development, hotels and conference facilities.

So there is clear policy support at the national level for promoting sustainable tourism in both rural and town centre locations within our districts. Tourism is also highlighted in the South Oxfordshire Corporate Plan as something that we want to promote in rural parts of the district, as a means of protecting and enhancing our key natural assets, like the River Thames and our National Landscapes (formerly AONBs). Furthermore, in the Vale of White Horse Corporate Plan there is reference to promoting public green spaces and developing new walking and cycling links, both of which can boost the attractiveness of the district to visitors.

Tourism and visitors make an important contribution to the local economy and we recognise that visitors, as well as residents, value and care about the districts. We have recently commissioned research to establish the current scale and distribution of tourist activity and the local visitor economy within South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, underpinned by an understanding of what brings people into our districts in the first place. This research will include high-level analysis of the economic value of tourism within the two districts, as well as an audit of the existing infrastructure/facilities that support our visitor economy. The research will also provide useful insight into the key challenges and opportunities relating to the tourism sector, both generally and in the local context, which the Joint Local Plan could address.

This policy is needed to pull together the research findings and ensure that we can not only facilitate and promote sustainable, high-quality tourism development that maximises the positive impacts that tourism can bring to our local communities, but also carefully balance these against any potential adverse impacts, particularly in sensitive locations such as within the National Landscape.

## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### Option A - Preferred

In advance of receiving our research findings and based on consultation feedback so far on an appropriate approach to supporting our local visitor economy, we envisage that this policy will:

- support and promote sustainable development proposals for visitor attractions and recreation facilities that will make a valuable contribution to growth of the local economy, where there is no adverse impact on the rural landscape, local communities, any historic assets or on the local road network
- where possible, direct new visitor attractions to sustainable locations within existing settlements with good access to public transport and supporting facilities (such as shops, food and drink establishments, public toilets etc) to promote car-free tourism and help boost the vitality and viability of town or village centres
- acknowledge that the attractiveness of the countryside and natural assets in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse are what often bring people to the area and that we have a responsibility to share its attributes more widely and provide greater public access to the countryside
- support small-scale tourist-related development in rural locations that respects the landscape character and visual quality of the countryside, provided identified needs are not already met by existing facilities in rural centres and there are no unacceptable environmental impacts (e.g. from light, noise or air pollution or traffic congestion)
- explore opportunities for creating “dark sky” visitor experiences and promoting eco-tourism in quiet and remote locations in our districts
- support development proposals that improve public access to nature/countryside/walking or cycling routes and trails (including National Cycle Routes and the Strategic Active Travel Network)
- support restoration of the local canal network to bring business opportunities and to attract more visitors to the area

- encourage new tourist-related development proposals to offer environmental or sustainability benefits (for example - by recycling more waste, using renewable energy, sourcing more products and materials from local businesses, creating new habitats for wildlife or undertaking landscape restoration)
- seek to protect against the loss of existing tourist attractions/other tourism-related facilities unless certain criteria are met
- expect new development proposals, particularly in rural locations, to retain and utilise existing buildings, wherever possible
- confirm that any redevelopment of sites/premises should, in the first instance, be considered for alternative tourist uses
- capitalise on the heritage of our market towns and villages and promote culture and heritage-based tourism opportunities
- recognise that new tourism development needs to be sensitively planned, to protect local communities from any adverse impacts, particularly in relation to parking provision and levels of disturbance from increased visitor activity
- support proposals that will improve ancillary facilities that meet the needs of all visitors, particularly families, those with disabilities and small visitor groups
- support necessary development that facilitates the temporary use of land for festivals or community events, subject to appropriate environmental and community safeguards.

### **Why we prefer Option A**

This is our preferred option because it reflects both government policy guidance and feedback from previous consultations and seeks to establish an appropriate policy approach to supporting sustainable, suitably-scaled tourism development in our districts, whilst protecting local communities and sensitive locations from any potential adverse impacts.

### **Alternative Option B**

Taking a much more restrictive approach to new tourism development in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, in order protect our historic town and villages and high-quality countryside from any environmental impacts arising from increased visitor numbers.

This approach is not preferred as it would be contrary to policy guidance in the NPPF and would restrict sustainable growth of the local visitor economy, which in turn would impact on our ability to bring economic benefits to our local communities and fund the protection and enhancement of our key natural assets.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy JT6 – Supporting sustainable tourism and the visitor economy**

- 1) Development proposals for new visitor attractions within existing settlements\* will be supported where they:
  - a) capitalise on the heritage of our market towns and villages and promote culture and heritage-based tourism opportunities, without damaging historic assets or the intrinsic character of the built environment;
  - b) have minimal impact on local communities, particularly in relation to parking provision, traffic flow or levels of disturbance from increased visitor activity;
  - c) have good access to bus, rail or cycle routes, shops, food and drink establishments and other supporting infrastructure (public toilets, seating areas etc); and
  - d) are accessible to all visitors, including families, those with disabilities and small visitor groups.
  
- 2) In locations outside existing settlements\*, new tourist-related development, will be supported which:
  - a) respects the landscape character, visual quality, biodiversity and tranquillity of the countryside, particularly within the National Landscapes;

- b) has no unacceptable environmental impact from light, noise or air pollution or traffic congestion;
  - c) has minimal impact on local communities, particularly in relation to parking provision, traffic flow or levels of disturbance from increased visitor activity; and
  - d) improves access to the countryside by sustainable modes, including via public transport, walking or cycling.
- 3) Subject to compliance with criteria 2(a) to (d) above, development proposals for rural diversification through the promotion of eco-tourism (including “dark sky” visitor experiences) will be supported in more remote locations in our districts.
- 4) New tourist-related development proposals, particularly in the countryside, will be expected to retain and utilise existing buildings, wherever possible. Where proposals include any new buildings, the applicant will need to submit evidence to demonstrate that their future business plan is viable.
- 5) Support will be given to development proposals that improve public access to nature via walking or cycling routes and trails (including the National Trails, National Cycle Routes and the Strategic Active Travel Network), or through restoration of the local canal network or navigable sections of the local river network.
- 6) Where planning permission is required, ancillary development to facilitate the temporary use of land for festivals or community events will be supported, subject to acceptability when assessed against relevant policy criteria (dependent on location).

*\* Those which fall within Tiers 1 to 4 of the settlement hierarchy*

## **Policy JT7 - Overnight visitor accommodation**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will support the provision of different types of overnight visitor accommodation to meet identified local needs, subject to certain criteria being met. It will also explain our approach to assessing proposals which would result in the loss of existing visitor accommodation.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

In order to promote sustainable growth of our local visitor economy, as advocated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), we need to ensure that we can support development proposals that offer opportunities for both leisure and business visitors to stay overnight or longer in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

We have recently commissioned research on our local hotels and overnight accommodation sector, seeking to gain a better understanding of our existing stock of visitor accommodation of all types in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, looking at the range, size, location, quality etc. and where there may be any deficiencies, identified gaps or new opportunities to boost the accommodation offer across the districts. The research will also report on the local situation regarding the use of residential properties as short term lets and whether this has had any adverse impact on the existing stock of homes in our districts.

This policy will reflect the research findings and set out our approach to supporting the provision of new visitor accommodation in sustainable locations and meeting any identified demand for particular types of accommodation in specific locations.

We also have an opportunity to combine several existing South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Local Plan policies that relate to visitor accommodation, so we can set out a clear, consistent approach to the consideration of both new development proposals and any potential loss of existing provision/bedspaces.

## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### Option A – Preferred

In advance of receiving our research findings and based on consultation feedback so far on an appropriate approach to supporting our local visitor economy, we envisage that this policy will support development proposals for hotels, guest houses and other serviced visitor accommodation within existing settlements, to encourage people to stay and spend money in our towns and villages.

The policy will promote a range of accommodation types to attract those making both leisure and business trips and will seek to ensure that new visitor accommodation is well located in relation to tourist attractions, shops, restaurants, cafes and bars and accessible by sustainable modes including public transport, on foot or by bicycle.

In line with our “Town Centre First” approach outlined in Policy TCR2, a footnote to this policy will reiterate that development proposals for main town centre uses (including hotels) of more than 500sqm gross floorspace which are located outside a defined town or local service centre will require an impact assessment.

In the countryside, the policy will offer support for new small-scale visitor accommodation (e.g. camping sites, shepherds huts, eco-lodges) that respects the landscape character and visual quality, helps support the viability of rural businesses and does not result in unacceptable environmental impacts (e.g. from light, noise, water or air pollution or traffic congestion). We will expect new proposals to retain and utilise existing buildings, wherever possible.

The policy will generally seek to retain existing overnight accommodation stock (including visitor moorings on our waterways), particularly if research suggests we have a deficit/unmet demand for particular types of accommodation or where a lack of alternative sites means that such facilities would be difficult to replace. Where development proposals would result in the loss of visitor accommodation, we will require proportionate evidence to demonstrate future viability and whether the possibility of re-using the building to provide a different type of overnight accommodation has been fully explored.

Other aspects covered by the policy will include:

- encouraging the dual use of suitable sites/premises such as public houses or motorway service areas to provide guest rooms, campervan/motorhome stopovers (also known as “aires”), cycle hire etc.
- attaching conditions to planning permissions to prevent overnight accommodation being used for permanent residential use or occupied for long, continuous periods of time
- securing high quality design in new hotel development, which respects the character and setting of the locality.

The research findings may also highlight other areas where we need to provide additional policy guidance. For example, we may want to address any local impacts associated with the rise in popularity of short-term let properties with the potential loss of existing housing stock across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. We may also wish to promote more budget-friendly visitor accommodation (for families, students, community groups or people visiting family and friends).

### **Why we prefer Option A**

This is our preferred option because it reflects feedback from previous consultations, providing a clear policy framework that supports development proposals for new visitor accommodation where there is an identified need, whilst protecting local communities and sensitive locations from any potential adverse impacts.

### **Alternative Option B**

Taking a much more restrictive approach to the provision of new visitor accommodation in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, in order to protect our historic town and villages and high-quality countryside from any environmental impacts arising from increased visitor numbers.



This approach is not preferred as it would prevent us from addressing any identified needs for different types of visitor accommodation in our districts, which would have a negative impact on sustainable growth of our economy and the economic benefits that tourism can offer local communities.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### **Policy JT7 – Overnight visitor accommodation**

- 1) Development proposals for hotels, guest houses or other serviced visitor accommodation within existing settlements\* will be supported, subject to the following criteria being met:
  - a) they are well located\*\* in relation to tourist attractions, shops, restaurants and cafes etc;
  - b) there is good accessibility by walking, cycling, wheeling or public transport; and
  - c) any new buildings respect the character and heritage of their surroundings and are designed to a high quality.
- 2) Dual use of suitable sites or premises, such as public houses or motorway service areas, to provide guest rooms, campervan/motorhome stopovers (“aires”), cycle parking or hire facilities will be encouraged, particularly in locations where this provides opportunities to link accommodation with walking or cycling routes such as the Thames Path or Ridgeway.
- 3) In locations outside existing settlements\*, development proposals for new small-scale\*\*\* visitor accommodation or minor extensions to existing premises will be supported where they:
  - a) respect the landscape character, visual quality and tranquillity of the surrounding countryside;
  - b) support the viability of a rural business or makes a contribution to the local economy;
  - c) do not result in unacceptable environmental impacts from light, noise, water or air pollution or traffic congestion; and

- d) are located within reasonable travelling distance (either by public transport, on foot or cycle) to essential services and facilities, in order to reduce reliance on private car use.
- 4) New development proposals for overnight accommodation, particularly in the countryside, will be expected to retain and utilise existing buildings, wherever possible. Any ancillary facilities necessary as part of the development must be proportionate in size and meet the same criteria cited in (1) or (3) above, dependent on location.
- 5) Subject to compliance with 3(a to d) above, proposals for new visitor accommodation which maximise opportunities for promoting eco-tourism in the districts will be supported.
- 6) Protection against the loss of existing visitor accommodation (sites or premises) will be sought unless it can be demonstrated, through proportionate evidence covering at least 12 months, that:
  - a) the use is no longer financially viable;
  - b) the applicant has fully explored the possibility of re-using the building or site to provide a different type of overnight accommodation or incorporating visitor accommodation within a mixed use proposal; and
  - c) where there is an identified need for a particular type of visitor accommodation within the locality, there are alternative, available sites to meet this need.

The scope of evidence required will vary, depending on the location and nature of the proposal. This will need to be agreed with the council in advance.

- 7) Existing visitor moorings on rivers and canals in the districts will be protected and suitable proposals for new visitor moorings in existing settlements will be supported, subject to an assessment of identified needs of boat dwellers for residential moorings. Outside settlements, proposals for mooring stages will not be permitted.
- 8) Proposals to relax or remove seasonal planning restrictions on the use of accommodation for tourism purposes will be supported, where this would help support a year-round local visitor economy. In such circumstances, these restrictions would usually be replaced with planning conditions to prevent the occupation of overnight accommodation for permanent residential use or longer term, continuous periods of stays by occupiers.

*\* Those which fall within Tiers 1 to 4 of the settlement hierarchy.*

*\*\* In line with the “Town Centre First” approach outlined in Policy TCR2, development proposals for main town centre uses (including hotels) of more than 500sqm gross floorspace which are located outside a defined town or local service centre will require an impact assessment.*

*\*\*\* For example, camping or touring caravan sites, eco-lodges, shepherds’ huts.*

## 8. Site allocations and Garden Villages

### Introduction

#### You told us

We didn't specifically ask about allocations at the Issues Consultation stage.

When developing our approach to allocations we've been mindful of overall feedback received to the Issues Consultation. We welcome views on the approach we're proposing through this consultation.

#### Why does the Joint Local Plan need to make site allocations?

Local plans contain policies that guide decisions on land use and development within a local area. An important role for local plans is to identify on a map where new homes and workplaces will be built by earmarking land for development (known as "allocations").

As we set out in Chapters 6 and 7, to do this the councils start off by assessing the need for different types of homes and employment land in our districts over the plan period. Our next step is to identify the supply of housing and employment land that will meet those needs. In the case of this Joint Local Plan, most of this supply will come from sites we allocated in our current local plans that have planning permission or have already started construction. Sites allocated by town and parish councils in neighbourhood plans also contribute to the supply of housing and employment land. However, sites that already have planning permission are unlikely to provide enough homes and jobs to meet our needs in full.

We are therefore proposing that the Joint Local Plan will save, and where relevant, update some existing site allocations from our current local plans. We have reviewed all the sites allocated in our current local plans to determine their status and whether they are still appropriate for residential and employment focused development. This review has concluded that:

- some sites have been built and therefore their allocation can be removed;
- most sites need their allocation saved;
- some sites need to have their allocation amended; and
- some sites are no longer appropriate for allocation.

This chapter sets out the outcomes of this review for each of the residential focused sites. We have set out the updated policies for the residential focused site allocations that will be retained in the Joint Local Plan. These retained allocations, along with the sites we've granted planning permission, meet our needs for market housing (as set out in policy HOU2). Therefore we don't need our Joint Local Plan to allocate more sites, however we are proposing extending the existing allocation at Dalton Barracks at Shippon near Abingdon-on-Thames and we're welcome your views on a range of options for the former council offices site at Benson Lane in Crowmarsh Gifford.

We think these two sites comply with our new spatial strategy and represent excellent opportunities to redevelop brownfield sites.

We have also set out in this chapter current allocations or parts of allocations which we do not propose to retain and set out the reasons why.

We expect a number of the existing allocations may gain planning permission before the Joint Local Plan is adopted, so we may need to update information on these sites as we progress with the plan.

Chapter 7 lists the employment allocations we are retaining to fully meet our needs for future employment land. Within Chapter 8 we present policies for two of our strategic employment allocations that require more detailed policies.

We start this chapter with a policy that sets out the requirements expected for all large scale major developments.

Chapter 8 also includes policies for our Garden Villages of Dalton Barracks and Berinsfield, and policy options for Harcourt Hill Campus, an education focused campus in Vale of White Horse.

If you would like to view the locations of the proposed site allocations from this chapter please see the Joint Local Plan Emerging Policies Map. You can also view a map tour of the sites in Chapter 8 of our Joint Local Plan Preferred Options website: [jlp.southandvale.gov.uk](http://jlp.southandvale.gov.uk)

## Policy LS1 – Proposals for Large Scale Major Development

### What will this policy do?

This policy will set out what is expected from large scale major development proposals in the district to ensure they are sustainable and of high quality.

### Why is this policy needed?

As set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. For local plans this means promoting a sustainable pattern of development and land use that meets the development needs of an area, aligning this growth with existing and proposed infrastructure as well improving the environment and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

This policy sets out what will be required from large scale major development proposals, to ensure that sustainable development is achieved. It provides applicants clarity in what we will be seeking from them as part of an application, whilst providing residents with an understanding of the evidence we will seek to ensure that any approved development proposals have a positive impact on the districts.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

A detailed policy that sets out what we expect from large scale major development proposals, including evidence documents that will need to be submitted.

### Why we prefer Option A

We prefer Option A as it provides clarity on what we expect of large scale major development proposals and what information needs to be submitted alongside any application; providing clarity for applicants and for residents. This should also make the application process simpler and more efficient than if it were not included.

The alternative of reliance on the validation checklist, as set out in Option B, is not as clear. We wish for our plan to be clear on what the councils expect large scale major developments to include as part of their planning application.

### **Option B – Alternative**

Not include a specific policy on large scale major development and instead rely on other policies within the plan to ensure sustainable developments are delivered, with the planning application validation checklist providing information on what documents should be submitted alongside proposals.

This is not our preferred option as we wish to be clear on that is expected of planning applications for large scale major developments.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy LS1: Proposals for large scale major development**

1) Proposals for large scale major development\* must:

- a) represent a comprehensive proposal that is well integrated with neighbouring uses where appropriate;
- b) ensure an appropriate scale and where required mix of uses, to create sustainable developments that support and complement the role of existing settlements and communities in line with the spatial strategy;
- c) include a comprehensive masterplan for the entire site that is informed by relevant technical studies. This masterplan must be prepared by the applicant in collaboration, and agreed, with the relevant local planning authority, in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council. The masterplan must take account of the councils' Joint Design Guide,

as well the concept plan within this Joint Local Plan. The council will determine future applications on sites in accordance with the agreed masterplan;

- d) demonstrate that the number and phasing of homes applied for, and the timing of housing delivery linked to the planned infrastructure is informed by evidence as per the requirements of other policies in this plan.
- e) ensure that necessary supporting infrastructure is provided, including social and community infrastructure. Developers must engage with relevant infrastructure providers to ensure the implementation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- f) provide sufficient leisure facilities and playing pitches, or where appropriate, contributions towards these, as set out in the relevant council's leisure strategy and playing pitch strategy.
- g) be supported by relevant technical studies and supporting documents, depending on the site's characteristics and location, such as, but not limited to:
  - i) a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
  - ii) a Green Infrastructure Plan illustrating an integrated green infrastructure network;
  - iii) a Landscape Management Plan (for full and detailed planning applications);
  - iv) an Ecological and Landscape Management Plan to be provided to manage habitats onsite;
  - v) a Health Impact Assessment;
  - vi) a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan;
  - vii) an Air Quality Assessment;
  - viii) an Arboricultural Survey;
  - ix) an Ecological Impact Assessment;
  - x) a Heritage Impact Assessment;
  - xi) a Construction Environmental Management Plan;
  - xii) a site specific flood risk assessment which takes into consideration the findings and recommendations of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
  - xiii) an integrated water management plan to include proposed foul and surface water drainage strategies, incorporating a sewage capacity assessment;



- xiv) an archaeological desk based assessment to provide an assessment of archaeological significance;
- xv) a noise assessment including noise during construction and noise insulation of development;
- xvi) a Sustainable Design and Construction Checklist;
- xvii) a Whole Life Carbon Assessment;
- xviii) for sites involving re-development, a pre-redevelopment audit;
- xix) for sites proposing demolition, a pre-demolition audit; and
- xx) an Energy Statement, detailing how it is intended to achieve net zero carbon emissions and facilitate renewable energy generation.

*\* A Large-Scale Major Development is one where the number of residential dwellings to be constructed is 200 or more or 1,000sqm of industrial, commercial or retail floor space. Where the number of residential dwellings or floor space to be constructed is not given in the application, or where there is a combination of employment and residential uses on site, a site area of 4 hectares or more should be used as the definition of a large-scale major development. For all other uses a large-scale major development is one where the floorspace to be built is more than 10,000sqm, or where the site area is more than 2 hectares. The definition for major development in a National Landscape (formerly AONB) differs. Please refer to NPPF paragraph 183, footnote 64.*

### Residential Focused Allocations:

We have reviewed all the sites allocated in our current local plans to determine their status and whether they are still appropriate for residential focused development.

### Allocated sites from previous local plans where we no longer need a policy

When a residential focused development site has fully built, there will be no need for the Joint Local Plan to continue allocating it for development. The following sites in our current local plans have finished construction and do not need a policy anymore:

Sites where construction has completed and we no longer need a policy		
Site	District	Status
Great Western Park, Didcot	Both districts	Completed
Hadden Hill, Didcot	South Oxfordshire	Completed
Land South of the A4130, Didcot	South Oxfordshire	Completed
East of Coxwell Road, Faringdon	Vale of White Horse	Completed
West of Harwell	Vale of White Horse	Completed
East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor	Vale of White Horse	Completed

### Allocated sites from previous plans where we need to keep (or save) the policies in an appendix to the Joint Local Plan

Many of the sites that our current local plans allocated have some sort of planning permission. While these sites are still under construction, or yet to start construction, we will need to save the original policy and propose to present these in an appendix to the Joint Local Plan for ease. For the sites with all the relevant planning permissions, this is in case the applicant submits new or varied plans. For the other sites, we will need to retain the policy to determine reserved matters applications (the detailed applications that follow outline consent). This will mean that the councils can still use the previous policy, upon which the developer secured their outline permission, to determine these reserved matters applications.

In addition to those sites with some sort of permission, there are two sites (Vauxhall Barracks and North-West of Abingdon-on-Thames) in the current local plans where the policy is still appropriate and will be saved in the same way.

The following site policies (including content from the Vale of White Horse Local Plans' Development Templates) will be saved and appear in an appendix to the Joint Local Plan at the draft plan stage:

<b>Sites the Joint Local Plan will save and appear in an appendix at the Draft Plan stage</b>		
<b>Site</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Status</b>
North-East of East Hanney	Vale of White Horse	Full permission, under construction
South-West of Faringdon	Vale of White Horse	Full permission, under construction
Milton Heights (smaller village)	Vale of White Horse	Full permission, under construction
North-West Radley	Vale of White Horse	Full permission, under construction
South of Kennington	Vale of White Horse	Full permission, under construction
North of Shrivenham	Vale of White Horse	Full permission, under construction
West of Stanford-in-the-Vale	Vale of White Horse	Full permission, under construction
Joyce Grove, Nettlebed	South Oxfordshire	Full permission
Ladygrove East	South Oxfordshire	Resolution to grant outline permission (subject to signing a legal agreement)
Didcot North East	South Oxfordshire	Outline consent, part detailed permission, under construction
Land West of Wallingford	South Oxfordshire	Outline consent, part detailed permission, under construction
Wheatley Campus	South Oxfordshire	Outline consent
Land South of Park Road, Faringdon	Vale of White Horse	Part outline consent, part completed
North of Abingdon-on-Thames	Vale of White Horse	Outline consent, part detailed permission, under construction
South of Faringdon	Vale of White Horse	Part outline consent, part completed
Monks Farm (North Grove)	Vale of White Horse	Outline consent, part detailed permission, under construction
Grove Airfield	Vale of White Horse	Outline consent, part detailed permission, under construction
Valley Park	Vale of White Horse	Outline consent, part detailed permission, under construction

East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor	Vale of White Horse	Resolution to grant outline permission (subject to signing a legal agreement)
South-East of Marcham	Vale of White Horse	Outline consent
Crab Hill (North East Wantage and South East Grove)	Vale of White Horse	Outline consent, part detailed permission, under construction
Vauxhall Barracks	South Oxfordshire	No planning application, remains appropriate for redevelopment
North-West of Abingdon-on-Thames	Vale of White Horse	Majority of the site is completed, no application for the remaining part of the site (west of Dunmore Road, south of the new Aldi), remains appropriate for development
North of East Hanney	Vale of White Horse	Resolution to grant full permission (subject to signing a legal agreement)
East of Sutton-Courtenay (Hobbyhorse Lane)	Vale of White Horse	Outline consent

### Allocated sites from previous plans with proposed updated policies in the Joint Local Plan

We are proposing updated policies for sites listed in the table below, to ensure they are consistent with priorities and other policies in this emerging Joint Local Plan and to reflect any change in circumstances. In some cases we are also proposing updated or new concept plans (for sites of 500 or more homes), this is to reflect the updated policies and to ensure consistency of approach across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse allocations. Previously only South Oxfordshire used concept plans. The councils' current allocation policies are structured and presented differently, so we are proposing that these policies are shown in a consistent way. Where relevant we have also updated the allocation boundary and shown the updated boundary on the emerging policies map.

<b>Sites with updated policies in the Joint Local Plan (see below Policies AS1 to AS10 for detail)</b>		
<b>Site</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Status</b>
Land at Berinsfield Garden Village	South Oxfordshire	No planning application
Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre	South Oxfordshire	No planning application
Land South of Grenoble Road	South Oxfordshire	No planning application
Land at Northfield	South Oxfordshire	No planning application
Land North of Bayswater Brook*	South Oxfordshire	Hybrid planning application (outline application for residential parts) for the main site.
Orchard Centre Phase II*	South Oxfordshire	Rich's Sidings part of the site has no application, although the Orchard Centre retail element is now complete
Didcot Gateway	South Oxfordshire	Outline planning application for part of the site
North West of Grove	Vale of White Horse	Outline planning application
North-West of Valley Park	Vale of White Horse	No planning application
Dalton Barracks*	Vale of White Horse	No planning application

\* Updated boundaries shown on the emerging policies map. Change to Land North of Bayswater Brook is due to the proposed removal of the separate Sandhills parcel.

The proposed updated policies for the above sites are set out in the next section, in Policies AS1-A10. Each of the above sites has been considered through the Strategic Environmental Assessment. Where relevant this has been on the basis of keeping the original policy and boundary, tweaking the policy (as presented in AS1-AS10) and boundary, and deletion of the allocation. The Sustainability Appraisal reports on this.

### Allocated sites from previous plans that are proposed to not be retained in the Joint Local Plan

As a result of the site allocation review, we believe the following sites are no longer suitable for continued allocation in the Joint Local Plan:

<b>Sites that are proposed to not be retained in the Joint Local Plan</b>		
<b>Site</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Status</b>
Chalgrove Airfield	South Oxfordshire	Application withdrawn
West of Priests Close, Nettlebed	South Oxfordshire	No planning application
Land south of Nettlebed Service Station	South Oxfordshire	No planning application
Sandhills parcel of Land North of Bayswater Brook	South Oxfordshire	No planning application

See the section “Currently Allocated Sites Proposed Not to be Retained in the Joint Local Plan” for more details about the first three sites and Policy AS5 regarding the Sandhill parcel of Land North of Bayswater Brook.

## **Policy AS1 - Land at Berinsfield Garden Village**

### **What do we want to achieve on this site?**

Through the Joint Local Plan we propose to continue to allocate Land at Berinsfield Garden Village for the delivery of approximately 1,700 new homes (with approximately 1,400 homes delivered within the plan period). Delivering growth and regeneration at Berinsfield, through a sustainable pattern of development, will address key issues currently facing the village. In addition, Berinsfield has been designated as a Garden Village with this development assisting in delivering the ambitions (see Policy AS13). The site will be delivered in accordance with other policies in the development plan, providing a high quality and sustainable development.

### **What has changed from our previous plan?**

The site was originally allocated by Policy STRAT10i: Land at Berinsfield Garden Village in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035. Our review of the existing allocated sites in the current Local Plan has found that this site is still a suitable allocation to continue into the Joint Local Plan. However, our review did conclude we should make some presentational changes to the policy by amalgamating the two lists of policy requirements into one to make it clearer and more effective. We have also removed reference to phasing from this policy and covered it instead in the overarching policy (LS1) on large-scale major development proposals. We have taken out most cross-references to other policies because these are unnecessary as any planning application will be assessed against all other relevant policies in the plan. We have made other changes to clarify layout and infrastructure requirements. We have made some minor changes to the concept plan to indicate an increase the green infrastructure provision.

### **Proposed draft policy**

**Policy AS1 - Land at Berinsfield Garden Village**

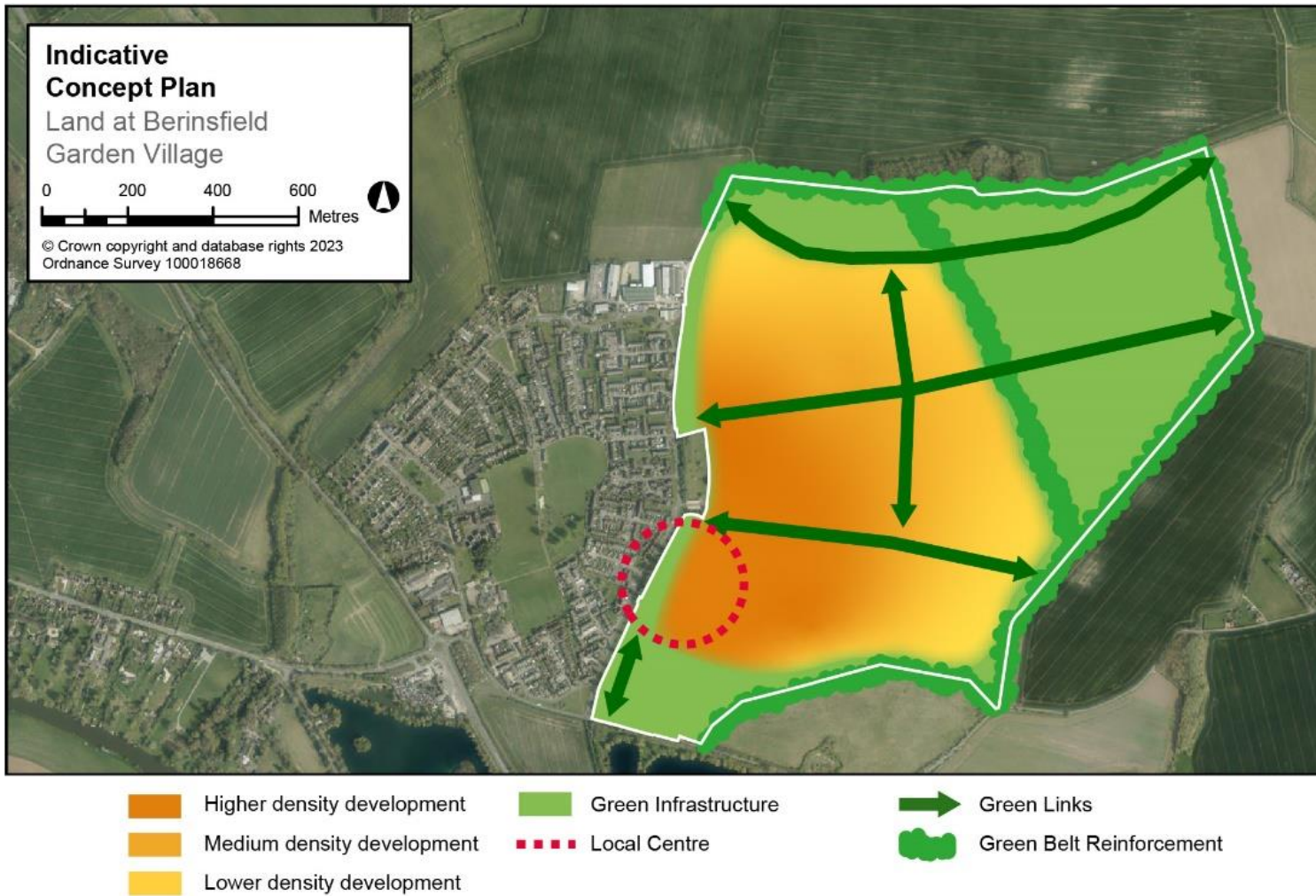
- 1) Land at Berinsfield Garden Village (as shown on the Policies Map) is allocated to deliver approximately 1,700 new homes, 5 hectares of additional employment land, and supporting services and facilities.
- 2) Proposals for the development must demonstrate:
  - a) that the applicants have prepared a comprehensive masterplan taking into consideration the indicative concept plan (Figure 2), and Joint Design Guide. This masterplan must be prepared in collaboration with South Oxfordshire District Council, in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council. The masterplan must be submitted, and approved, as part of the first application for development on this site. The council will determine future applications on this site in accordance with the masterplan;
  - b) how the proposed development is designed to facilitate the regeneration of Berinsfield, including how it interacts and connects with the wider, existing village in accordance with the strategy for Berinsfield Garden Village (Policy AS13);
  - c) a layout that minimises the use and impact of private motor vehicles on the site;
  - d) how walking and cycling permeability will be achieved between the existing and proposed Berinsfield settlements and beyond to other key employment, retail, and leisure destinations;
  - e) how the necessary regeneration package has been identified and will be delivered, referring to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which is likely to include the refurbishment and expansion of the Abbey Sports Centre and library to accommodate new community facilities in a “community hub”. This may include new premises for an expanded health centre or alternatively premises for a new health centre will be provided within the new development;
  - f) how the proposed number of new homes will support the delivery of the regeneration package for Berinsfield;
  - g) a total affordable housing provision in accordance with Policy HOU3, with a site specific mix of affordable tenures informed by robust local evidence that seeks to address existing local need, as well as rebalance the mix of housing tenures across the Garden Village;



- h) sufficient education provision, which is likely to require one additional primary school provided on site, contributions to the enhancement of Abbey Woods Primary School, and contributions to a new secondary school and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provided off site;
- i) provision of convenience floorspace that meets the day-to-day needs of the local community only, without impacting on the vitality and viability of existing retail centres in accordance with the Retail Hierarchy;
- j) all necessary transport infrastructure based on up-to-date evidence on the impact of the development. This should reference the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan, but not be limited to this document. The transport mitigation measures are likely to include:
  - i) high quality infrastructure to encourage cycling and walking and provide links through the site and to adjacent employment and into the village of Berinsfield and to other surrounding locations including Culham Science Centre; specifically (but not limited to) improving the existing walking and cycling infrastructure along the A415 from Berinsfield to Culham Science Centre and railway station, and providing a cycle and walking route from Berinsfield to Oxford;
  - ii) a new junction and access onto the A4074 that provides a second access to the new development;
  - iii) upgrades to the existing A4074/A415 junction;
  - iv) contributions towards upgrading the A4074/B4015 junction at Golden Balls, the Clifton Hampden bypass, and the Didcot to Culham River Crossing;
  - v) provision for excellent public transport facilities including pump priming a scheduled bus service, with a service between Berinsfield-Cowley, a service between Berinsfield, Culham and Abingdon-on-Thames, with options to extend or vary services to Didcot; and
  - vi) enhancements to the public rights of way network on and off site.

- k) appropriate landscaping throughout the site, including a new permanent defensible landscaped edge to protect the Oxford Green Belt, while still maintaining a sense of permanent openness between Berinsfield and Drayton St Leonard, and maintaining key views to the Chiltern Hills and Wittenham Clumps;
- l) no greater land-take of greenfield land than is necessary to deliver the required regeneration and other relevant policy requirements. Any part of the developable greenfield area that is not required for housing or related infrastructure should provide green infrastructure including planting to contain the settlement edge;
- m) the delivery of higher density development (a minimum of 50 dph), along key transport corridors and adjacent to the local centre, gradually reducing the scale and density of development to provide a transition across the site towards the northern and eastern countryside edges where lower density development should be delivered, alongside a network of green infrastructure and planting to create a new permanent landscaped edge to protect the Oxford Green Belt, to deliver an overall site-wide average net density of 35-50 dph; and
- n) a net gain in biodiversity delivered on site which includes extensive new woodland planting in the north and east of the site, significant new woodland buffers around the site boundaries, green linkages through the site, and could include de-culverting some of the watercourse on the western boundary of the site.

Figure 2 - Concept Plan



## **Policy AS2 - Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre**

### **What do we want to achieve on this site?**

Through the Joint Local Plan we propose to continue to allocate Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre for the delivery of approximately 3,500 new homes. A mixed use development will be required including new homes and the retention and optimisation of the existing employment area on land east of the railway, known as the Culham No. 1 site. This allocation offers an opportunity to provide significant development in a sustainable location. To the east of the site lies Culham Science Centre. We, and National Government, recognise the key role of the Science Centre as an internationally important centre of science and research and support and encourage its future. This development will have access to employment opportunities as well as public transport at the Culham railway station.

This will be a community within Science Vale that can make the most of advancing technologies such as clean heat and power generation and autonomous vehicles. The site will be delivered in accordance with other policies in the development plan, providing a high quality and sustainable development.

### **What has changed from our previous plan?**

The site was originally allocated by Policy STRAT9: Land Adjacent to Culham Science Centre in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

Our review of the existing allocated sites in the current Local Plan has found that this site is still a suitable allocation to continue into the Joint Local Plan. However, our review did conclude that we should make some presentational changes to the policy by amalgamating the two lists of policy requirements into one to make it clearer and more effective. We have removed reference to phasing from this policy and covered it instead in the overarching policy (LS1) on large-scale major development proposals. The Culham No.1 site is located next to the Culham Science Centre and comprises 10 hectares of employment land. The current South Oxfordshire adopted local plan policies (STRAT8 and STRAT9) require this 10 hectares to be retained and redistributed across the two allocations. Our Joint Local Plan preferred approach for the No.1 site is for the employment land to be retained for employment uses and optimised, with updates made to the policy to address this. Updates have been made to the transport infrastructure requirements. We have taken out cross-references to other policies because these are unnecessary as any planning application

will be assessed against all other relevant policies in the plan. We have made other changes to clarify layout and infrastructure requirements. We have made some changes to the concept plan, to adjust the location of the local centre, acknowledge the retention of employment use on the No.1 site, adjust the green links and increase the areas of Green Belt reinforcement.

### Proposed draft policy

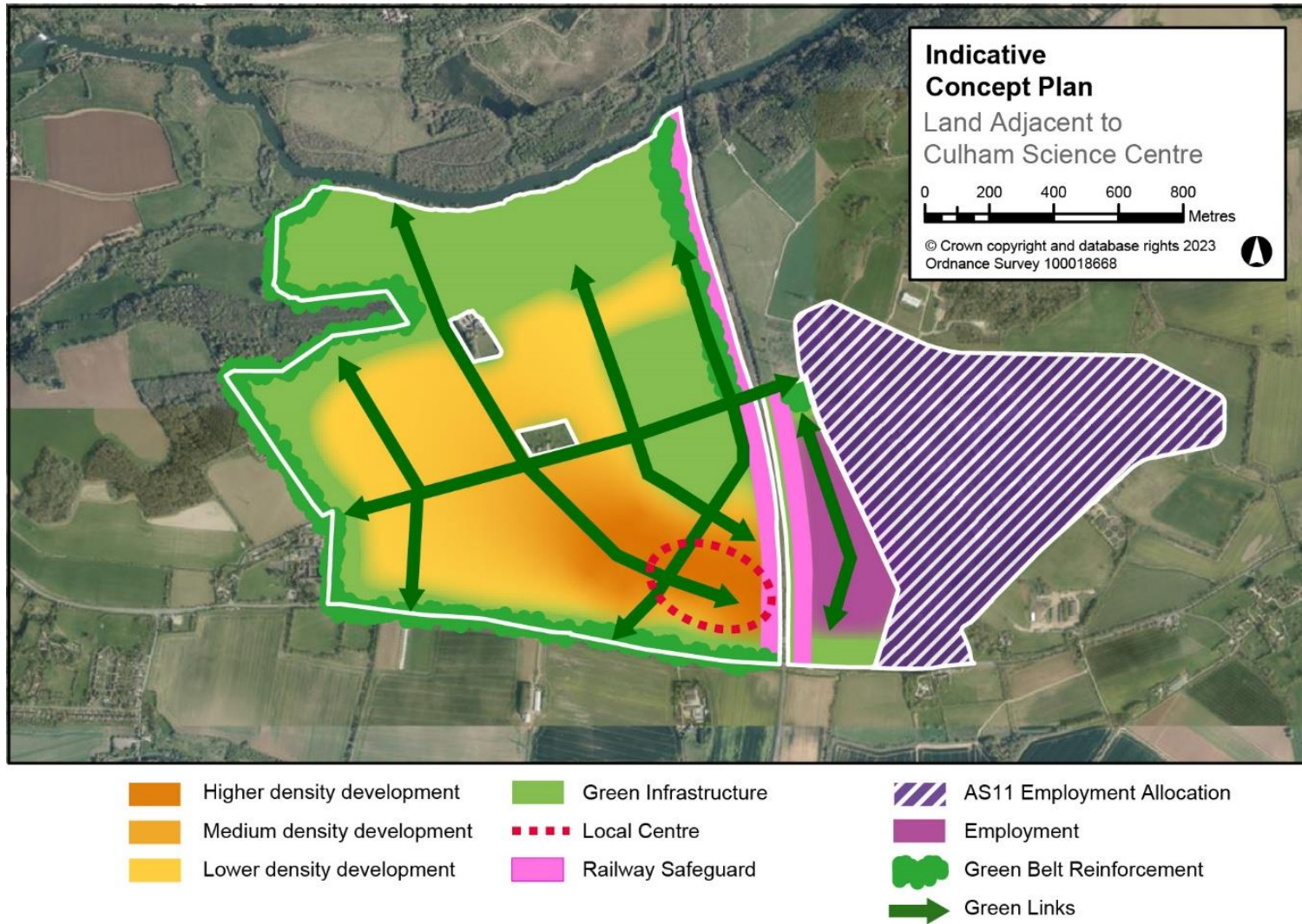
#### **Policy AS2 - Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre**

- 1) Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre (as shown on the Policies Map) is allocated to deliver approximately 3,500 new homes, optimise the use of existing employment land, 3 pitches for gypsies and travellers, and supporting services and facilities.
- 2) Proposals for the development must demonstrate:
  - a) that the applicants have prepared a comprehensive masterplan taking into consideration the indicative concept plan (Figure 3), and Joint Design Guide. This masterplan must be prepared in collaboration with South Oxfordshire District Council, in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council. The masterplan must be submitted, and approved, as part of the first application for development on this site. The council will determine future applications on this site in accordance with the masterplan;
  - b) how the site will retain and optimise the employment use of the Culham No.1 site;
  - c) sufficient additional education capacity, to be agreed with the Local Education Authority. This is likely to be the provision of two onsite primary schools and one onsite secondary school with sixth form. The development will also need to demonstrate appropriate contributions towards Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
  - d) sufficient health care capacity, likely to be a total of one new GP surgery on site to serve existing and future demand in this area in accordance with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan;

- e) provision of convenience floorspace that meets the day-to-day needs of the local community only without impacting on the vitality and viability of existing retail centres in accordance with the Retail Hierarchy;
- f) all necessary transport infrastructure based on up-to-date evidence on the impact of the development. This should reference the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan, but not be limited to this document. The transport mitigation measures are likely to include:
  - i) provision for excellent sustainable transport facilities including, but not limited to, new and improvements to existing cycle and footways including contributions towards a “Cycle Premium Route” that is proposed between Didcot and Culham; provision of a new walking and cycling bridge and associated connectivity and paths across the River Thames to connect appropriately with Abingdon-on-Thames and beyond to the north of the site; improvements to the walking and cycling infrastructure along the A415 between Culham railway station and Abingdon-on-Thames; bus improvements including provision of a scheduled bus service between Berinsfield, Culham and Abingdon-on-Thames, with options to extend or vary services to locations such as Cowley and Didcot;
  - ii) contributions to Culham railway station improvements including longer platforms, public realm, new station building, cycle hub and potentially car parking;
  - iii) new junctions onto the A415 and significant contributions towards the Clifton Hampden Bypass, the Didcot to Culham River Crossing, and upgrading the A4074/B4015 junction at Golden Balls; and
  - iv) enhancements to the public rights of way network on and off site.
- g) a layout that recognises plans for improvements to Culham railway station and any associated future rail capacity upgrades, recognising its importance and potential to support growth and development at the adjacent Culham Science Centre;
- h) a layout that minimises the use and impact of private motor vehicles on the site;

- i) a layout that delivers higher density development (a minimum of 50 dph) along the principal internal transport corridors, adjacent to the local centre and adjacent to the railway station, provided it does not adversely impact any existing heritage assets. Density should then gradually reduce from these locations outwards to provide a transition across the site, with lower density development located on the northern, southern and eastern edges of the site, to create a permanent defensible edge to protect the Oxford Green Belt;
- j) a layout that recognises the overhead power lines on the site and avoids the built form beneath these where possible, or explores the option of undergrounding the power cables on site;
- k) appropriate landscaping and an integrated network of green infrastructure throughout the site and in particular along its boundaries, which would allow limited through views, creating a permanent defensible edge to protect the Oxford Green Belt. This shall be based on landscape character, including historic landscape characterisation, considering the contribution of the site to the setting of Oxford, that preserve and enhance the surrounding Green Belt Way and River Thames long distance footpaths;
- l) a layout and form that respects the setting of the heritage assets within and beyond the site; in particular the listed buildings and structures (the Culham railway station and rail bridges, the Europa School and the Registered Park and Garden associated with Nuneham House);
- m) a layout that has land which remains undeveloped to the northern border of the site and that should be utilised for flood plain storage, protecting the physical boundary features on the site;
- n) a layout and appropriate mitigation measures that protect Culham Brake Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which lies to the north-west of the site, the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority sites to the north of Culham, and that within the Culham Science Centre and numerous BAP priority habitats, including the BAP priority habitat south of Culham railway station; and
- o) a net gain in biodiversity which is integrated into the masterplan through the creation of new woodland habitats along the river escarpment and ecological enhancements of the floodplain habitats, including a complex of new wetland habitats and species rich floodplain meadows.

Figure 3 - Concept Plan





## Policy AS3 - Land South of Grenoble Road, Edge of Oxford

### What do we want to achieve on this site?

Through the Joint Local Plan we propose to continue the allocation of Land South of Grenoble Road, Edge of Oxford for the delivery of approximately 3000 new homes (with approximately 1,400 homes delivered within the plan period) and 10 hectares of employment land. The site is located at the edge of Oxford City Council's administrative boundary and is well located for access to employment and services. The site will be delivered in accordance with other policies in the development plan, providing a high quality and sustainable development.

### What has changed from our previous plan?

The site was originally allocated by Policy STRAT11: Land South of Grenoble Road in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

Our review of the existing allocated sites in the current Local Plan has found that this site is still a suitable allocation to continue into the Joint Local Plan. However, our review did conclude we should make some presentational changes to the policy by amalgamating the two lists of policy requirements into one to make it clearer and more effective. We have removed reference to phasing from this policy and covered it instead in the overarching policy (LS1) on large-scale major development proposals. We have taken out cross-references to other policies because these are unnecessary as any planning application will be assessed against all other relevant policies in the plan. We have made other changes to use alternative terminology and clarify layout and infrastructure requirements.

### Proposed draft policy

#### Policy AS3 - Land South of Grenoble Road, Edge of Oxford

- 1) Land South of Grenoble Road, Edge of Oxford (as shown on the Policies Map) is allocated to deliver approximately 3,000 new homes, 10 hectares of additional employment land, incorporating an extension to Oxford Science Park, a mobility hub serving the A4074 corridor, and supporting services and facilities.

2) Proposals for the development must demonstrate:

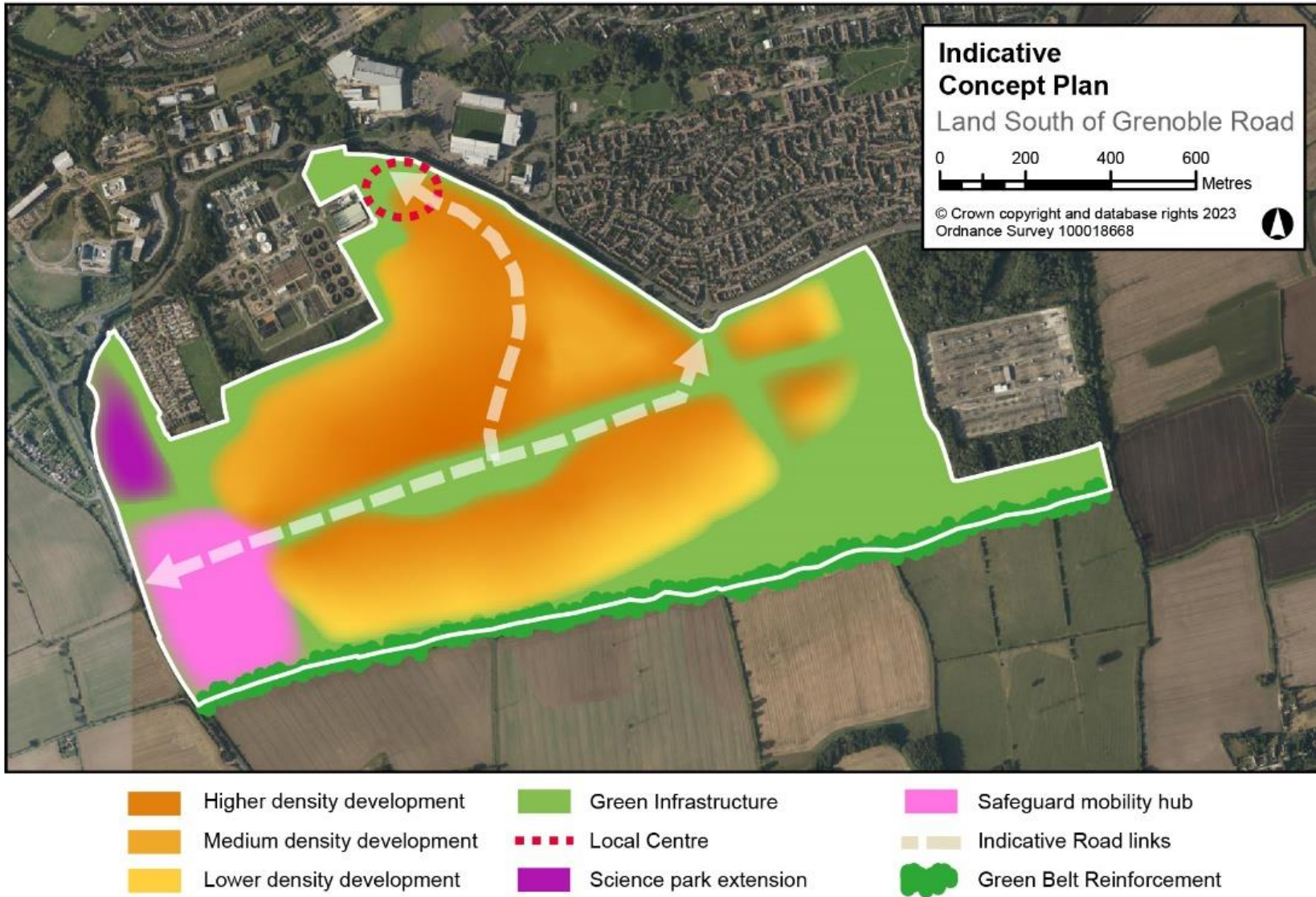
- a) that the applicants have prepared a comprehensive masterplan taking into consideration the indicative concept plan (Figure 4), and the councils' Joint Design Guide. This masterplan must be prepared in collaboration with South Oxfordshire District Council, in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council. The masterplan must be submitted, and approved, as part of the first application for development on this site. The council will determine future applications on this site in accordance with the masterplan;
- b) a high-quality development that is fully integrated and relates closely to The Leys neighbourhoods in Oxford;
- c) how it contributes to improvements to existing community facilities and services in The Leys necessary to address impacts arising from the increased usage by the residents of land south of Grenoble Road;
- d) an appropriate provision of convenience floorspace to meet the day-to-day needs of the local community only, without impacting on the vitality and viability of existing retail centres in accordance with the Retail Hierarchy;
- e) sufficient education capacity, to be agreed with the Local Education Authority. This is likely to be on-site primary school and on-site secondary school provision with the capability to expand to meet future needs. The development will also need to demonstrate appropriate contributions towards Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
- f) all necessary infrastructure based on up-to-date evidence on the impact of the development. This should reference the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan, but not be limited to this document. The transport mitigation measures are likely to include:
  - i) provision of new, and enhancement to existing, cycling and walking infrastructure and the public rights of way network on and off site ensuring the site is well connected to Oxford City, nearby mobility hubs, and appropriate surrounding villages;
  - ii) a new mobility hub on site;

- iii) improvements to bus services and infrastructure within the site and along the A4074 and B480 corridors to Oxford City and nearby villages and associated infrastructure;
  - iv) provision of infrastructure to support public transport through the site;
  - v) improvements to highway infrastructure in the vicinity of the site; and
  - vi) a scheme to improve the B480 route towards Cowley for buses, pedestrians and cyclists.
- g) a layout that minimises the use and impact of private motor vehicles on the site;
- h) the applicants have completed a comprehensive odour assessment, the methodology of which will be agreed by the Local Planning Authority, that identifies the necessary mitigation required to address the odour impact of the Oxford Sewage Treatment Works. This will need to be submitted to, and agreed with, South Oxfordshire District Council before development can commence, and the mitigation measures implemented in accordance with the recommendations of the odour assessment;
- i) an extension to the woodland at Sandford Brake substation to ensure a buffer between the development and the substation is provided;
- j) how a landscaped urban edge can be created to the south of the site to provide a transition into the wider landscape through woodland planting. The landscape planting should create a strong and defensible edge to Oxford, and create a permanent sense of openness between the site and Nuneham Courtenay, Marsh Baldon, Toot Baldon and Garsington. Proposals must reflect the design, and consider the cumulative landscape impact of the nearby renewable energy generating station at Nineveh Farm\*. including the solar farm on this site. Only green infrastructure should be provided on land directly to the south of Minchery Farmhouse to respect the setting of the Grade II\* listed farmhouse;
- k) a layout that recognises the overhead power lines on the site and minimises the location of the built form beneath these or explores the option of undergrounding the power cables on site;

- l) the delivery of higher density development around the local centres (a minimum of 70 dwellings per hectare (dph)) and along key transport corridors (a minimum 60 dph). The northern part of the site will respond to sensitivities relating to the listed Minchery Farm and densities will gradually reduce towards the southern landscape buffer and the eastern edge of the site, close to the Sandford Brake Local Wildlife Site to create a suitable interface with the adjacent Green Belt; and
- m) a net gain in biodiversity, including proposals to enhance the biodiversity value of the watercourse which connects to the Littlemore Brook.

*\* Planning permission reference P20/S4360/FUL*

Figure 4 - Concept Plan



## **Policy AS4 - Land at Northfield, Edge of Oxford**

### **What do we want to achieve on this site?**

Through the Joint Local Plan we propose to continue the allocation of Land at Northfield, Edge of Oxford for the delivery of approximately 1,800 new homes. The site is located at the edge of Oxford City Council's administrative boundary and is well located for access to employment and services. The site will be delivered in accordance with other policies in the development plan, providing a high quality and sustainable development.

### **What has changed from our previous plan?**

The site was originally allocated by Policy STRAT12: Land at Northfield in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

Our review of the existing allocated sites in the current Local Plan has found that this site is still a suitable allocation to continue into the Joint Local Plan. However, our review did conclude we should make some presentational changes to the policy by amalgamating the two lists of policy requirements into one to make it clearer and more effective. We have removed reference to phasing from this policy and covered it instead in the overarching policy (LS1) on large-scale major development proposals. We have taken out cross-references to other policies because these are unnecessary as any planning application will be assessed against all other relevant policies in the plan. We have made a minor change to the concept plan to amend the indication of the local centre. We have made other changes to clarify layout and infrastructure requirements.

### **Proposed draft policy**

#### **Policy AS4 - Land at Northfield, Edge of Oxford**

- 1) Land at Northfield, Edge of Oxford (as shown on the Policies Map) is allocated to deliver approximately 1,800 new homes and supporting services and facilities.
- 2) Proposals for the development must demonstrate:

- a) that the applicants have prepared a comprehensive masterplan taking into consideration the indicative concept plan (Figure 5), and the councils' Joint Design Guide. This masterplan must be prepared in collaboration with South Oxfordshire District Council, in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council. The masterplan must be submitted with, and approved, as part of the first application for development on this site. The council will determine future applications on this site in accordance with the masterplan;
- b) how the proposed development is well integrated with its surroundings;
- c) sufficient education provision, to be agreed with the Local Education Authority. This is likely to include an on site primary school, as well as contributions to appropriate off-site secondary school and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
- d) all necessary infrastructure based on up-to-date evidence on the impact of the development. This should reference the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan, but not be limited to this document. The transport mitigation measures are likely to include:
  - i) cycling and walking infrastructure and the public rights of way network on and off site ensuring the site is well connected to Oxford City, and appropriate surrounding villages;
  - ii) a scheme to improve the B480 route towards Cowley for buses, pedestrians and cyclists;
  - iii) provision of infrastructure/financial support for Culham-Science Vale bus service;
  - iv) contributions towards improvements to bus services along the B480 corridor and through the site to Oxford City and nearby villages; and
  - v) upgrades to the existing junctions on the Oxford Eastern Bypass (A4142), including Cowley junction.

- e) provision of convenience floorspace that meets the day-to-day needs of the local community only without impacting on the vitality and viability of existing retail centres in accordance with the Retail Hierarchy;
- f) appropriate landscape mitigation measures to minimise the visual impact of the development on the openness of the Green Belt and maintain important views of Oxford City, providing a defensible Green Belt boundary and a strong countryside edge retaining a permanent separation between Oxford and Garsington;
- g) a layout that minimises the use and impact of private motor vehicles on the site;
- h) provision of a landscape led scheme which integrates a network of green infrastructure with structural landscaping along the north western boundary (Industrial Estate) that integrates and improves existing hedgerows and tree belts on the site;
- i) a net gain in biodiversity through the creation and restoration of habitats along the course of the Northfield Brook and biodiversity enhancements integrated into the masterplan; and
- j) the delivery of higher density development (a minimum of 70 dph) along key transport corridors, adjacent to the local centre, and towards the north western boundary of the site, but having regard to the existing noise environment from the adjacent employment site, to respond to the existing adjacent development. The scale and density of development should gradually reduce to provide a transition across the site towards the eastern and south-eastern countryside edges where the lower density development should be delivered, alongside a network of green infrastructure to create an appropriate urban edge.



Figure 5 - Concept Plan



- Higher density development
- Medium density development
- Lower density development
- Green Infrastructure
- Local Centre

## **Policy AS5 - Land at Bayswater Brook, Edge of Oxford**

### **What do we want to achieve on this site?**

Through the Joint Local Plan we propose to continue the main site allocation at Land at Bayswater Brook, Edge of Oxford for the delivery of approximately 1,100 new homes. The site is located at the edge of Oxford City Council's administrative boundary and is well located for access to employment and services. The site will be delivered in accordance with other policies in the development plan, providing a high quality and sustainable development.

### **What has changed from our previous plan?**

The site was originally allocated by Policy STRAT13: Land North of Bayswater Brook in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

Our review of the existing allocated sites in the current Local Plan has found that this site is largely still a suitable allocation to continue into the Joint Local Plan, with the exception of the parcel of land north of Sandhills. However, our review did conclude we should make some presentational changes to the policy by amalgamating the two lists of policy requirements into one to make it clearer and more effective. We have removed reference to phasing from this policy and covered it instead in the overarching policy (LS1) on large-scale major development proposals. We have taken out cross-references to other policies because these are unnecessary as any planning application will be assessed against all other relevant policies in the plan.

### **Suitability concerns**

There are specific issues affecting the suitability of the Sandhills area of the current allocation, which is separate from the main site allocation. The prospective developers have indicated that they would like vehicles to access the Sandhills site across a bridleway from Burdell Avenue and Delbush Avenue. Oxfordshire County Council has advised that this is not possible given the unregistered land upon which the bridleway sits, and therefore the site is not achievable. Additionally, Oxfordshire County Council has advised that any other potential means of access via Waynflete Road would be unlikely to be able to accommodate many further trips given geometric constraints and gradients. Therefore, this part of the site is not suitable based on highways objections and is not proposed to be retained. We have therefore removed this area from the policy, concept plan and emerging policies map.

## Proposed draft policy

### **Policy AS5 – Land at Bayswater Brook, Edge of Oxford**

- 1) Land at Bayswater Brook, Edge of Oxford (as shown on the Policies Map) is allocated to deliver approximately 1,100 new homes, and supporting services and facilities.
- 2) Proposals for the development must demonstrate:
  - a) that the applicants have prepared a comprehensive masterplan taking into consideration the indicative concept plan (Figure 6), and the councils' Joint Design Guide. This masterplan must be prepared in collaboration with South Oxfordshire District Council, in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council. The masterplan must be submitted, and approved, as part of the first application for development on this site. The council will determine future applications on this site in accordance with the masterplan;
  - b) sufficient on-site educational capacity, to be agreed with the Local Education Authority. This is likely to be for on-site primary school provision including early years, and appropriate contributions towards an off-site secondary school and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
  - c) provision of convenience floorspace that meets the day-to-day needs of the local community only without impacting on the vitality and viability of existing retail centres in accordance with the Retail Hierarchy;
  - d) necessary facilities for movement. As a first priority, these should provide high quality pedestrian, cycle and public transport connections into Oxford to maximise the number of trips made by non-car modes, and measures to discourage car-based development. If, having taken the impact of these measures into account, significant residual impacts on the highway network are still predicted, new highway infrastructure will be required to mitigate those

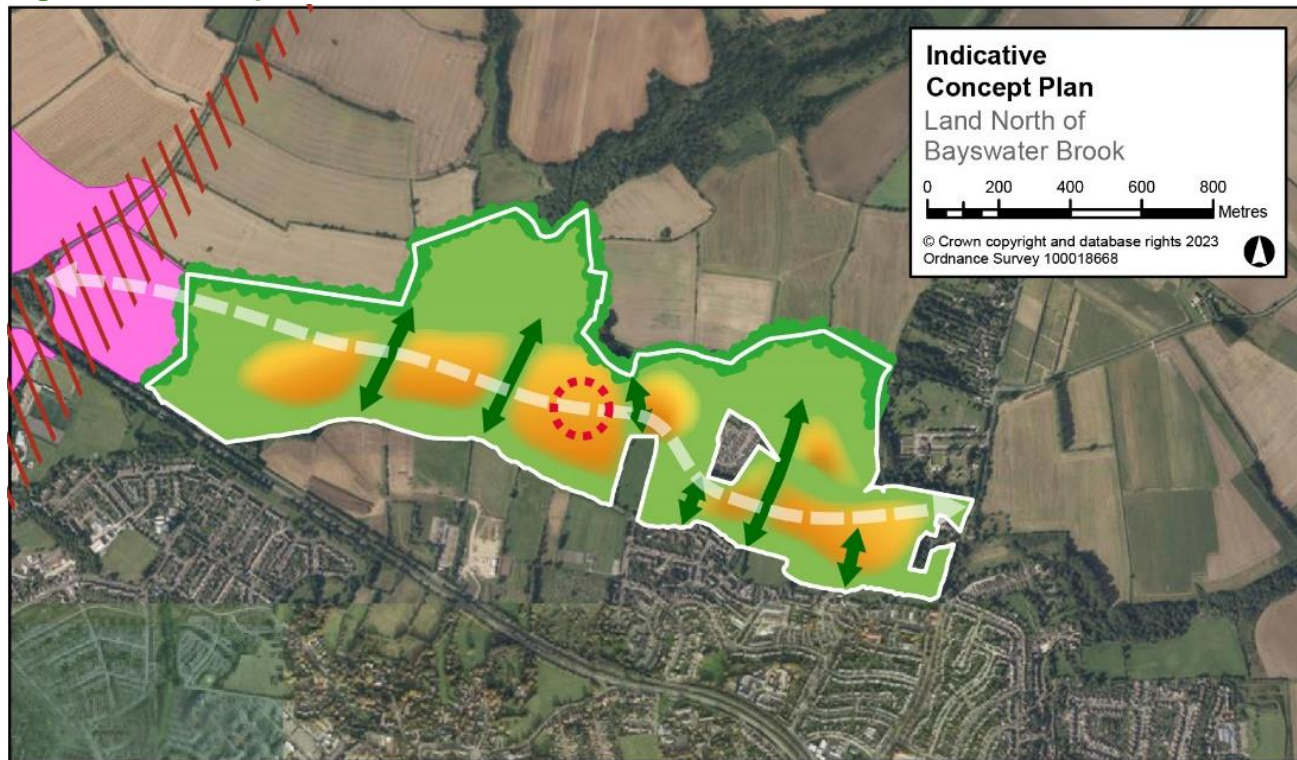
impacts. Any planning application will be expected to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan. Transport improvements are likely to include:










- i) provision of high quality pedestrian, cycle and public transport access and connectivity to Oxford City Centre and other major employment locations, particularly the hospitals and Oxford Science and Business Parks, including (but not limited to) the links to and across the A40 Oxford Northern Bypass and a new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the A40 which will require a suitable landing point outside of the allocated site;
- ii) a transport and movement hierarchy which promotes non-car modes of travel and permeability across the site and beyond to Oxford City, including on and off-site public rights of way enhancements. The hierarchy should identify where on-site highways infrastructure will be required, ensuring appropriate highways and sustainable transport access and permeability across the site, including between Bayswater Road and the B4150 Marsh Lane/A40 junction;
- iii) road access from the surrounding road network; and
- iv) measures to mitigate any significant residual impacts on the highway network, first taking into account the benefits from the sustainable movement measures described above.
- e) a schedule of works as agreed with the council for the repair of the Grade II\* Wick Farm Wellhouse identified on the Heritage at Risk Register. This is to be agreed prior to the determination of an application for development. An application for planning permission must be accompanied by an application for listed building consent for the works to the Wellhouse;
- f) a development that ensures that there will be no demonstrable negative recreational, hydrological or air quality impacts on the Sidlings Copse and College Pond SSSI;

- g) focuses built development within Flood Zone 1 only, with areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 preserved as accessible green space;
- h) includes a landscape buffer between the development and Wick Farm, as well as incorporating high quality design to preserve or enhance listed buildings and their settings;
- i) provides a permanent defensible Green Belt boundary around the allocation and a strong countryside edge;
- j) retains and incorporates existing hedgerows and tree belts, particularly where this assists with the creation of a new Green Belt boundary;
- k) relates to and connects with adjoining built development and development that is planned within Oxford City;
- l) delivers higher density development (a minimum of 45 dph) along key frontages, transport corridors and towards the south and east boundaries of the site, to respond to the existing adjacent development, provided it does not adversely impact any heritage assets or their settings, and provided that it respects the character of, and living conditions within, neighbouring residential development. This will be interspersed with green links and public access to attractive walking routes. Densities will gradually reduce towards the northern landscape buffer, and will be lower close to Sidlings Copse and College Pond SSSI and also reduce towards the western edge of the site to reflect the sensitivities of the view cone;

- m) a net gain in biodiversity through the protection and enhancement of habitats along the Bayswater Brook, new habitats to the north buffering the Sidlings Copse and College Pond SSSI and offsite biodiversity enhancements;
- n) provides a network of green infrastructure that:
  - i) retains and incorporates areas of functional flood plain and existing surface water flow paths;
  - ii) protects and enhances existing habitats, particularly those associated with Sidlings Copse and College Pond SSSI and the Bayswater Brook;
  - iii) connects with adjoining green infrastructure within Oxford City;
  - iv) retains and incorporates existing public rights of way, improves and extends public rights of way where appropriate, and supports movement through the site and into adjoining areas by walking and cycling; and
  - v) provides an appropriate buffer to the Oxford view cone.
- o) a scheme of appropriate mitigation should be established in accordance with the archaeological evaluation prepared to support the masterplan in 2020 (or a subsequent evaluation where this has been agreed with the council), to include the physical preservation of significant archaeological features and their setting.

Figure 6 – Concept Plan



- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  Higher density housing |  Green Infrastructure             |  Indicative Route Alignment |
|  Medium density housing |  Area needed for Transport Access |  Local Centre               |
|  Lower density housing  |  View Cone                        |  Green Belt Reinforcement   |
|  |  |  Green Links                |

## **Policy AS6 – Rich’s Sidings and Broadway, Didcot**

### **What do we want to achieve on this site?**

Through the Joint Local Plan we propose to continue the allocation of this site, with a revised boundary, to support its redevelopment. This site is centrally located in Didcot Garden Town and offers a regeneration opportunity.

### **What has changed from our previous plan?**

The site was carried forward into the Local Plan 2035 from previous development plan documents. The original extension east of Didcot town centre was set out in the Local Plan 2011. The Core Strategy 2012 carried the proposals forward and envisaged a masterplan for the whole Orchard Centre (including Orchard Centre and Orchard Centre phase 2) for a mixed-use retail-led development to include approximately 300 dwellings to be delivered across the whole site.

### **Achievability concerns**

As part of our site review, we noted that some of the existing allocation has been delivered however no residential units were provided as part of that scheme. As a result, there is a need to reduce the area of the allocation and reduce the number of homes. We also consider the site can continue to provide for jobs. Therefore, the revised policy recognises the scope of a mix of uses and capacity for approximately 100 homes. We have renamed the site to Rich’s Sidings and Broadway.

### **Proposed draft policy**

#### **Policy AS6: Rich’s Sidings and Broadway, Didcot**

- 1) Land at Rich’s Sidings and Broadway, Didcot (as shown on the Policies Map) is allocated to deliver a mixed-use scheme comprising of new jobs and approximately 100 homes.



## Site Boundary



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## **Policy AS7 - Didcot Gateway, Didcot**

### **What do we want to achieve on this site?**

Through the Joint Local Plan we propose to continue the allocation of this site to support the redevelopment of this important central gateway site opposite the station in Didcot Garden Town.

### **What has changed from our previous plan?**

Our site review process has shown that the existing allocated site is unlikely to have capacity to deliver 300 homes. We are therefore revising the capacity down from approximately 300 to 200 dwellings.

### **Achievability concerns**

Our review has noted that since the site was allocated in Local Plan 2035, progress has been made in bringing the site forward for development, including the various landowners collaboratively developing a masterplan for the whole site which includes a mix of uses including residential. Following this work, and the submission of planning applications for part of the site, we no longer consider the site to have sufficient capacity to deliver 300 homes. The revised capacity is for approximately 200 new homes as part of a mixed-use development, which also reflects South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse Councils' plan to relocate their new headquarters onto this site.

### **Proposed draft policy**

#### **Policy AS7: Land at Didcot Gateway, Didcot**

1) Land at Didcot Gateway (as shown on the Policies Map) is allocated to deliver approximately 200 new homes as part of a mixed-use development.

## Site Boundary



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## **Policy AS8 - North West of Grove, Grove**

### **What do we want to achieve on this site?**

Through the Joint Local Plan we propose to continue the allocation of land North West of Grove for the delivery of approximately 600 new homes. The site is located between the Monks Farm and Grove Airfield site allocations and will contribute towards ensuring these sites are well integrated. The site will be delivered in accordance with other policies in the development plan, providing a high quality and sustainable development.

### **What has changed from our previous plan?**

The site was originally allocated by Core Policy 15a in Part 2 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031.

Our review of the existing allocated sites in the current Local Plan has found that this site is still a suitable allocation to continue into the Joint Local Plan. However, our review did conclude that while the site was originally allocated for 400 new homes in the adopted Local Plan, this was with the acknowledgement that the site has the capacity to deliver more housing. The site was allocated for 400 new homes to be delivered within the plan period of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan up to 2031. As the Joint Local Plan covers an extended plan period, the preferred option is to now allocate the site for 600 homes, to cover the period up until 2041 and complete this development.

As part creating a Joint Local Plan, we're aiming to create consistency in how the site allocation policies for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse are presented. Therefore, our preferred approach is to incorporate content that is currently set out in the appendix to the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 into the allocation policy.

We have taken out cross-references to other policies because these are unnecessary as any planning application will be assessed against all other relevant policies in the plan. We have made other changes to clarify terms, layout and infrastructure requirements. We have proposed a concept plan for this site.

## Proposed draft policy

### **Policy AS8 - North West of Grove, Grove**

- 1) Land North West of Grove, Grove (as shown on the Policies Map) is allocated to deliver approximately 600 new homes, and supporting services and facilities.
- 2) Proposals for the development must demonstrate:
  - a) that the applicants have prepared a comprehensive masterplan taking into consideration the indicative concept plan (Figure 7), and the councils' Joint Design Guide. This masterplan must be prepared in collaboration with Vale of White Horse District Council, in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council. The masterplan must be submitted, and approved, as part of the first application for development on this site. The council will determine future applications on this site in accordance with the masterplan. The masterplan must demonstrate the following urban design principles:
    - i) that it maximises walking, cycling, and public transport connectivity with the existing settlement of Grove, including the neighbouring developments at Monks Farm and Grove Airfield;
    - ii) that active frontages are incorporated throughout the development, particularly along the route of the Grove Northern Link Road;
    - iii) that building heights across the site should be predominantly two storeys high;
    - iv) that land used for noise buffers shall not be counted towards public open space but should incorporate good quality green infrastructure; and
    - v) that the proposals conserve and enhance the setting of the nearby cemetery on Downsview Road.
  - b) sufficient primary and early years education provision, to be determined in consultation with the Local Education Authority. This will likely require sufficient contributions towards primary education and early years in accordance with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan;

- c) sufficient off-site contributions to additional secondary education and Special Education Needs and Disabilities, in accordance with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- d) all necessary infrastructure based on up-to-date evidence on the impact of the development. This should reference the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan, but not be limited to this document. The transport mitigation measures are likely to include:
  - i) completion of the Grove Northern Link Road and any necessary mitigation measures identified through the site transport assessment, and signalling the Brook Lane Railway Bridge;
  - ii) contributions towards improving the bus services and associated infrastructure for the area and new bus services connecting with the neighbouring allocations of Grove Airfield and Monks Farm;
  - iii) provision of a network of safe and attractive walking and cycling routes connecting with Grove village centre, and the adjacent allocations of Grove Airfield and Monks Farm; and
  - iv) improvements to, and the creation of new, public rights of way on and off the site.
- e) a layout that minimises the use and impact of private motor vehicles on the site;
- f) how it will contribute towards the expansion and enhancement of the nearby cemetery on Downsview Road;
- g) a new landscape structure building on existing landscape features responding to the most up to date landscape evidence including the Joint Landscape Character Assessment;
- h) how it will contribute towards redressing the identified green infrastructure deficit in the area surrounding Wantage and Grove; and
- i) that potential noise impacts from the existing railway line have been investigated and any necessary mitigation measures to provide an adequate buffer.

Figure 7 - Concept Plan



- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Higher density development |  Green Infrastructure      |
|  Medium density development |  Green Links               |
|  Lower density development  |  Indicative Road Alignment |

## **Policy AS9 - North West of Valley Park, Didcot**

### **What do we want to achieve on this site?**

Through the Joint Local Plan we propose to continue the allocation of North West of Valley Park, Didcot for the delivery of approximately 800 new homes. The site is located adjacent to the Valley Park site allocation. The site will be delivered in accordance with other policies in the development plan, providing a high quality and sustainable development.

### **What has changed from our previous plan?**

The site was originally allocated by Core Policy 15: Spatial Strategy for South East Vale Sub-Area in Part 1 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031.

As part creating a Joint Local Plan, we're aiming to create consistency in how the site allocation policies for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse are presented. Therefore, our preferred approach is to incorporate content that is currently set out in the appendix to the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 into the allocation policy.

We have taken out cross-references to other policies because these are unnecessary as any planning application will be assessed against all other relevant policies in the plan. We have made other changes to clarify layout and infrastructure requirements. We have proposed a concept plan for this site.

### **Proposed draft policy**

#### **Policy AS9 - North West of Valley Park, Didcot**

- 1) Land North West of Valley Park, Didcot (as shown on the Policies Map) is allocated to deliver approximately 800 new homes, supporting services and facilities, including education provision, and a local centre.
- 2) Proposals for the development must demonstrate:

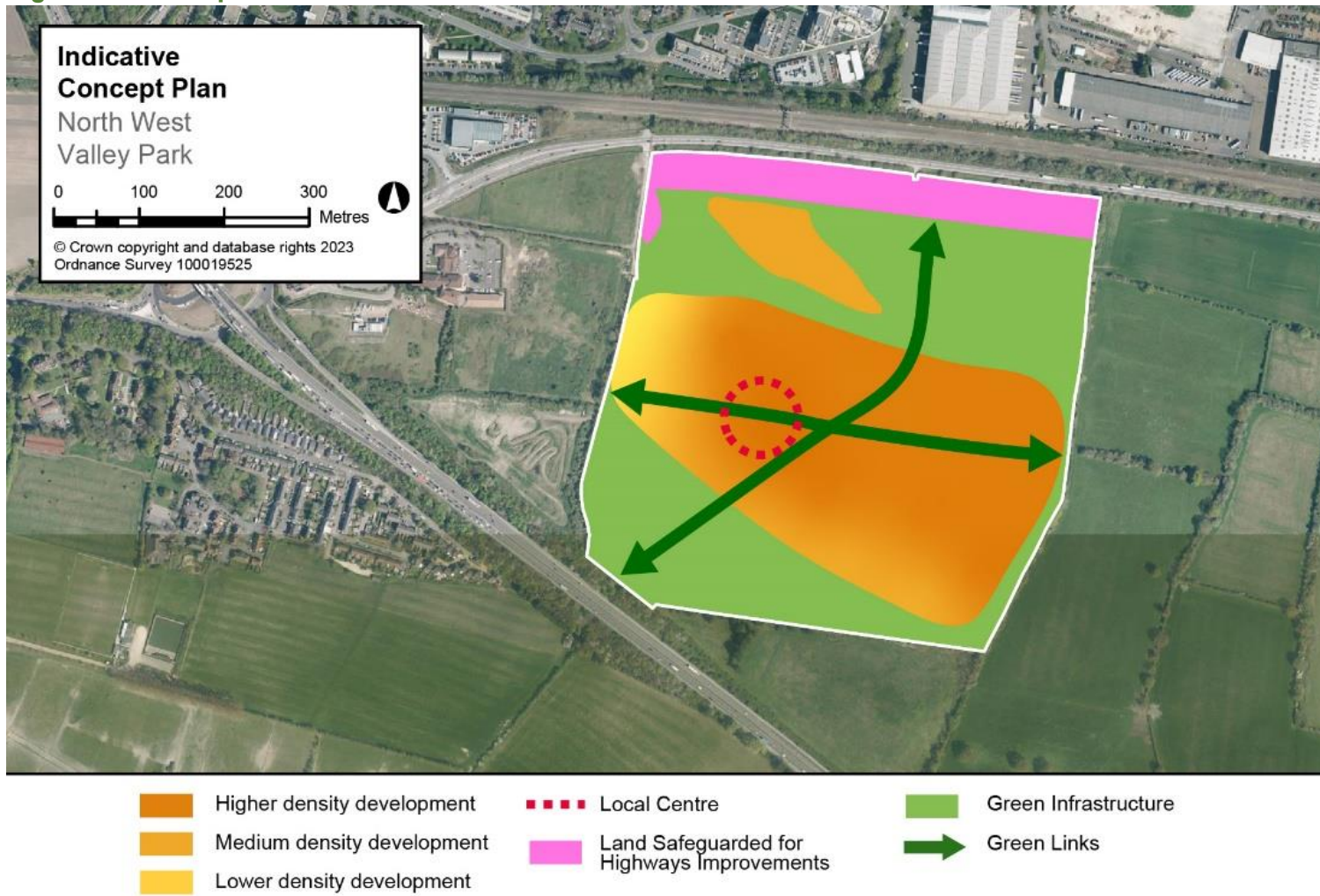


- a) that the applicants have prepared a comprehensive masterplan taking into consideration the indicative concept plan (Figure 8) the councils' Joint Design Guide, and design and layout of nearby housing sites, including Valley Park and Milton Heights. This masterplan must be prepared in collaboration with the Vale of White Horse District Council, in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council. The masterplan must be submitted, and approved, as part of the first application for development on this site. The council will determine future applications on this site in accordance with the masterplan;
- b) sufficient education provision, to be determined in consultation with the Local Education Authority. This is likely to require a primary school on site, and sufficient off-site contributions to secondary education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
- c) all necessary infrastructure based on up-to-date evidence on the impact of the development. This should reference the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan, but not be limited to this document. The transport mitigation measures are likely to include:
  - i) permeability for active modes through this site, and onward connections to key nearby destinations, including Didcot town, Valley Park, Milton Park, and Harwell Campus;
  - ii) provision of land for the widening of the A4130;
  - iii) vehicular access onto the A4130 directly and through Valley Park;
  - iv) a landscaped corridor along the northern edge of the site, providing a footpath and cycle way from the adjacent Valley Park development to Milton Park, and offer a more attractive approach to the town from the A34;
  - v) pedestrian and cycle routes from this site to the Milton Heights development to the west of the A34;
  - vi) ensuring the proposed development does not preclude the future expansion of the A34; and

- vii) an appropriate route through the site for, and contributions towards, new high quality bus services to Didcot town centre / railway station, and to the major employment sites at Culham Science Centre, Milton Park, and Harwell Campus, until such a time that these services can be operated on a fully commercial basis.
- d) a layout that minimises the use and impact of private motor vehicles on the site;
- e) how the proposed development will act a gateway to Didcot, carefully considering the uses on the frontage of the A4130;
- f) provision of a neighbourhood centre of approximately 500m<sup>2</sup>, to include local shops and other community facilities to serve the development;
- g) provision of a community centre of approximately 1,400m<sup>2</sup>;
- h) provision of public open space and recreational facilities in locations that are accessible for this site and the adjacent Valley Park site, in accordance with the Leisure Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy;
- i) contributions towards sports facilities in Didcot;
- j) a new landscape structure building on existing landscape features responding to the most up to date landscape evidence including the Joint Landscape Character Assessment, with a masterplan which coordinates with the Valley Park development to the east to provide linkages;
- k) how it will contribute towards redressing the identified green infrastructure deficit in the area surrounding Didcot and link to other strategies for the area;
- l) a Drainage Strategy setting out the sewerage infrastructure provision. The sewer route through the site will be protected by an easement. The site will be connected to the sewage treatment works located to the north of Great Western Park; and

m) that there is no development within Flood Zones 2 and 3, other than essential infrastructure, and that surface water flooding to the north of the site has been investigated and appropriately mitigated (if necessary).

Figure 8 - Concept Plan



## **Policy AS10 - Land at Dalton Barracks Garden Village, Shippon**

### **What do we want to achieve on this site?**

Through the Joint Local Plan we propose to continue and extend the allocation at Dalton Barracks, Shippon for the delivery of an exemplar mixed-use development, comprising approximately 2,750 new homes, supporting services and facilities, including parkland, education provision, leisure and recreational facilities, local centres, and opportunities for employment, following Garden Village Principles. The site is currently a Ministry of Defence site located adjacent to the village of Shippon to the north of Abingdon-on-Thames. The site will be delivered in accordance with other policies in the development plan, providing an exemplar development.

### **What has changed from our previous plan?**

The site was originally allocated by Core Policy 8a in Part 2 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031.

Core Policy 8a allocated 1,200 new homes to the site. The preferred option is to extend and allocate the site for 2,750 homes in the Joint Local Plan, which will be delivered mainly within the plan period up until 2041, but also beyond it.

As part of Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2, the main area of Barracks buildings on the site was removed from the Green Belt, but this area was not allocated for development at that time. The council considers that as the site is due to be vacant from 2029 it is important to positively plan for the redevelopment of this brownfield (previously developed) area now. It is located immediately adjacent to the existing allocation. This offers huge potential to deliver a comprehensively planned exemplar development of a scale that provides the opportunity to bring forward associated facilities and infrastructure for the benefit of the local community. The extended area of the allocation is located within the Garden Village area and includes further land in the Green Belt to provide for a larger parkland, amounting to 52 hectares rather than the current policy requirement of 30 hectares.

The council adopted a Supplementary Planning Document for Dalton Barracks in 2022. This should be used in conjunction with the Joint Local Plan to ensure an exemplar sustainable development is achieved in accordance with Garden Village Principles (see policy AS14).

As part of creating a Joint Local Plan, we're aiming to create consistency in how the site allocation policies for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse are presented. Therefore, our preferred approach is to incorporate content that is currently set out in the appendix to the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 into the allocation policy. We have updated the policy to reflect the larger

allocation, as we prepare the Draft Joint Local Plan we will consider if further changes are needed. We have not cross-referenced to other policies in the Plan because these are unnecessary as any planning application will be assessed against all other relevant policies. We have referenced the adopted Supplementary Planning Document and made other changes to clarify layout and infrastructure requirements. We have proposed a concept plan for this site.

### Proposed draft policy

#### **Policy AS10 - Land at Dalton Barracks Garden Village, Shippon**

- 1) Land at Dalton Barracks Garden Village (as shown on the Policies Map) is allocated to deliver approximately 2,750 new homes, supporting services and facilities, including healthcare and education provision, leisure and recreational facilities, local centres including convenience floorspace that meets the day-to-day needs, and opportunities for employment.
- 2) Proposals for the development must demonstrate:
  - a) an exemplar development standard, following Garden Village Principles and objectives (see Policy AS14) to ensure the potential for highly sustainable and accessible development is fully realised;
  - b) that the applicant has prepared a comprehensive masterplan taking into consideration the indicative concept plan (Figure 9), the councils' Joint Design Guide and the Dalton Barrack Strategic Allocation Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2022)\*. This masterplan must be prepared in collaboration, and agreed with, the Vale of White Horse District Council, in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council, Natural England, and any other relevant stakeholders. The masterplan must be submitted, and approved, as part of the first application for development on this site. The council will determine future applications on this site in accordance with the masterplan;
  - c) how the proposals make efficient use of land by focussing new buildings on areas of previously developed land within the site;

- d) that the part of the site within the Oxford Green Belt will be limited to Green Belt-compatible development. This area will include parkland, located on the western and north-western sides of the site that should be planned for as part of the overall site masterplan;
- e) how existing buildings used by the public will be retained or replaced;
- f) that existing buildings and monuments, where possible, are retained and re-used to give context and interest to the site, particularly where these are of heritage significance;
- g) sufficient education provision, to be agreed with the Local Education Authority, which is likely to require primary school provision (including nursery education) to be provided on site. A site and funding for a new secondary school is also required. Financial contributions will be required for off-site Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
- h) all necessary infrastructure based on up-to-date evidence on the impact of the development. This should reference the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan, but not be limited to this document. The transport mitigation measures are likely to include:
  - i) upgrades to Frilford Junction. No homes are to be occupied on site until this work is completed, unless an alternative phasing plan is agreed with the council and the local highway authority;
  - ii) mobility hub (previously known as Park and Ride) sites;
  - iii) bus priority measures on the A34;
  - iv) an upgrade to footpath (ref: 333/7/10) and the footbridge over the A34 connecting Faringdon Road in Shippon with Copenhagen Drive in Abingdon-on-Thames to enable walking, cycling, and wheeling;
  - v) junction improvements at Barrow Road/unnamed road;
  - vi) junction improvements at unnamed road/Marcham Road;
  - vii) mitigation at Marcham Interchange, to potentially include traffic signals;
  - viii) proposals to reduce the impact of vehicular traffic in surrounding villages;
  - ix) access to the A34;
  - x) pedestrian and cycle access to proposed mobility hub sites;

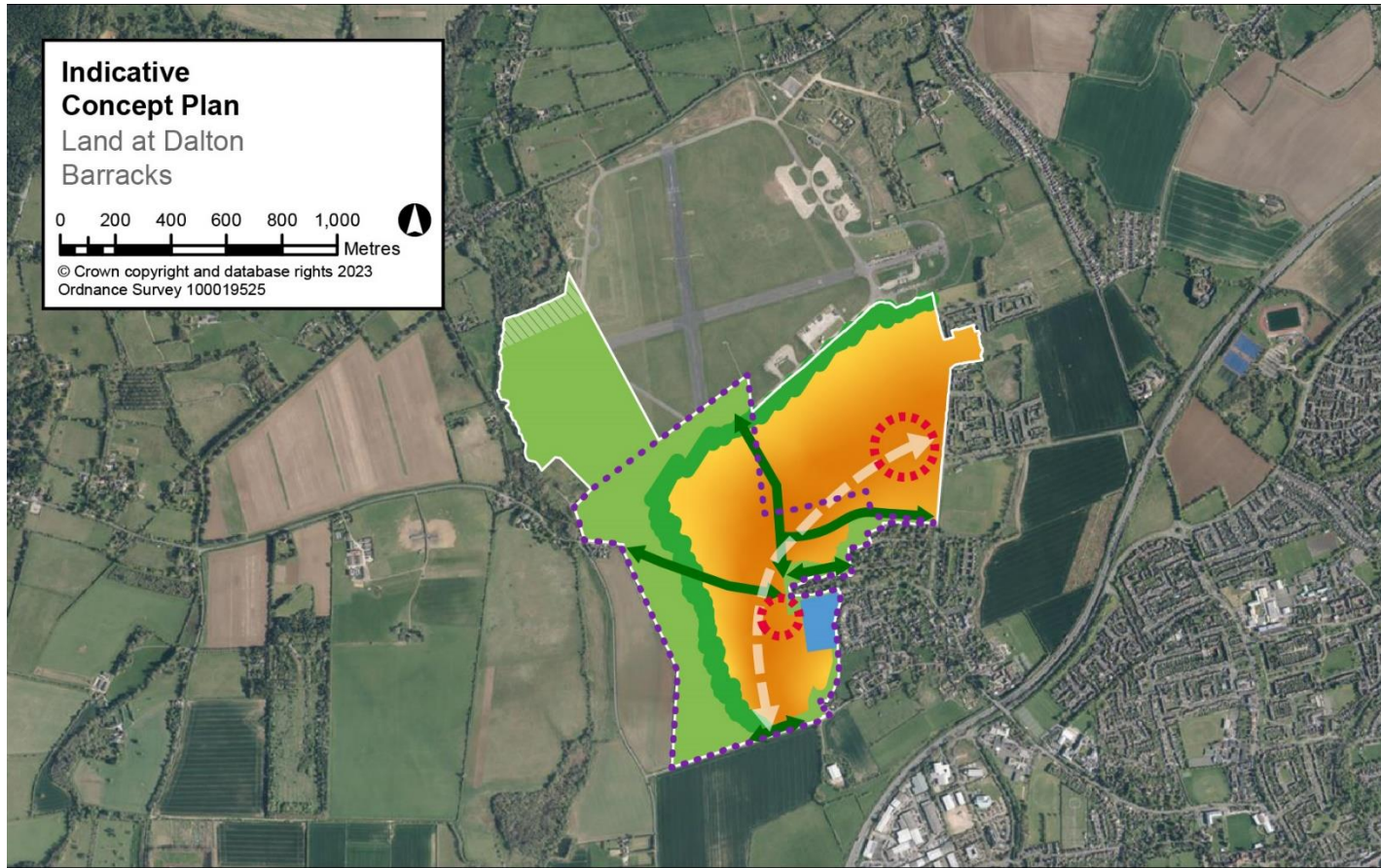
- xi) a network of safe and attractive walking and cycling routes through the site and connecting with the surrounding area, including cycle way and footway connections to Oxford and Abingdon-on-Thames
  - xii) enhanced bus frequency through the site to secure a premium route standard with associated infrastructure enhancements to Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxford and other key destinations;
  - xiii) contributions towards a new high-quality bus service to major employment sites at Culham Science Centre, Harwell Campus, and Milton Park, if possible;
  - xiv) the retention, improvement and/or appropriate diversion of existing Public Rights of Way unless otherwise specifically agreed;
  - xv) provision of new accesses, including cycle routes and a bridleway to and within the parkland; and
  - xvi) a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to include transport and air quality assessments to consider the impact on Cothill Fen SAC, and any outcomes appropriately addressed.
- 
- i) a layout that minimises the use and impact of private motor vehicles on the site;
  - j) how it will make the necessary contributions to a comprehensive landscape plan for the site, informed by a Landscape and Visual Assessment. This will incorporate parkland of at least 52 hectares, to be located on the western side of the site, views to the North Wessex Downs ridgeline to the south to be retained from the from the parkland and a new permanent defensible landscaped edge to protect the Oxford Green Belt;
  - k) a net gain in biodiversity delivered on site, as well as avoiding all direct and indirect impacts on Cothill Fen SAC, Dry Sandford Pit SSSI, Brown Farm Fen SSSI, and Frilford Heath Ponds and Fen SSSI;
  - l) how recreational impacts on Cothill Fen SAC and neighbouring SSSIs have been assessed and used to inform on-site mitigation through the provision of suitable alternative natural greenspace (in the form of parkland of at least 52 hectares). This mitigation should be considered alongside potential infrastructural improvements within the SAC;
  - m) that there are no adverse effects in relation to the water quality of nearby sites: Cothill Fen SAC; Barrow Farm Fen SSSI; and Gozzards Ford Fen Local Wildlife Site;














- n) that consideration has been given to the Priority Habitat – Deciduous Woodland along Sandford Brook and the western edge when designing the connected green infrastructure for the site;
- o) that there is at least a 10 metre wildlife buffer between the Sandford Brook and the development;
- p) a buffer zone of defensive planting between the Dry Sandford Pit SSSI and the parkland; and
- q) that consideration has been given, where appropriate, to mitigate against any adverse effects on other priority habitat species, as identified through survey work and provide an additional plan to address invasive non-native species.

*\*Dalton Barracks SPD: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/daltonbarracksspd](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/daltonbarracksspd)*

Figure 9 - Concept Plan



- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  Higher density development |  Local Centre  |  Green Infrastructure     |
|  Medium density development |  Indicative Route Alignment  |  Green Links              |
|  Lower density development  |  Primary school playing field<br>(from the Neighbourhood Plan. Other education provision to be provided elsewhere on the site) |  Green Belt Reinforcement |
|  Existing allocation        |   |  SSSI Buffer Zone         |

## **Currently Allocated Sites Proposed Not to be Retained in the Joint Local Plan**

There are three currently allocated sites, with standalone policies, that have not been granted planning permission which we are not proposing to retain.

### **Land at Chalgrove Airfield**

#### **What status will this site have in the Joint Local Plan?**

We do not propose to retain this site allocation (currently allocated under Policy STRAT7 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035) in the Joint Local Plan.

#### **What has changed from our previous plan?**

Our review of existing allocated sites has demonstrated that the allocated development is unlikely to be achievable, and that this site is no longer suitable for development.

#### **Achievability concerns**

The site promoter (Homes England) has identified issues with complying with the existing policy for the currently allocated site. An objection from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regarding the proposed layout of the runway led to Homes England withdrawing its outline planning application for this site in May 2021.

The current allocation of 3,000 homes is not achievable within the existing allocated site boundary. The site is leased by Killinchy Aerospace Holdings Limited (until 2063). Killinchy's operating subsidiary Martin Baker Aircraft Company Ltd develops and tests ejector seats for armed forces around the globe. The current site boundary does not allow enough space for 3,000 new homes and a realigned runway delivered to Civil Aviation Authority standards. Homes England has advised that the site boundary would need to be extended (predominantly to the north into currently unallocated, greenfield land) to address the CAA's concerns about the runway.

#### **Suitability concerns**

Our review has found that the significant change in social and environmental priorities of the Joint Local Plan now render the site unsuitable for development. The Chalgrove Airfield site is not a good fit with the emerging spatial strategy for the Joint Local Plan (see Policy SP1), which involves delivering planned development within Science Vale, focussing new housing at the garden

communities of Didcot, Berinsfield and Dalton Barracks, on well-located brownfield sites, and maintaining existing sites that contribute to addressing Oxford's unmet housing need.

An extension to the site boundary to include additional land in the control of the site promoter to facilitate a relocation of the runway, to address the CAA concerns, would result in the site's greenfield footprint extending even further. It would further diminish the extent to which this is a brownfield site since it would involve building on greenfield land. The Joint Local Plan's strategy is to support development on well-located brownfield land. Therefore, whilst Homes England do control the land to facilitate an extension, expanding the allocation would result in the site further conflicting with the emerging spatial strategy of the Joint Local Plan.

We therefore do not consider that the policy in its current or an amended form is capable of addressing the issues of achievability or suitability identified above. Given that the suite of other existing allocations already provides sufficient housing to meet South Oxfordshire's housing requirement (see Policies HOU1 and HOU2), this site is not needed to address our housing needs.

### **Land at Nettlebed, two sites - West of Priests Close and Land South of Nettlebed Service Station**

#### **What status will these sites have in the Joint Local Plan?**

We do not propose to retain these site allocations (currently allocated under policies H5 and H7 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035) in the Joint Local Plan.

#### **What has changed from our previous plan?**

West of Priests Close is currently allocated for approximately 11 homes and Land South of Nettlebed Service Station is currently allocated for approximately 15 homes. Our review of existing allocated sites has demonstrated that these sites are no longer suitable for development.

#### **Suitability concerns**

The two sites are located on greenfield land on the edge of the village of Nettlebed. The village of Nettlebed and the sites themselves lie within the Chilterns National Landscape (formerly AONB).

Our emerging strategy places a great emphasis on conserving and enhancing the special qualities of our nationally protected landscapes, the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes, and takes a more restrictive view than South Oxfordshire's current plan to development in National Landscapes.

Furthermore, these two sites are outside the built-up area of Nettlebed (a proposed Tier 3 settlement). Our previous strategy sought to identify opportunities for villages to grow, especially where this will support local services. Our emerging strategy is to allow housing within Tier 3 settlement, but not on greenfield land outside it. A larger allocated site at Nettlebed (Joyce Grove) has already received planning permission, involving a conversion of a listed building and associated buildings (therefore brownfield land) and we think this provides enough homes, without the need for the greenfield sites in the National Landscape as well.

The councils consider that the significant change in our spatial strategy now render the sites unsuitable for development because they no longer meet the plan's social and environmental priorities. The emerging Joint Local Plan is therefore no longer seeking housing targets nor residential allocations for Nettlebed.

Additionally, there are issues with access to the site known as Land to the West of Priest Close, with access likely to be required across Registered Common Land, an additional constraint not in favour of development at this location.

Given that the suite of other existing allocations already provides sufficient housing to meet South Oxfordshire's housing requirement (see Policies HOU1 and HOU2), these sites are not needed to address our housing needs.

## **Strategic Employment Allocations**

### **Policy AS11 - Culham Science Centre**

#### **What do we want to achieve on this site?**

We want to provide a positive framework for the sustainable development of this internationally important centre of science and research, and for development to come forward in a comprehensive way that takes into account transport, landscape, heritage and ecological impacts, through the preparation of a masterplan.

#### **What has changed from our previous plan?**

The site is allocated in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 in policy STRAT8. Policy STRAT8 allows a net increase of at least 7.3 hectares of employment land to be delivered across the Science Centre site and the adjacent allocation – Land Adjacent to Culham Science Centre (current policy STRAT 9). Our monitoring shows that 5 hectares has been completed on the Science Centre site so far, leaving a further 2.3 hectares still to be delivered to reach at least a 7.3 hectare net gain. There is 10 hectares of existing employment land at the adjacent Culham No.1 site, which is part of the current STRAT 9 allocation, and the current local plan requires this amount to be retained and redistributed across the Science Centre site and the STRAT9 allocation. Our Joint Local Plan's preferred approach for the Culham No.1 site is for the employment land to be retained for employment uses and optimised, this is addressed in Policy AS2. The Science Centre site will deliver a net increase of employment land of at least 2.3 hectares.

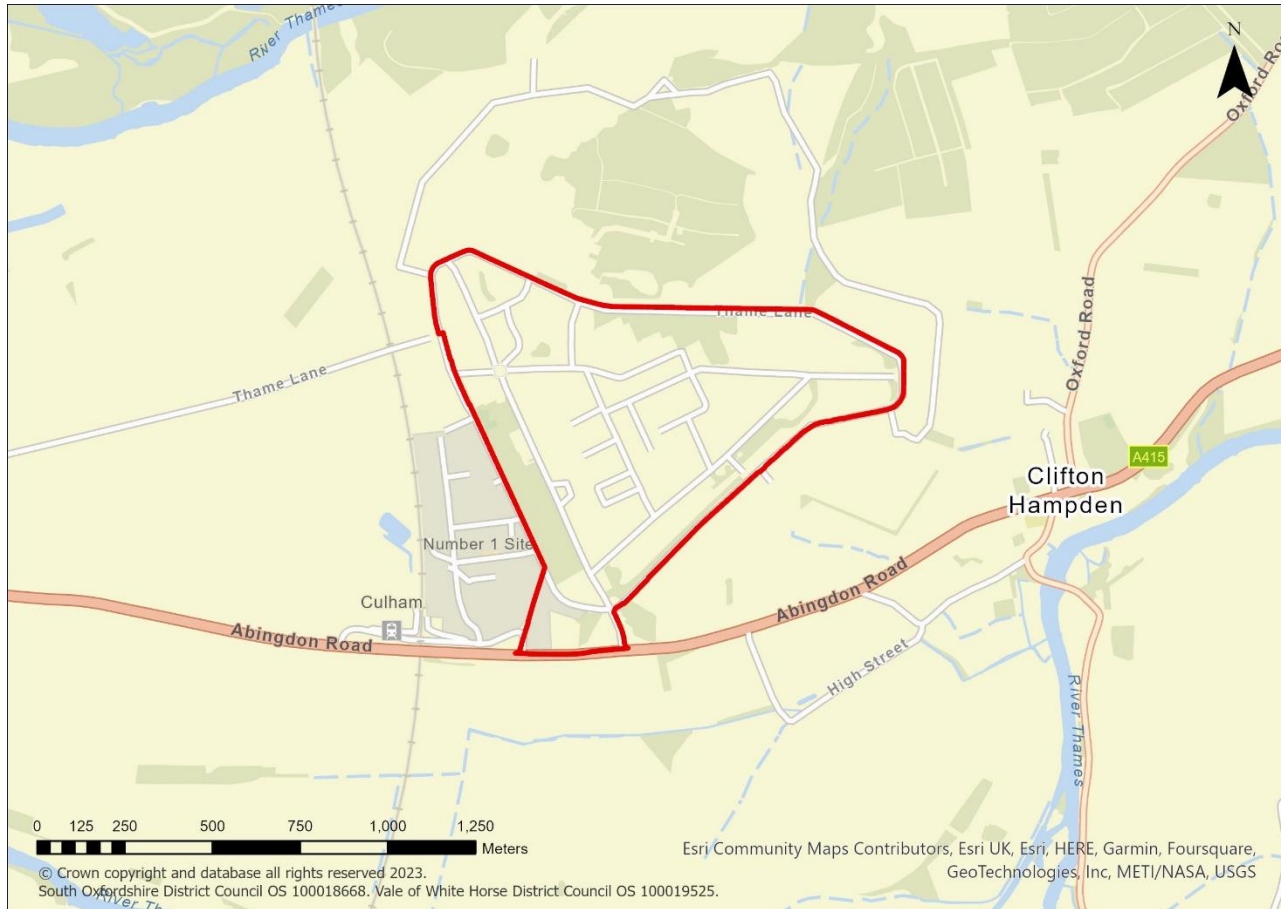
In this updated policy we are requiring a masterplan to be prepared and approved before any future development is permitted, following the adoption of the Joint Local Plan. This gives time between now and Joint Local Plan adoption to complete this masterplan process. The masterplan will ensure that development comes forward in a planned way, taking into account the key impacts of development in this location.

## Proposed draft policy

### Policy AS11 - Culham Science Centre

- 1) A net increase of at least 2.3 hectares of employment land will be provided at the Culham Science Centre (as shown on the Policies Map). We will support proposals for additional employment provision at Culham Science Centre that:
  - a) are in accordance with an agreed masterplan for the site that shall be prepared in consultation with South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council;
  - b) mitigate as far as possible the impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and the Registered Parkland associated with Nuneham House;
  - c) address all necessary infrastructure, to be agreed in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council based on up-to-date evidence on the impact of the development. This should reference the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan, but not be limited to this document; and
  - d) are in accordance with and meets the requirements of a travel plan for the whole site to make the necessary improvements (through direct delivery or via developer contributions) in order to implement sustainable transport initiatives, including minimising car usage, reducing car parking provision (in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council Parking Standards) and increasing the use of public transport, walking and cycling both on and off site. This will include the requirement to model the traffic impacts of all anticipated development across the whole site.
- 2) The site owner should work proactively with the council to develop a masterplan for the site that facilitates any future growth. This should include a comprehensive assessment of transport impacts, landscape impacts, archaeological and heritage impacts, and ecological impacts. This masterplan must be agreed with the Local Planning Authority and Oxfordshire County Council prior to any further development being granted permission. The masterplan must be submitted, and approved, as part of a planning application for development on this site (this will either be the first application following the adoption of the Joint Local Plan or earlier). The council will determine future applications on this site in accordance with the masterplan.

## Site Boundary



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## Policy AS12 - Harwell Campus

### What do we want to achieve on this site?

We want to continue to support the sustainable growth of this internationally important hub for science, innovation and research. We aim to secure a masterplan for the comprehensive development of the campus to ensure that development comes forward in a coordinated way, taking into account the impact on transport and landscape, reflecting its location within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (formerly AONB).

### What has changed from our previous plan?

Harwell Campus is an allocated employment site in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1. Core Policy 6 allocates the site for 128 hectares of employment land. Our monitoring indicates that to date around 35 hectares has been either delivered or has planning permission. There is around 93 hectares of employment land remaining to be delivered.

The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 contains Core Policy 15b: Harwell Campus Comprehensive Development Framework. Core Policy 15b sets out some criteria for how future development should come forward. These criteria have been carried forward to this policy. We are requiring a masterplan to be prepared and approved before any future development is permitted, following the adoption of the Joint Local Plan. This gives time between now and Joint Local Plan adoption to complete this masterplan process. This process will ensure future growth contributes towards comprehensive development of the site and includes an assessment of the transport and landscape impacts of development, across the whole campus.

### Proposed draft policy

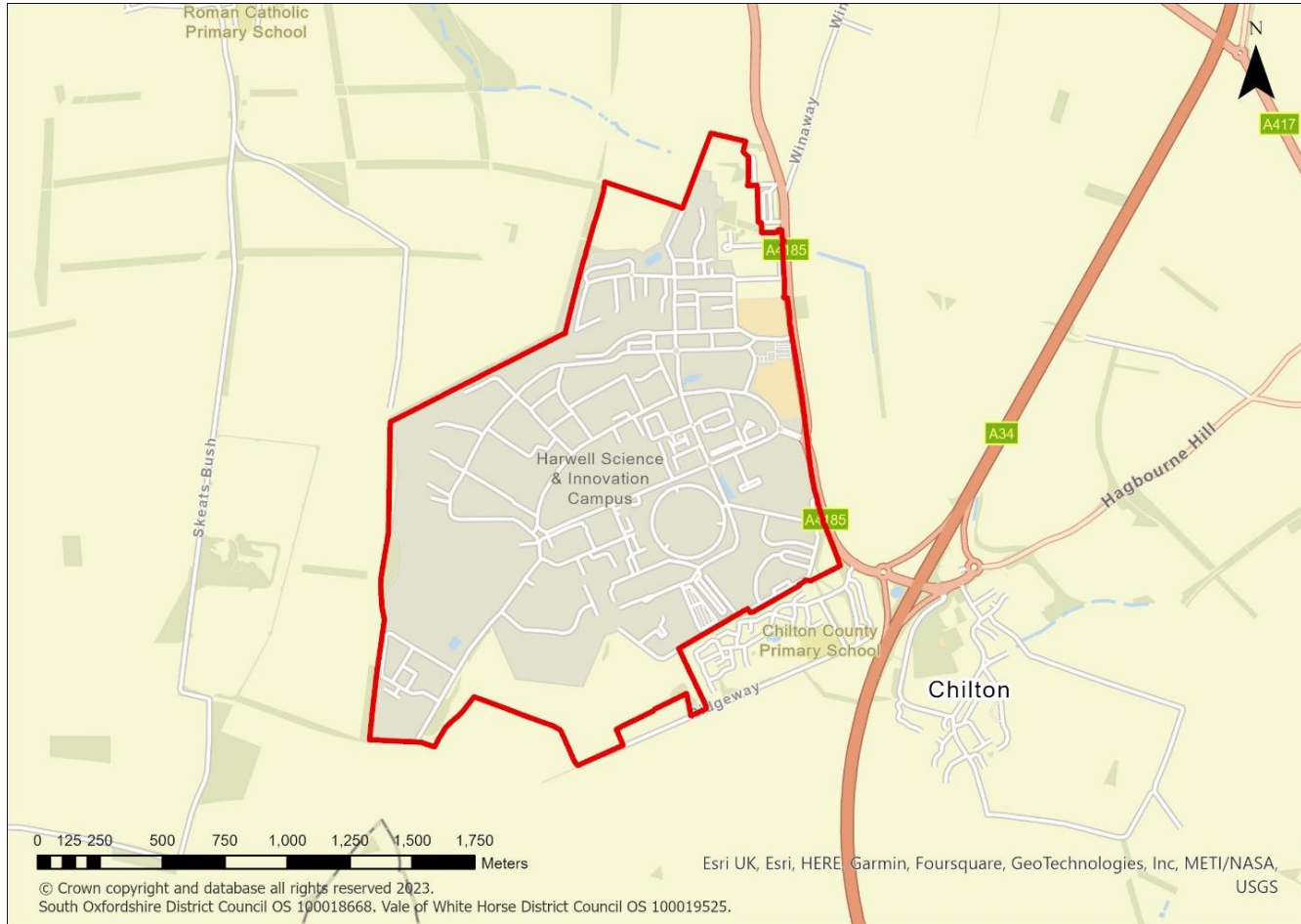
#### Policy AS12 - Harwell Campus

- 1) Harwell Campus (as shown on the Policies Map) is allocated to deliver approximately 93 hectares of employment land.
- 2) The site owners should work proactively with the Vale of White Horse District Council, National Highways, and Oxfordshire County Council to develop a masterplan of the site that facilitates this growth. This should include a

comprehensive assessment of the transport, landscape and ecological impacts of development, generated by the whole campus in the vicinity of the site. This masterplan must be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, National Highways and Oxfordshire County Council prior to any further development being granted permission. The masterplan must be submitted, and approved, as part of a planning application for development on this site (this will either be the first application following the adoption of the Joint Local Plan or earlier). The council will determine future applications on this site in accordance with the masterplan.

- 3) Proposals must demonstrate how they contribute towards a comprehensive approach to development and that they:
- a) will not unacceptably harm the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Landscape, taking into account their location, scale, bulk, height and materials;
  - b) adequately assess and mitigate impact upon areas of archaeological interest;
  - c) are in accordance with and meets the requirements of a travel plan for the whole campus to make the necessary improvements (through direct delivery or via developer contributions) in order to implement any required infrastructure, with particular emphasis upon sustainable transport initiatives, including minimising car usage, reducing car parking provision and increasing the use of public transport, walking and cycling both on and off site. This will include the requirement to model the traffic impacts on the local and strategic road networks of all anticipated development generated across the whole campus;
  - d) are in accordance with and makes the necessary contributions to a comprehensive landscape plan for the whole campus. No development will be permitted within structural areas of open space and perimeter landscaping. In considering proposals for new development and redevelopment, a high quality of landscaping will be required, existing important wildlife habitats will be retained and opportunities for the creation of new wildlife habitats will be taken, where possible; and
  - e) ensure any external lighting scheme has a minimal impact in terms of light pollution.

## Site Boundary



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## **Policy AS13 - Berinsfield Garden Village**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy identifies principles for all new development within Berinsfield Garden Village, including the land allocated within AS1 – Land at Berinsfield Garden Village.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Berinsfield was awarded Garden Village status in June 2019 and has the potential to become an exemplar for the delivery of high-quality place making and well-being, as identified in the Garden Village Bid. This policy identifies the principles that development within Berinsfield should accord with in order to achieve this, by referencing the Garden Village Principles as set out by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and setting out locally specific Berinsfield Garden Village principles.

As the policy applies to both the existing village and the land allocated in Policy AS1 – Land at Berinsfield Garden Village, it should help to create a sense of cohesion between the two areas. The policy will guide both the delivery of the housing allocation as well as any development and regeneration projects within the existing village.

### **Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)**

#### **Option A - Preferred**

To have a policy that sets clear, locally specific, principles for development within Berinsfield Garden Village.

### **Why we prefer Option A**

We prefer Option A as it will help guide development within Berinsfield Garden Village to follow a comprehensive set of principles that are locally specific and respond to the needs of the village.

### **Option B - Alternative**

A policy that does not identify specific “Berinsfield Garden Village Principles” and only signposts to the Garden Village principles as set out by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA). This option is not preferred as it misses the opportunity to add local detail relating to Berinsfield Garden Village.

### **Option C – Alternative**

To have no policy on principles for development in Berinsfield Garden Village and to instead rely on other policies within the plan. This option is not preferred as it misses the opportunity have a policy that specifically deals with the important development within a garden village

## **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

### **Policy AS13 - Berinsfield Garden Village**

- 1) Berinsfield Garden Village is defined as the existing village and any future development that is contiguous to the existing village including land within the allocation in Policy AS1 - Land at Berinsfield Garden Village.
- 2) All development within the Berinsfield Garden Village (as shown on the Policies Map) will meet the Garden Village principles as set out by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and in accordance with the Berinsfield Garden Village principles below:
  - a) stewardship and legacy – a cared for Garden Village of attractive built and natural environments, healthy and accessible nurseries and classrooms with residents involved in managing space and facilities.

- b) forward thinking – a resilient Garden Village, master planned at a human scale that incorporates sustainable energy, adaptable homes and smart street lighting that avoids night sky light pollution.
- c) landscape led – a green Garden Village with a minimum 38 per cent usable green space in built-up areas, a minimum of 10 per cent biodiversity net gain and a design that responds visually to topography and aspect, with multi-functional blue-green infrastructure with integrated SuDS from rooftop to attenuation.
- d) strong sense of place – a connected Garden Village that creates attractive walking and cycling links between the existing village, new development and the surrounding countryside.
- e) healthy, vibrant community – a healthy Garden Village with integrated open space that incorporates “edible landscape”, orchards, allotments, natural play, private and community gardens, space for healthy lifestyles and social mixing, tenure blind housing and full integration of mixed tenure homes.
- f) sustainable transport and access – an accessible Garden Village that prioritises walking and cycling, well designed parking solutions, integrated public transport, and built in capacity within; homes, businesses, and public spaces to enable innovative transport solutions and safe neighbourhoods with natural surveillance and smart lighting.
- g) attention to detail – a legible Garden Village in which people can find their way, through landmarks, character areas and waymarked routes, detailed design to make local trips more attractive on foot or by bicycle and use of high-quality materials and design.

3) Land at the centre of Berinsfield, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated as Local Green Space.

## Garden Village Boundary



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## Policy AS14 - Dalton Barracks Garden Village

### What will this policy do?

This policy identifies the principles and objectives for all new development within Dalton Barracks Garden Village, including the land allocated within AS10 - Land at Dalton Barracks Garden Village, Shippon.

### Why is this policy needed?

Dalton Barracks was awarded Garden Village status in June 2019 and has the potential to become an exemplar for the delivery of high-quality place making and well-being. This policy identifies the principles and objectives that development within Dalton Barracks should accord with in order to achieve this, by referencing the Garden Village principles as set out by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and setting out locally specific Dalton Barracks Garden Village objectives.

Vale of White Horse District Council adopted a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Dalton Barracks in 2022. This should be used in conjunction with the Joint Local Plan to ensure an exemplar sustainable development is achieved in accordance with Garden Village principles.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

To have a policy that sets clear, locally specific, objectives for development within Dalton Barracks Garden Village. This policy will act as a link to the existing Supplementary Planning Document.

### Why we prefer Option A

We prefer Option A as it will help guide new development within Dalton Barracks Garden Village to follow a common set of objectives that are locally specific.



### **Option B - Alternative**

A policy that does not identify specific Dalton Barracks Garden Village objectives and only signposts to the Garden Village Principles as set out by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA).

This option is not preferred as it misses the opportunity to link with the existing SPD.

### **Option C – Alternative**

To have no policy on principles for development in Dalton Barracks Garden Village and to instead rely on other policies within the plan.

This option is not preferred as it misses the opportunity to link with the existing SPD and specifically have a policy that deals with the important development within a garden village, along with Berinsfield Garden Village and Didcot Garden Town.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy AS14 - Dalton Barracks Garden Village**

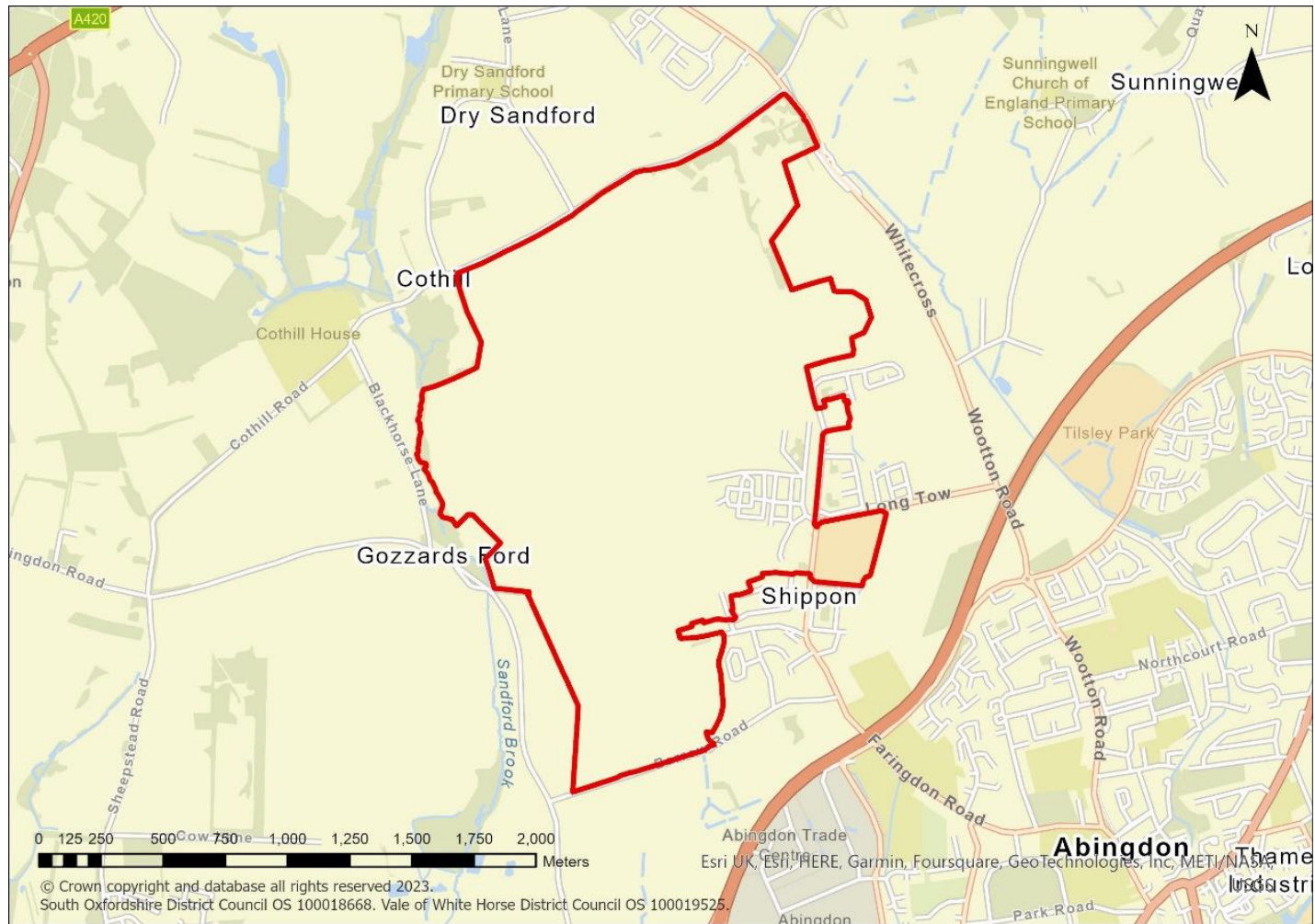
- 1) All development within the Dalton Barracks Garden Village (as shown on the Policies Map) will meet the Garden Village principles as set out by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and be in accordance with the Dalton Barracks Garden Village objectives below:
  - a) A resilient garden community, which can adapt to changes in demographic profile, the impact of emerging challenges related to climate and other environmental issues and socio-economic developments.

- b) Landscape led – considering landscape first in the masterplanning process and using it to steer the layout of the development.
- c) A strong sense of place with an attention to detail and high quality.
- d) A healthy and vibrant community.
- e) An accessible Garden Village.
- f) Stewardship and legacy addressed.

2) The Dalton Barracks Supplementary Planning Document (adopted in 2022)\* provides detail on how these objectives should be achieved.

*\*Dalton Barracks SPD: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/daltonbarracksspd](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/daltonbarracksspd)*

## Garden Village Boundary



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## Policy AS15 - Harcourt Hill Campus

### What will this policy do?

This policy will continue to guide the future development of Harcourt Hill Campus. This policy aims to secure a masterplan for proposals for the upgrading or redevelopment of the site that meets the needs for predominantly educational uses and in a manner that respects its Green Belt setting and urban-rural fringe context.

### Why is this policy needed?

Core Policy 9 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1 supports the upgrading or redevelopment of the campus where it is guided by an agreed masterplan. The Harcourt Hill Campus is currently occupied by Oxford Brookes University, and provides teaching facilities, student accommodation and supporting uses including sports facilities which can be accessed by the public. Harcourt Hill Campus is located in a wooded section of the Oxford Green Belt on the urban-rural fringe and the site falls within the setting of protected views towards and from Oxford.

The University is reviewing the future role of Harcourt Hill Campus and this policy is needed to ensure that the campus develops in a coherent and comprehensive manner. The policy requires a masterplan that sets out a clear vision for the future educational and recreational use of the site.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### **Option A - Preferred**

To make updates to the wording of the existing policy to reflect the retention of the educational focus of the site and recreational use. To include reference to walking and cycling access to reflect the objectives of the Joint Local Plan.

## Why we prefer Option A

Option A continues the policy support for the future educational use of Harcourt Hill Campus. Additions and updates to the policy have been made to include requirements for the provision/retention of education and sports facilities, and site access by a network of footways and cycle routes, to reflect the objectives and other policies in the Joint Local Plan.

### Option B - Alternative

Retain the policy as it is in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan. Option B is not preferred as this fails to reflect other policies in the Joint Local Plan.

### Option C – Alternative

Remove the policy allocation. Option C is not preferred as this would fail to recognise the potential changes facing this site located in the Oxford Green Belt and the role it has with existing communities.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### Policy AS15 - Harcourt Hill Campus

- 1) If proposing significant change, the landowner/Oxford Brookes University is required to work proactively with the district council, Oxfordshire County Council, local residents and other appropriate stakeholders to develop a masterplan for the Harcourt Hill Campus site (as shown on the Policies Map) that meets the needs for predominantly educational uses and in a manner that respects its Green Belt setting and urban-rural fringe context. Proposals for the upgrading or redevelopment of the Harcourt Hill Campus will be supported in principle where guided by an agreed masterplan that sets a clear vision for the future use of the site. The agreed masterplan and any subsequent proposals should be prepared to

clearly identify and address key site issues including, but not limited to, the following matters:

- a) the scale of development proposed and intended uses;
- b) the provision/retention of educational and sports facilities;
- c) the integration of built form into the landscape which will be assessed at the planning application stage with reference to a comprehensive landscape, tree, and planting strategy;
- d) sustainable site access including by a network of footways and cycle routes, public transport, and the effective management of car trips and car parking demand; and
- e) the safeguarding of long-distance views of the site from Oxford and to ensure that new development does not detract from views of the existing spires by reason of its height or form.

## Site Boundary



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## Policy AS16 - Land at Crowmarsh Gifford, Benson Lane - Site of former district council offices

### What do we want to achieve on this site?

This is a brownfield site, located at Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford, it is just over 2.5 hectares in size. It was previously in employment use as it was home to South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils until a fire destroyed the offices in 2015. The councils have decided not to return to the site. As a vacant brownfield site, which is well located at a Tier 3 settlement and close to the Tier 1 settlement of Wallingford, it is appropriate for us to consider what use or uses it should have in the future through this plan.

The site is located within the Crowmarsh Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) area which was made (adopted) on 7 October 2021. However, no specific policies within the NDP address the future use of the site, rather it notes that the site will become available for other uses given the councils electing not to return to it. The site is roughly “L” shaped and is outside but adjacent the NDP’s village boundary. It is surrounded by development on most sides, with residential use to the south and east, employment use to the north and a recreation ground and nature area to the west.

We don't at this stage have a preferred option for the site instead we are exploring options which can be refined further once we have reviewed comments and gathered additional evidence to better understand the needs of the district including specialist housing or other uses.

### Proposed options

#### **Option A –**

Employment use:

Option A would be to reuse the site for employment use. The site was used as the office base for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils until a fire destroyed the offices in 2015. The councils have vacated the site and the previous office building has been demolished. Allocating the site for reuse for employment would represent a continuation of the current land use of the site and complement the neighbouring employment centre at Howbery Park to the north.



### **Option B –**

Residential use:

Option B would be to allocate the site for residential use. Further work would be required to understand the potential capacity of the site for residential development and any site-specific requirements that the development would be required to provide. However, it may have capacity for up to approximately 100 homes.

Proposals for residential use would need to make appropriate provision for affordable housing and comply with other relevant policies in the development plan.

### **Option C –**

Specialist housing:

Option C would be to allocate the site to address the housing needs of a specific group or groups, solely or alongside other uses. The councils are in the process of gathering the evidence necessary to understand the potential housing needs of specific groups. It may be necessary to consider the potential of this and other sites to address any additional need that cannot be accommodated within other allocated sites. This could include but not limited to:

- specialised housing for older people; and
- plots for self and/or custom housebuilders.

### **Option D –**

Other uses:

Option D acknowledges there may be other appropriate land uses for the site not set out above in Options A-C. Other uses could include, but are not limited to:

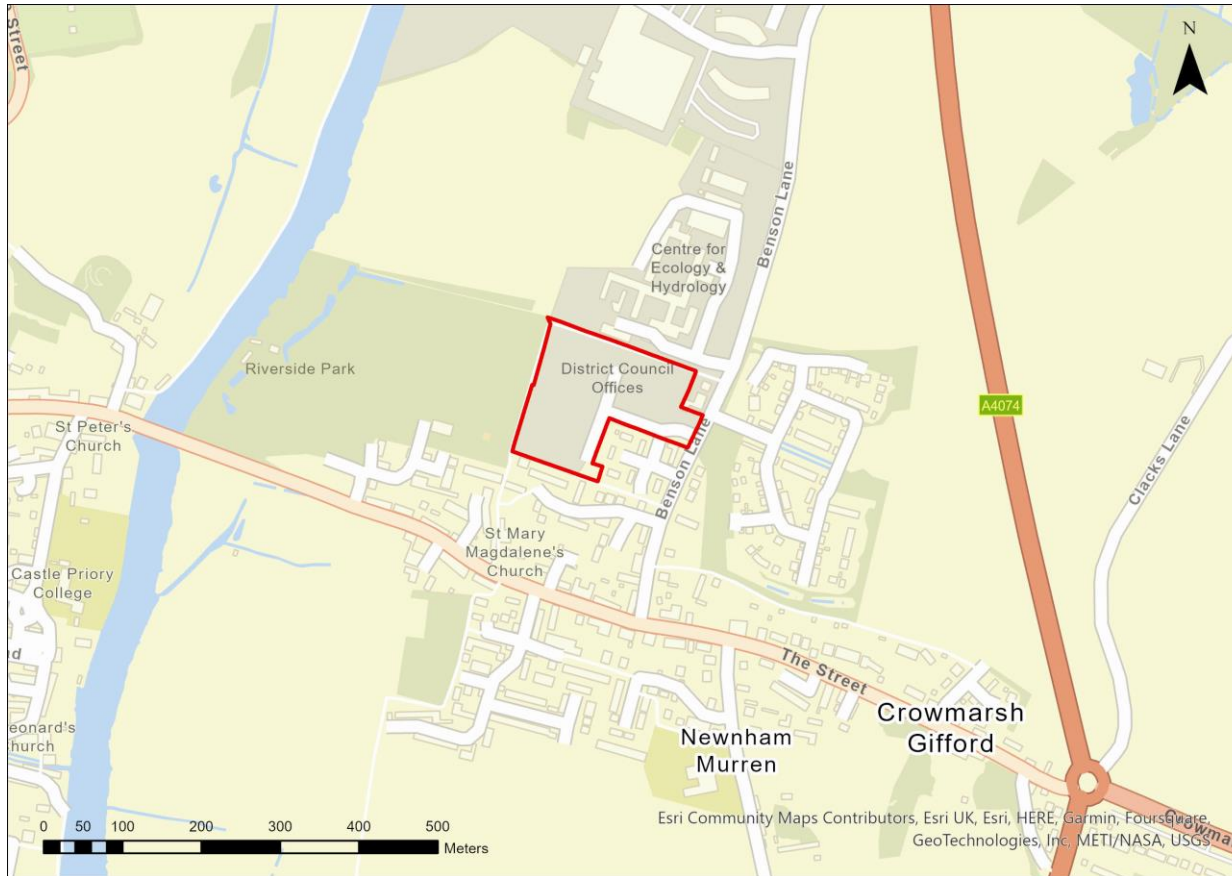
- community facilities
- environmental use/renewable energy
- leisure and recreational uses.

### **Proposed draft policy**

#### **Policy AS16 - Land at Crowmarsh Gifford, Benson Lane - Site of former district council offices**

*No draft policy at this stage. Further work is required to understand the potential capacity of the site for different uses or a mix of uses and to understand whether different uses are compatible on this site. Additionally, the policy would need to set out any site-specific requirements that the development would be required to provide.*

## Site Boundary



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## 9. Town Centres and Retail

### Introduction

#### You told us

In response to our Issues Consultation, you gave us plenty of suggestions about how we could adapt and improve our town centres and high streets to meet our changing needs. Comments were wide-ranging and often related to specific centres, however we did notice some recurring themes which we have taken on board in our policy drafting.

There was support for the conversion of vacant properties/sites for other appropriate town centre uses, including making better use of upper floors in town centres for residential uses and there were requests for a wider variety of retail and service uses and more independent retailers. Some people also suggested that restricting out-of-town stores and developing in sustainable/accessible town centre locations could support the vitality and viability of our town centres and local businesses. There was also general agreement that the Joint Local Plan needed to consider future retail and other service provision in our rural areas, emphasising that villages played a vital role in providing for the essential needs of residents and that Joint Local Plan policies could address rural needs by offering protection to essential community facilities, shops and employment uses.

## Policy TCR1 - Centre hierarchy

### What will this policy do?

This policy will set out a hierarchy of centres across the two districts, so that shops and other town centre uses can be directed to sustainable locations, avoiding “out of town” retail development. The hierarchy will reflect each settlement’s role and function, based on their size, range of shops, services and facilities and the size of the population they serve.

### Why is this policy needed?

We need to define a network and hierarchy of centres in our Joint Local Plan, in accordance with paragraph 90 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), to provide clarity on where we see the focus for retail and other service provision over the plan period. For this hierarchy to apply across both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts, we need to bring consistency to how we define the respective tiers because the current adopted plans use different terminology, which could cause confusion.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Preferred Option A

Have a policy that:

- brings consistency between the existing centre hierarchies in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, setting out an appropriate centre hierarchy across the two districts, which takes into account the findings from our Town Centres and Retail Study and Settlement Assessment by:
  - identifying Didcot as the principal town centre across both districts
  - categorising Henley-on-Thames, Abingdon-on Thames, Thame, Wallingford, Wantage and Faringdon within a second town centre tier, recognising that they provide for a wide range of uses (particularly convenience goods retail and services) to meet the local populations’ day to day needs
  - identifying Botley and Grove (in the Vale) and Watlington (in South Oxfordshire) as “Local Service Centres”
  - identifying a fourth tier comprising village/local centres.

- defines the role and function of each centre, reflecting its position in the hierarchy
- provides clarity on where we see the focus for different levels of retail and other service provision across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

The plan will identify each centre on the Policies Map (or Inset Map, depending on the level of detail required).

### **Why we prefer Option A**

This is our preferred option because it fully complies with the NPPF, provides a unified approach to defining an appropriate centre hierarchy across both our districts and offers clarity over where we would support new retail and other main town centre development that, not only contributes to the vitality and viability of our town and local centres, but also directs development to the most sustainable and accessible parts of our districts.

### **Alternative Option B**

Retain the two separate centre hierarchies defined in the adopted South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse local plans.

This option is not preferred as it would result in an unnecessarily complex policy, which does not reflect the recommendations of our latest Town Centres and Retail Study and fails to provide clarity on the role and function of individual centres in a centre hierarchy.

### **Alternative Option C**

Define a single centre hierarchy covering both districts, but:

- (1) classify one or more of the individual centres within a different tier;
- (2) include any other village/local centres within the fourth tier; and/or
- (3) remove any of the listed village/local centres from the fourth tier.

This option is not preferred as the position of individual centres within our defined hierarchy reflects the findings of the Town Centres and Retail Study and our own Settlement Assessment work.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### Policy TCR1 - Centre hierarchy

1) The hierarchy of centres in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse is defined in the table below.

#### Centre Hierarchy

Tier in Hierarchy	Role & Function	South Oxfordshire	Vale of White Horse
Principal Town Centre	Principal focus of new and enhanced retail and other main town centre uses (as defined in the Glossary).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Didcot</li> </ul>	
Town Centre	Focus of more localised retail, offices, services, community, leisure, culture, health and tourism facilities that reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Henley-on-Thames</li> <li>• Thame</li> <li>• Wallingford</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abingdon-on-Thames</li> <li>• Wantage</li> <li>• Faringdon</li> </ul>

Local Service Centre	Provision of retail (primarily convenience goods) and a range of other services to serve the settlement and surrounding communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watlington</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Botley</li> <li>• Grove</li> </ul>
Village/Local Centre	Sale of food/other convenience goods and the provision of services to meet the essential day-to-day needs of the local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Berinsfield</li> <li>• Benson</li> <li>• Chalgrove</li> <li>• Chinnor</li> <li>• Cholsey</li> <li>• Crowmarsh Gifford</li> <li>• Goring-on-Thames</li> <li>• Nettlebed</li> <li>• Sonning Common</li> <li>• Wheatley</li> <li>• Woodcote</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blewbury</li> <li>• Cumnor</li> <li>• Drayton</li> <li>• East Challow</li> <li>• East Hanney</li> <li>• East Hendred</li> <li>• Harwell</li> <li>• Harwell Campus</li> <li>• Kennington</li> <li>• Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor</li> <li>• Marcham</li> <li>• Radley</li> <li>• Shrivenham</li> <li>• Stanford-in-the-Vale</li> </ul>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Steventon</li><li>• Sutton Courtenay</li><li>• Watchfield</li><li>• Wootton</li></ul>
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2) Each centre in the hierarchy is identified on the Policies Map (with a boundary drawn for each town or local service centre - see also Policy TCR2).

## **Policy TCR2 - Strategy for town and local service centres**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will set out the councils' strategy to support the evolution of their respective town and local service centres over the plan period by setting out the most appropriate mix of uses to enhance overall vitality and viability within defined centre boundaries and (in some locations) primary shopping areas, whilst confirming our "Town Centre First" approach to site selection for new retail or other appropriate town centre uses.

It will also define a range of proportionate, locally set floorspace thresholds, above which proposals for new retail and commercial leisure development outside our defined centres will require an impact assessment.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

This policy sets out how we will seek to promote the long-term vitality and viability of our town and local service centres by giving them the flexibility to evolve and diversify in a way that can respond to prevailing economic circumstances and changing demographics. We will achieve this by clarifying the range of uses (including shops, restaurants, cinemas, offices, theatres, museums, art galleries, hotels and, where appropriate, residential) that will be permitted within defined town and local service centre boundaries shown on the Policies Map.

It will reinforce the "Town Centre First" approach to site selection for main town centre uses, as set out in paragraphs 91 and 92 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and currently reflected in our adopted Local Plans. This approach is important as it will encourage the re-use of any vacant town centre premises/sites and ensure that our centres retain their role as economic and community hubs, helping to sustain footfall and activity both during the day and into the evening, which in turn will protect their ongoing vitality and viability.

We also need to ensure that any larger scale retail or commercial leisure development proposals, which would be located outside our defined centre boundaries, do not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of any centres within the catchment area of the proposal. Paragraph 94 of the NPPF states that, when assessing applications for retail and commercial leisure development outside town centres, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold. This should include assessment of:

- a) The impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and

- b) The impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment (as applicable to the scale and nature of the scheme).

Where there are no locally set thresholds, the default threshold set in the NPPF is 2,500m<sup>2</sup> of gross floorspace. However, by setting a range of local floorspace thresholds (applicable to the different tiers in our centre hierarchy), this allows us to retain appropriate control over the potential for development to impact on the future health of our defined centres, whilst ensuring that only those proposals which could genuinely result in an unacceptable impact require an impact assessment.

For some of our larger town centres, we also need to define “primary shopping areas” on the Policies Map. This will enable us to clearly show the areas where the sequential and impact tests apply.

Finally, the policy will need to give consideration to the retention and enhancement of existing community and farmers’ markets and, in appropriate circumstances, the re-introduction or creation of new markets, as required by paragraph 90 of the NPPF.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Preferred Option A

Have a policy that sets out a clear strategy for our town and local service centres over the plan period, which will provide them with the flexibility to evolve in light of prevailing economic circumstances, changing demographics and the need to address the climate emergency.

Our strategy will:

- support an appropriate range of new retail and other main town centre uses within defined town and local service centre boundaries, so that we can direct development to the most sustainable and accessible locations in our districts, acknowledging the important role that these centres play in meeting the retail, employment and leisure needs of their rural hinterlands and helping to protect their ongoing vitality and viability, both during the day and evening
- adopt a “Town Centre First” approach to site selection for new retail or other main town centre uses

- set a range of local floorspace thresholds and require all planning applications for retail and commercial leisure development above these thresholds, and which would be located outside our defined centres, to be accompanied by an impact assessment
- encourage applicants to explore opportunities to repurpose vacant and/or outdated premises to support ongoing vitality and viability of our centres
- support residential development within our town centres on appropriate sites, particularly through the conversion of floorspace above shops or other commercial premises
- encourage the retention and enhancement of existing community and farmers' markets and, in appropriate circumstances, support the re-introduction or creation of new markets
- define primary shopping areas for each town centre on the Policies Map/Inset Map(s) and seek to accommodate new retail uses and secure additional retail floorspace within these defined areas, as an important driver of increased footfall to support their ongoing vitality and viability
- seek to protect against the loss of retail floorspace at ground floor level within defined primary shopping areas (subject to certain criteria and where planning permission is required).

### **Why we prefer Option A**

Both national policy and the findings of our Town Centres and Retail Study support our preferred town and local service centre strategy, where we are advocating a “Town Centre First” approach to site selection for retail and other main town centre uses, directing such development to the most sustainable locations in each district and promoting the ongoing vitality and viability of our town centres.

Setting proportionate local floorspace thresholds will ensure that any potential impacts of larger scale retail and/or commercial leisure development on our defined centres will be appropriately assessed. It will allow us to refuse planning applications that have

a significant adverse impact on vitality and viability (including on existing, committed and planned public and private investment) for any centres within the catchment area of the proposal.

### **Alternative Option B**

Adopt a “hands-off” policy approach, which allows our town centres to evolve in response to the economic climate and market forces.

This option is not preferred as most of the proposed elements in Option A are required to comply with national planning policy as set out in the NPPF. Allowing town and local service centres to evolve without a plan-led approach could mean new development in unsustainable locations, which fails to address the climate emergency and undermines the vitality and viability of individual centres.

### **Alternative Option C**

Do not apply any locally set floorspace thresholds for impact assessment (i.e. default to the national 2,500m<sup>2</sup> threshold).

This option is not preferred as the findings of our Town Centres and Retail Study suggest that a range of lower thresholds is more appropriate, given the size, role and function of individual centres within our centre hierarchy and the adverse impact that new retail or leisure development outside these defined centres could have on their vitality and viability.

### **Alternative Option D**

Set higher/lower local thresholds for impact assessment than those proposed for each tier in our centre hierarchy.

This option is not preferred as the proposed district-wide threshold and the lower thresholds for local service centres (and villages/local centres under Policy TCR4) have been set at an appropriate level, which reflects the impact that new retail or leisure development proposals outside these defined centres could have on their vitality and viability, based on locally sourced evidence.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### **Policy TCR2 - Strategy for town and local service centres**

- 1) In order to protect the long-term vitality and viability of the town and local service centres identified in Policy TCR1, an appropriate mix of retail and other main town centre uses\* will be sought. Where possible, applicants will be encouraged to explore opportunities to repurpose vacant and/or outdated premises before proposing new development.
- 2) A sequential approach to site selection for new retail or other main town centre uses will be applied, whereby first consideration must be given to locations within the defined primary shopping areas or town centre boundaries\*\*, then edge of centre locations. Only if suitable town centre sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period), will out of centre locations be considered.
- 3) Proposals for retail or commercial leisure development (including those relating to mezzanine floorspace and the variation of restrictive conditions) which are not located within a defined centre\*\*\* and exceed the local floorspace thresholds set out below must be accompanied by an impact assessment, the scope of which will be agreed with the respective council in advance:
  - a) the proposal provides a gross floorspace in excess of 500 sq.m gross; or
  - b) the proposal is located within 800 metres of a defined local service centre boundary and is in excess of 300 sq.m gross.

- 4) Each threshold will apply to new floorspace and to applications for changes of use or variations of condition (to remove or amend restrictions on how units can operate or trade).
- 5) Applicants will be expected to be flexible regarding the format and scale of their proposed development so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites can be fully explored. When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference will be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre on foot, cycle or by public transport.
- 6) Within defined primary shopping areas (and in circumstances where planning permission is required), retail floorspace at ground floor level will be protected, unless evidence of at least twelve months active marketing demonstrates that there is no realistic prospect of the site/premises being used or redeveloped for a retail use in the foreseeable future and the proposed new use would not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole.
- 7) Residential development in appropriate locations within town centre boundaries will generally be supported, particularly through the conversion of floorspace above shops or other commercial premises.
- 8) When determining applications for retail or commercial leisure development outside of our town centres, consideration will be given to whether planning conditions or legal agreements are needed to restrict the authorised use to that justified in the application submission.
- 9) The retention and enhancement of existing community and farmers' markets will be encouraged and, in appropriate circumstances, the re-introduction or creation of new markets will be supported.

*\* Main town centre uses as defined in the NPPF Glossary*

*\*\* As shown on the Policies Map*

*\*\*\* For the purposes of retail development, a “defined centre” comprises the primary shopping area (where applicable) and for all other main town centre uses comprises the town centre boundary.*



## **Policy TCR3 - Retail floorspace provision (convenience and comparison goods)**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will reflect the findings of our Town Centres and Retail Study (December 2023), which found that both districts had capacity to increase convenience goods (food store) retail floorspace, over the plan period. In doing so, it will provide clarity on where any additional provision might best be located, to meet the future needs of our residents and those working in the districts.

Whilst acknowledging that no future floorspace requirements were identified in either district for comparison goods (e.g. stores selling clothing, footwear, DIY, gardening or sports equipment, books, toys etc), this policy will also explain how proposals for new comparison retail development will be assessed.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Paragraph 90(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning policies should “allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of development likely to be needed, looking at least ten years ahead”.

The government’s planning practice guidance on Town Centres and Retail (Para 004) also requires local planning authorities to assess the ability of their town centres to accommodate the scale of any identified need for main town centre uses, and also identify any associated need for expansion, consolidation or restructuring to enable new development.

Policy TCR3 needs to reflect the evidence base findings and provide clarity for prospective food store operators and site owners/ promoters as to where we would support new convenience store development proposals.

### **Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)**

#### **Preferred Option A**

Have a policy that:

- acknowledges the additional floorspace capacity over the plan period for food store provision across the two districts, as identified in the Town Centres and Retail Study

- applies the “Town Centre First” approach set out in Policy TCR2 for the consideration of proposals for additional food store floorspace, with preference given to brownfield/regeneration sites (to accommodate new stores) or, where feasible, the expansion of existing stores, within defined town or local service centres
- supports the provision of new convenience/food store floorspace as an integral part of the planned development cited in the Site Allocations chapter.

### Why we prefer Option A

Option A is our preferred option because it reflects our evidence base findings and is consistent with NPPF policy requirements, supporting new convenience retail (food store) development in sustainable locations which meet the identified current and future needs of our local communities.

By acknowledging our future retail floorspace needs and providing clarity on where new food stores would be supported in principle, we will be able to ensure that new retail development is directed to the most sustainable locations and has a positive impact in terms of protecting the vitality and viability of nearby town centres (by improving customer choice, encouraging linked trips to other shops and services, diverting surplus trade from existing stores that are currently over-trading etc). Promoting the inclusion of new convenience goods floorspace within the masterplans for large site allocations will also help us to transition to net zero carbon districts, by reducing the need for residents to travel by private car to meet their day to day grocery shopping needs.

### Alternative Option B

Include total convenience retail floorspace requirements (in square metres) over the plan period for each district and identify specific sites to meet these requirements.

This option is not preferred for the following reasons: Our evidence base does identify future food store capacity in the form of a range of additional floorspace requirements (in sqm), for each 5 year period to 2041. However, we need to be cautious about

setting any precise quantum of development required to meet identified 'need' in the Plan. This is partly because such figures can date quickly as they relate to a range of variables/market fluctuations and also because 'need' changes as and when development comes forward. It is also difficult to effectively monitor the delivery of retail floorspace requirements, particularly as recent changes to the Use Classes Order and Permitted Development Rights mean that, within Use Class E (which covers shops, service uses, food and drink premises etc), floorspace can now change without the need for planning permission.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### **TCR3 - Retail floorspace provision (convenience and comparison goods)**

- 1) To meet additional convenience goods retail floorspace needs and increase customer choice in the districts over the plan period:
  - a) A "Town Centre First" approach (as set out in Policy TCR2), will be applied to the consideration of proposals for new convenience retail floorspace, with preference given to brownfield/regeneration sites within defined town or local service centres which have the capacity to accommodate a new store; or, where feasible, the expansion of existing stores, within these centres; and
  - b) The provision of new convenience (food store) floorspace as an integral part of the planned development set out in Chapter 8 (Site allocations and garden villages) will be supported in principle. The appropriate scale and location of this floorspace will be determined as part of whole-site masterplanning exercises, in order to reduce the need for residents to travel by car to meet their essential grocery needs, whilst minimising impact on the vitality and viability of nearby town or local service centres.
- 2) Didcot Town Centre will remain the primary focus for any additional comparison retail floorspace across both districts.

3) No new comparison retail floorspace needs have been identified in Abingdon-on-Thames, Henley-on-Thames, Thame, Wallingford, Wantage or Faringdon over the plan period. Applications for comparison retail development in these town centres should therefore be treated on their individual merits, subject to any required sequential assessment, as outlined in Policy TCR2.

## **Policy TCR4 - Retail and service provision in villages and local centres**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will support proposals for new (small scale) shops and service uses within our villages and local centres to meet the day-to-day needs of local communities.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that we should plan positively for community facilities (such as local shops and other local services) to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments and that our planning policies should:

“...guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs [and] ensure that established shops, facilities and services... are retained for the benefit of the community...”

A significant proportion of our districts’ populations live in villages and rely on local shops and other services to meet their essential daily needs. This is especially true for residents who are less mobile and is important in light of the declared Climate Emergency and the need to reduce car journeys wherever possible. Furthermore, land values are generally high in South Oxfordshire and the Vale and this often means that existing shops/premises in our village and local centres come under pressure for redevelopment, including for residential uses.

Policy TCR4 is therefore needed, not only to support the vitality and viability of our existing village and local centres, but also (in circumstances where planning permission is required) to protect valued shops and service uses that meet the day-to-day needs of the local community against unnecessary loss.

Notwithstanding this policy approach, there may be circumstances where a local shop is no longer needed or has become unviable, so we need to be sure that there is sufficient evidence to support the proposed loss of the existing facility.

## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### Preferred Option A

Have a policy that:

- supports small-scale proposals for shops and service uses to serve the day-to-day needs of the local community, where they contribute to the vitality and viability of our villages or local centres and improve accessibility and choice for local residents
- requires an impact assessment to be submitted alongside any planning application for new retail or commercial leisure development over a given size and located close to a village or local centre. This is to reflect the localised role and function of these smaller centres and how something like a new food store nearby could directly compete with the type of local day-to-day provision typically found within such centres
- only permits the loss or change of use of any shop or service use located within a village or local centre under specific circumstances (such as where there is an equivalent shop or service use within reasonable walking distance or where there is evidence that the current use is no longer needed or viable)
- supports the establishment of new farm shops which sell local farm produce where they do not undermine the viability and vitality of shopping provision in nearby village or local centres.

### Why we prefer Option A

This is our preferred option because it complies with national policy guidance and legislation and supports the future sustainability of our villages and local centres, whilst protecting valued facilities which serve to meet the day-to-day needs of our residents.

### **Alternative Option B**

No policy in the plan supporting new small-scale proposals for shops or service uses in our villages or local centres or seeking to protect against the loss of existing retail or service provision in these locations.

This approach would be contrary to national policy and could have a negative impact on the vitality and viability of our village and local centres. It could also result in more proposals to redevelop local shops for other uses, including residential.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy TCR 4 – Retail and service provision in villages and local centres**

- 1) New small-scale\* proposals for shops or service uses to serve the day-to-day needs of the local community, will be supported where located in a village or local centre, as defined in Policy TCR1 - Centre Hierarchy.
- 2) Proposals for retail or commercial leisure development (including those relating to mezzanine floorspace and the variation of restrictive conditions) which are located within 800 metres of any village or local centre\*\* and are in excess of 200 sqm gross will require an impact assessment, the scope of which will be agreed with the respective council in advance.
- 3) Where planning permission is required, the loss or change of use of any shop or service use located within a village or local centre will not be permitted unless:
  - a) there is another equivalent shop or service use accessible to customers within an 800m walking distance; or
  - b) it can be demonstrated that the premises are no longer required to meet the needs of the local community or have become unviable, through evidence of at least twelve months active marketing.

In either case, the proposed replacement use must also complement the function and character of its immediate locality. Consideration will be given to any community benefits of the proposed replacement use and any impact on the community of such a loss.

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

- 4) Farm shops will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they do not undermine the viability and vitality of shopping provision in a nearby village or local centre. Control over the types of produce sold may be sought by planning condition.

*\*Defined as 280 sqm or less as per Class F2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)*

*\*\*Where a centre is of limited scale and there is no boundary defined, the 800 metres measurement will be taken from the centre's midpoint, identified from the Policies Map.*



## 10. Well-designed places for our communities

### Introduction

#### You told us

Although we didn't have a specific design chapter in the Issues consultation, several comments were received about design, access, and density of development. You raised the importance of high-quality standards for both market and affordable housing, the need for new development to be accessible and the need to provide good access to services and facilities.

You told us that higher standards of design are needed than is currently the case and that we should be focussing on excellence in design and encouraging innovative design.

We have considered all feedback when developing our policy options, selecting our preferred option and proposed policy wording, which are presented in this chapter.

#### How does this chapter link with the Joint Design Guide



The councils adopted a new Joint Design Guide in June 2022. The design guide is a Supplementary Planning Document and is a material consideration when determining planning applications.

We have drafted the policies and options in Chapter 10 with the Joint Design Guide in mind. Our draft policies require that proposals not only satisfy the relevant requirements of the policy, but also those requirements set out in the Joint Design Guide.

The design guide provides more detailed design requirements than those set out in the local plan, and is intended to help develop the design of proposals and has been prepared to guide users through all the steps and stages of the design process.

The design guide is intended to assist landowners, developers, applicants, agents, designers and planners through all stages of the design and planning process to achieve high quality and sustainable development.

We shifted away from a traditional PDF document for this design guide to a more accessible, engaging and modern digital format. With an interactive website, users can look up essential design guide information including diagrams of buildings, photos of examples and pop-up boxes of advice available at a click. You can view the design guide on our websites at:

[www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/planning-and-development/urban-design/joint-design-guide/](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/planning-and-development/urban-design/joint-design-guide/)

[www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/planning-and-development/urban-design/joint-design-guide/](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/planning-and-development/urban-design/joint-design-guide/)

## Policy DE1 - High quality design

### What will this policy do?

This policy will set out our requirements for high-quality design that new developments, as well as extensions or alterations to existing buildings, will need to meet.

### Why is this policy needed?

Good design is a fundamental element of successful placemaking and creating sustainable development. The way we design buildings and new development has wide ranging impacts on how we feel, our sense of identity and community, as well as how we live our everyday lives. A well-designed place is somewhere that is not only attractive, but a place that can make us feel safe, where we can live, work and socialise at ease, and it can also enhance our health and well-being.

The importance of high-quality design became more prominent in plan-making following the publication in January 2020 of the “Living with beauty” report<sup>42</sup> from the government’s Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission. Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out how we can achieve well-designed places through planning policies and decisions<sup>43</sup>. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF importantly states that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”.

Overall, the requirements in this policy will be crucial in helping us to achieve high-quality and well-designed places in the districts.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

Have a policy that sets design requirements reflecting the following design themes:

- Place and setting.
- Natural environment (including new NPPF requirements on trees).
- Movement and connectivity.

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/living-with-beauty-report-of-the-building-better-building-beautiful-commission>

<sup>43</sup> Paragraph 135 in particular sets out what planning policies and decisions should do to achieve well-design places.

- Space and layout.
- Built form (including requirements on public art).
- Climate and sustainability.

These requirements will need to be met by all new development proposals.

### Why we prefer Option A

This policy will ensure that all aspects of good design are achieved by new developments in the districts. Splitting the policy into thematic areas will help applicants to fully understand all elements of high-quality design and clearly set out the high standards that new development is expected to meet to achieve well-designed places. These themes are wide ranging and include key elements of design such as built form, movement and connectivity, place and setting, and space and layout, but also include the role of the natural environment as well as climate and sustainability.

#### **Option B - Alternative**

Do not include a policy on high-quality design in the Joint Local Plan.

This alternative option would be contrary to national policy which requires plans to set out clear design expectations. It would also risk new developments in the districts being of poor and low-quality design, which could have detrimental impacts on our local communities, the health of the districts and our sustainability goals.

#### **Option C – Alternative**

Include design requirements within other policies in the Joint Local Plan.

This alternative option would risk diluting the emphasis and importance placed on high-quality design within the districts. It would also not be possible to include the same number and variety of design requirements as set out in the preferred option throughout other policies within the plan. Therefore, certain design requirements would be omitted from the plan, which would risk developments in the districts being of poor and low-quality design in some aspects, which could have detrimental impacts on our local communities, the health of the districts and our sustainability goals.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### **Policy DE1 - High quality design**

##### **Place and setting**

1) All development must achieve high quality design that:

- a) responds positively to the site and its surroundings, and reinforces local identity or establishes a distinct identity whilst not preventing innovative responses to context, demonstrated by a constraints and opportunities plan;
- b) responds positively to the history of a site and its surroundings, and conserves and enhances historic character;
- c) creates a distinctive sense of place through high quality townscape and landscaping that physically connects and visually integrates with its surroundings whilst avoiding coalescence with neighbouring settlements; and
- d) retain or create any attractive and/or sensitive views and skyline (both of and from built and natural features) into, out of and within the site.

##### **Natural environment**

2) All development must achieve high quality design that:

- a) is landscape led, by retaining and strengthening the site's landscape features and character;
- b) retains and enhances biodiversity and delivers biodiversity net gain in accordance with Policy NH1: Nature Recovery;
- c) incorporates and/or links to a well-defined network of green infrastructure and improves access to existing green infrastructure in the vicinity of the development;
- d) provides a range of high-quality green open spaces (providing a variety of natural and designed landscapes and functions) that meet the needs of all users, and are safe, attractive, and accessible;
- e) avoids the use of artificial grass in residential development;
- f) uses planting to help development integrate into the landscape and to develop character and sense of place;
- g) takes opportunities to incorporate new trees in development, ensuring that new streets are tree lined and that the right trees are planted in the right places; and
- h) uses trees and soft landscaping to create character and distinction between street types and to provide traffic calming.

### **Movement and connectivity**

3) All development must achieve high quality design that:

- a) has a network of streets, paths and integrated cycleways that are safe, direct and legible, and connect with each other and the surrounding area (including to existing streets and cycle and walking paths); creating an attractive choice of routes for all users, with priority given to active travel and sustainable modes of transport;

- b) provides direct pedestrian and cycle links to local services and facilities that are convenient, legible, visually attractive and follow natural desire lines;
- c) limits the impacts of car use and encourages movement by active travel by prioritising the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users (especially those with disabilities), over the needs of motorists within the design of streets;
- d) provides a clear and permeable hierarchy of streets, routes and spaces to create safe and convenient ease of movement by all users;
- e) includes accessible wayfinding/signposting to be installed to promote movement by pedestrians, cyclists and other active travel; and
- f) co-locates local services and facilities as appropriate within higher tier settlements (tier 1 and 2) as set out in the settlement hierarchy, with good access to public transport and pedestrian and cycle links.

#### **Space and layout**

- 4) All development must achieve high quality design that:
  - a) secures a high-quality public realm that is interesting and aesthetically pleasing; and designed to support an active life for everyone with well managed and maintained public areas;
  - b) creates cohesive and walkable communities with incorporated and designed social spaces within the public realm, providing places for people to shade and shelter, rest, gather, interact, and spectate;
  - c) ensures that streets and spaces are well overlooked, incorporate active frontages and create a positive relationship between the fronts and backs of buildings;
  - d) has streets where buildings and landscaping are more visually prominent than the highway (including parking);

- e) provides a wide range of house types and tenures that meet local and district needs;
- f) clearly defines public and private spaces;
- g) ensures a sufficient level of well-integrated, innovative and contemporary solutions for street furniture, car and bicycle parking (including EV charging) and external storage, including bins;
- h) creates safe and secure communities and reduces the likelihood of crime and antisocial behaviour as well as the fear of crime itself, ensuring sufficient natural surveillance; and
- i) incorporates public art into, and/or within the vicinity of, major developments or sites of 0.5ha or more to enhance their visual quality of the scheme and/or character of the area, and to help create or enhance a sense of identity.

#### **Built form**

5) All development must achieve high quality design that:

- a) respects the local context working with and complementing the scale, height, density, grain, massing and detailing of the surrounding area;
- b) chooses materials and detailing for the development inspired by the local context and local vernacular;
- c) uses land efficiently while respecting the existing landscape and/or townscape character;
- d) ensures the building line maintains or establishes a good street scene;
- e) does not differentiate between the design quality of market and affordable housing or the adjacent public realm;
- f) is designed to take account of possible future development in the local area, including providing links to neighbouring land where they may be needed in future;



- g) understands and addresses the needs of all potential users by ensuring that buildings and their surroundings can be accessed and used by everyone through universally accessible and inclusive design;
- h) ensures that shopfronts are in keeping with the character of the building and street scene, reflect the scale and proportion of the building in which it is set, and preserve and restore surviving historic shopfronts in a sensitive manner; and
- i) ensures that any advertisements are safe, attractive and well designed, by ensuring their location is suitable, they complement local character, use appropriate high quality materials, and avoid flashing internal or external illumination.

#### **Climate and sustainability**

- 6) All development must achieve high quality design that:
  - a) is sustainable and resilient to climate change in accordance with Policy CE1: Sustainable Design and Construction;
  - b) takes into account landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping;
  - c) minimises energy consumption in accordance with Policy CE2: Net Zero Carbon Buildings;
  - d) uses sustainable, locally and/or ethically sourced and accredited low embodied carbon materials and/or carbon negative materials that are robust and weather well;
  - e) minimises vulnerability and improves resilience to flood risk from all sources, incorporating landscape-led sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water, flood risks and significant changes in rainfall; and
  - f) is built to last, functions well and is flexible to changing requirements of occupants and other circumstances.

7) Development must also satisfy requirements of the Joint Design Guide as well as any adopted local design guides or codes (such as those within Neighbourhood Plans) where relevant.

## Policy DE2 - Local Character and Identity

### What will this policy do?

This policy will set requirements that will help to ensure all new development responds to the character of the local area and does so both physically and visually, whilst allowing appropriate innovation or change.

### Why is this policy needed?

Local character makes a unique and important contribution to the towns, villages and countryside that make up our districts. Character provides us with a sense of place, identity as well as an insight into history, and therefore it is crucial that the Joint Local Plan includes a policy that ensures new development will respond sympathetically to existing character and enhance it where appropriate.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the importance of local character and reflects this throughout the framework. Paragraph 135(c) particularly references local character and states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments, “are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change”. It is important that when protecting local character, appropriate change or innovation is accepted as this is often what makes future places and buildings distinctive and contributes to the continual developing character of local areas. Therefore, the policy will recognise this, whilst ensuring that new development in the districts responds positively to its surroundings.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that:

- requires all new development to reflect and enhance the positive features found in the character and identity of the surrounding local area. These positive features should inform the design of the development, for example by reflecting local scale, form, and materials amongst other distinctive local characteristics such as historic character
- ensures that new development respects the findings of positive features identified in local Character Assessments where they have been prepared for a local area as part of a Neighbourhood Development Plan

- ensures proposals in Conservation Areas respect the findings of the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal, Management Plan or Character Study
- requires all proposals for new development to be informed by a contextual analysis demonstrating how the above requirements are met
- encourages innovative proposals in appropriate locations that will make a positive contribution to the future character of an area.

### Why we prefer Option A

This option will help ensure the character which gives our towns and villages their identity and distinctiveness is preserved. It would set clear requirements around how we expect all new development proposals in the districts to respond to local character, whilst encouraging innovative design where appropriate.

#### **Option B - Alternative**

Include requirements on local character in the 'High quality design' policy.

This option fails to provide the necessary emphasis on the importance of character in the plan, given the role of character in its contribution to the identity and distinctiveness of the districts. Having a separate policy on local character will set clear and tailored expectations around how we expect new developments to respond to local character.

#### **Option C – Alternative**

Have no local plan policy on local character and instead rely on general local plan policies on design and heritage, as well as national policy and guidance within the NPPF/planning practice guidance.

This alternative option would not provide any local protection or expectations around new developments and how they respond to local character. This could risk new developments giving no consideration to local character and distinctiveness and therefore lead to incongruous new development in the districts.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### **Policy DE2 - Local character and identity**

- 1) All new development must be designed to reflect the positive features that make up the character and identity of the local area and should both physically and visually enhance and complement the surroundings. Contemporary and innovative proposals that will make a positive contribution to the future character of an area will be supported in appropriate locations.
- 2) All proposals for new development should be informed by a contextual analysis that demonstrates how the design:
  - a) has been informed by and responds positively to the site and its surroundings; and
  - b) reinforces place-identity by enhancing local character.
- 3) In the Chilterns National Landscape (formerly AONB), proposals for development should reflect the advice in the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and associated technical notes on brick, flint and roofing materials.
- 4) Where a Character Assessment has been prepared as part of a made Neighbourhood Development Plan, a proposal must demonstrate that the positive features identified in the Assessment have been incorporated into the design of the development.

5) Proposals that have the potential to impact upon a Conservation Area or the setting of a Conservation Area should also take account of the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan or Character Study and demonstrate that the important features identified have been incorporated into the design of the development.

## **Policy DE3 - Delivering well-designed new development**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will set out the design processes that we require developers to undertake to help achieve well-designed development in the districts. These range from design and access statements for developments of all sizes, through to masterplans and design codes for larger schemes, which we require the developer to engage with the local community on.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

There are a range of design processes and actions expected to be undertaken as part of a planning application. Some are legislative requirements, such as design and access statements, whilst others are only required for certain applications, such as masterplans, design codes, and design review. All of these mechanisms help to positively secure high-quality design in the districts.

Regarding design and access statements, architects and developers are required to undertake these on developments of all sizes to ensure the design of a new development has been thoroughly considered. As previously explained, these statements are a legislative requirement that explain how the proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting and demonstrate that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users. Legislation sets out what should be included in a design and access statement as minimum, but local plan policy can still provide more prescriptive local requirements to utilise them further.

For large sites, masterplans and design codes help to ensure that well-designed development is realised and delivered on the ground by setting the vision and implementation strategy for a development. Masterplans set the design vision of a site, including site specific information, and set out clear design intentions. Design codes, as defined in the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) are 'a set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area' and often build upon and help to implement design visions, such as masterplans.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages the use of masterplans and design codes and explains that they can be used to help 'ensure that land is used effectively while also creating beautiful and sustainable places' and that design codes specifically can 'provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality standard of design'. Design codes can therefore be a successful mechanism for Neighbourhood Plans to utilise to set locally specific design requirements. The NPPF also importantly explains that design codes 'should be based on effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area' and take into account guidance set out in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code.

Using a design review panel is a relatively new mechanism for ensuring high quality design for both significant minor applications, and major planning application proposals. A design review panel comprises a group of multi-disciplinary professionals who offer impartial advice on design proposals and key design issues. These panels are beneficial as they help to raise the quality of design, by identifying where it can be improved, as well as being able to recognise innovative design and help to resist poor design. They also provide an opportunity for additional independent and objective voices to be heard from a variety of expert professionals in the built environment industry, helping to identify any issues early on in the planning process and support urban design officers in their analysis and decision making.

Therefore, we will set out in this policy expectations about what design mechanisms such as masterplans, design codes, design reviews and design and access statements should be included and when they should be used within the districts to help ensure well-designed development is delivered locally. It will also help to ensure that the community are involved in shaping these masterplans and codes and help to shape future developments in their local areas.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that:

- requires that masterplans, design codes are prepared and submitted as part of relevant proposals to ensure new development delivers high quality design and demonstrates good place making
- encourages Neighbourhood Plans to prepare design codes for their local area
- sets out key requirements regarding what masterplans should include. These could be categorised into themed areas for clarity, including:
  - Land use –
    - i.e., amount, scale and density of development, including movement, access, legibility and green/blue infrastructure
  - Design requirements
    - Set out that the masterplan must set out how it will meet the design requirements set out in the ‘high quality design’ policy
  - Local and community facilities



- i.e., the provision and co-location of education and training facilities, health care, community leisure and recreation where appropriate
- requires Design Reviews to be undertaken for nominated residential and non-residential development, as well as for sensitive sites and those significant because of a local issue, or public benefit
- where a proposal is required to be accompanied by a design and access statement, set specific requirements about what the design and access statement should include beyond those required by legislation, such as:
  - Setting out how the development proposal meets the design objectives and principles set out in the Joint Design Guide
  - Presenting a constraints and opportunities plan that clearly informs the design process and final design
  - the delivery implementation phases and strategies to be put in place.
- ensures that design codes and masterplans are prepared with the involvement of the local community and other stakeholders (including neighbouring authorities where relevant), as well as the local planning authority
- encourages innovative engagement methods, such as utilising virtual reality and digital models.

### Why we prefer Option A

We prefer this option as it sets out clear expectations about what design processes and actions are expected to be undertaken as part of a planning application (such as masterplans, design codes, design and access statements, design review and adequate community engagement). This option sets out more clearly when masterplans and design codes should be submitted and what they should include, as well as emphasising the importance of involving the local community and relevant stakeholders in their preparation. It also sets out more specific requirements for design and access statements, so that they positively secure high-quality design in the districts.

#### **Option B - Alternative**

Do not have a separate policy, instead include these requirements in the 'High quality design' policy.

High quality design is less likely to be achieved without specific requirements on these mechanisms. A separate policy allows more specific requirements to be set than could be included in the broader 'high quality design' policy.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Have no policy and instead rely on national policy and guidance set out in the NPPF/planning practice guidance.

This alternative option would not provide clear requirements on what delivery processes and actions are expected to be utilised by developers to aid the delivery of well-designed development within the districts. Additionally, it would not set out expectations about when masterplans and design codes should be submitted, as well as what should be included within them. This could risk masterplans and design codes not being submitted at all, or those submitted being of poor quality. The risk relating to poor quality submissions also applies to design and access statements, but as they are legally required to be submitted for certain applications, the risk is lower. High quality design is less likely to be achieved without specific requirements on these mechanisms.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy DE3 - Delivering well-designed new development**

##### **Masterplans**

- 1) Proposals for sites allocated in the Development Plan, including sites allocated within Neighbourhood Development Plans, and major development must be accompanied by a masterplan. For outline applications, an illustrative masterplan should be submitted. In all cases, the masterplan should:

##### **Land use**

- a) identify the vision for the development, setting out a clear description of the type of place that could be created whilst building on the overall aims for the district;
- b) clearly set out the character areas and land uses proposed including the amount, scale and density of development, the movement and access arrangements and green infrastructure provision (including amount and position of open space), demonstrated with parameter plans;
- c) illustrate how the proposal integrates with the surrounding built, historic and natural environments, in particular maximising existing and potential movement connections and accessibility to prioritise walking, cycling and use of public transport;
- d) define a hierarchy of routes and the integration of suitable infrastructure, including for example SuDS within the public realm;
- e) demonstrate a legible structure and identify key elements of townscape such as main frontages, edges, landmark buildings, key building groups and character areas;
- f) set out the landscape strategy, taking account of existing natural features of the site and wider area, and biodiversity.

### **Design**

- g) provide a framework plan for a design code;
- h) show how the design requirements of the scheme work within the masterplan vision and demonstrate how the masterplan vision will be achieved;
- i) demonstrates a clear link to the criteria set out in Policy DE1 - High quality design, the Design and Access Statement and the Joint Design Guide;
- j) be based on a full understanding of the significance or special interest of the related historic environment, including above and below ground archaeological remains and other heritage assets within the site or its setting, and the conservation and enhancement of those remains or assets and significance or special interest;
- k) be based on the principles of natural surveillance and active street frontages by demonstrating that streets and spaces are well overlooked and fronted by the main entrances of buildings, providing direct access to the street or space.

### **Community Facilities**

- l) demonstrate as appropriate the careful siting of, and access to, community facilities and other amenities, to meet the needs of the existing and future community. Consideration should also be given to the potential colocation of these facilities and amenities.

### **Design Codes**

- 2) Proposals for sites allocated in the Development Plan, including sites allocated within Neighbourhood Development Plans, and large-scale major development must be accompanied by a design code. The design code should:
  - a) set out specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site;
  - b) avoid detailed policy wording, instead presenting information in a graphical format;
  - c) where relevant, build upon details set out in the masterplan providing more specific, detailed design requirements;

### **Design and Access Statements**

- 3) Where an application is required to be supported by a Design and Access Statement, it should be proportional to the scale and complexity of the proposal. It should include:
  - a) a constraints and opportunities plan that clearly informs the design process and final design;
  - b) a clear concept that shows how the design of the proposal and the rationale behind it has evolved, and clearly demonstrates that the criteria set out in Policy DE1 - High quality design as well as the Joint Design Guide have been considered; and
  - c) the delivery implementation phases and strategies to ensure the timely delivery of infrastructure and services;

## **Community Engagement**

- 4) Masterplans and design codes must demonstrate that they have been prepared with the involvement of the local community and other stakeholders (including neighbouring authorities and Design Review Panel where applicable) and in consultation with the local planning authority.
- 5) Engagement and collaboration with the local community and other stakeholders on planning applications should take place at an early stage, and throughout the planning process.
- 6) Innovative engagement methods should be utilised where possible to engage the community in the planning process.

## **Design Review**

7) The following development proposals will likely be subject to assessment by a Design Review Panel prior to its determination by the councils:

- a) Major residential and non-residential development that have been nominated for Design Review by council officers or the applicant;
- b) The site is particularly sensitive in terms of heritage, landscape, design, public interest, or local impact, irrespective of their scale, size and use; and
- c) Significant public realm schemes that involve creation of new or alterations to existing public spaces and streets such as pedestrianisation schemes or proposals to enhance public squares and civic open spaces.

This design review should take place as early on in the planning application stage as possible, preferably prior to submission at the pre-application stage.

## Policy DE4 - Optimising densities

### What will this policy do?

This policy will set requirements on the density of new development so that land is used effectively when developed for new housing.

### Why is this policy needed?

There is a finite amount of undeveloped and vacant land in the districts, so it is important that any land available and suitable for development is used effectively. We want to set appropriate densities for new development, so that we can use land efficiently and reduce the amount of greenfield land that is built on. Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) explains that planning policies should support development that makes an efficient use of land and encourages appropriate densities to be achieved. Higher densities can be built sensitively and don't have to result in high rise or out of character development. For example, traditional terraced development found in our market towns and villages throughout the districts is often high density.

However, it is important that the density of development reflects the context and local character of an area. Where higher densities are proposed in suburbs or villages these should aim to achieve 'gentle densification'.

Building at higher densities potentially helps to reduce the amount of land required for development. It also helps to support public services and transport systems, because a greater concentration of people in one place means a greater demand for these services and a lesser reliance on cars. Where homes are built smaller to more traditional dimensions, they can be more affordable for the local community too.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that aims to optimise densities by:

- taking a design-led approach, ensuring that the density of development is reflective of its local context and character
- requiring higher densities in appropriate areas across the district. For example, in well-connected towns that are highly accessible by cycling, walking and public transport.

## Why we prefer Option A

This option is preferred as it will help to ensure that optimal densities are achieved in the districts, in accordance with national policy which requires plans to support making an efficient use of land. This option also aims to ensure that densities will be optimised in locations where the plan will be promoting development. Achieving optimal densities will consequently help to reduce the amount of land required for development, and also help to support public services and transport systems. This option takes a design-led approach, ensuring that development of all scales is reflective of local character and context, meaning that development of all densities fit in sympathetically with their surroundings.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Have a policy that sets a blanket minimum density figure across all areas of the districts.

This alternative option does not take the opportunity of optimising densities in areas supported and highly accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. This option risks densities in appropriate areas not making the most efficient use of land, coming forward at lower densities than what they could potentially achieve in their location.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Have a policy that sets ambitious minimum density figures in appropriate areas, and also a blanket district wide minimum density figure.

A blanket minimum density figure is not considered an appropriate approach. This is because densities outside of the areas considered suitable for minimum density figures (due to their location being in areas supported and highly accessible by walking, cycling and public transport) should be informed by a design-led criteria approach to ensure densities are reflective of local context and character, whilst still optimising the use of the land potential of the site. A blanket minimum density figure risks local context and character not being fully considered when establishing the appropriate density for a site.

### **Option D – Alternative**

Have a policy that provides density ranges to be used as a guide to establish the appropriate density of development.

Density ranges can be limiting, as providing lower and upper limits can reduce the flexibility needed to establish an informed density figure for a development reflective of local circumstances. The preferred approach instead allows densities to be decided on a case-by-case basis with no upper limit on what can be achieved on site, which provides necessary flexibility and allows densities to be optimised.

### **Option E – Alternative**

Have no policy and instead rely on national policy and guidance set out in the NPPF/planning practice guidance.

This alternative option is not preferred as it would risk development proposals coming forward at inappropriately low densities or density out of character for the area, leading to difficult negotiations having to be had at the application stage between officers and applicants.

## **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

### **Policy DE4 - Optimising densities**

- 1) Planning permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal optimises and makes an efficient use of land and potential of the site. Developments should accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of uses (including green space and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks.
- 2) The density of development must be informed by:
  - a) the capacity of the site and the need to use land efficiently;



- b) the need to achieve high quality sustainable design that respects local character;
  - c) local circumstances and site constraints, including the required housing mix, and the need to protect or enhance the local environment, National Landscapes (formerly AONBs), heritage assets, and important landscape, habitats and townscape;
  - d) the site's current and future level of accessibility to local services and facilities by walking, cycling and public transport; and
  - e) the need to minimise detrimental impacts on the amenity of future and/or adjoining occupiers.
- 3) Sites well related to higher tier settlements (tier 1 and 2) and served by public transport, or with good accessibility by foot or bicycle to town centres or a district centre within Oxford City should be capable of accommodating development at higher densities. It is expected that these sites will accommodate densities of more than 45 dwellings per hectare (net) unless there is a clear conflict with delivering a high-quality design or other clearly justified planning reasons for a lower density.
- 4) Applicants should demonstrate that a scheme makes the optimal use of the site, and clearly set out the density of development as part of the masterplan or Design and Access Statement, where these are required to support a planning application.

## Policy DE5 - Neighbouring amenity

### What will this policy do?

This policy will ensure that new development will not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses.

### Why is this policy needed?

It is important that new development does not result in unacceptable adverse impacts to the amenity of both existing and future occupants of nearby buildings and land. Amenity can cover a variety of impacts, including a neighbour's outlook, privacy, sunlight/daylight and any noise and disruption likely to arise directly or indirectly from the development. It's important to check for impacts on neighbours whether a development is a new building, an extension or a new use.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments "create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users...". Therefore, to ensure a high standard of amenity for neighbours, the policy will require adverse impacts such as unacceptable noise, a reduction in sunlight/daylight and loss of privacy and outlook to be considered and adequately addressed in development proposals.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that ensures that new development will not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses. The policy will list factors that will be taken into account when assessing impact on neighbouring amenity including:

- loss of privacy
- daylight or sunlight
- dominance or visual intrusion
- noise or vibration
- dust, heat, odour, gases or other emissions
- pollution
- contamination or the use of / or storage of hazardous substances

- external lighting.

We will require applicants to demonstrate how the above factors have been considered and demonstrate that their development proposal does not result in unacceptable adverse impacts on neighbours.

### Why we prefer Option A

This option recognises that new development can have an impact on the amenity of neighbours, and that this should be thoroughly considered when assessing and determining planning applications to ensure new development does not have significant adverse impacts on neighbouring amenity. It does so by clearly setting out to developers what factors must be considered to ensure these adverse impacts do not arise. This will help to ensure that a high standard of amenity is retained for residents, in accordance with national policy and guidance.

#### **Option B – Alternative**

Do not have a separate policy, instead include these requirements in the 'High quality design' policy.

A separate policy allows more specific requirements to be set than could be included in the broader 'high quality design' policy, therefore this option is not preferred.

#### **Option C – Alternative**

Have no policy and instead rely on national policy and guidance set out in the NPPF/planning practice guidance.

This alternative option would not provide clear requirements on what factors new developments should consider to ensure it does not result in significant adverse impacts on neighbouring amenity. Currently, national policy and guidance lacks detail on how to sufficiently ensure neighbouring amenity is not negatively impacted, and without specific policy requirements on

neighbouring amenity, this alternative option could result in unacceptable impacts arising as a consequence of new development.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### **Policy DE5 - Neighbouring Amenity**

- 1) Development proposals must demonstrate that they will not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, when considering both individual and cumulative impacts, in relation to the following factors:
  - a) loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight ;
  - b) dominance or visual intrusion;
  - c) noise or vibration;
  - d) smell, dust, heat, odour, gases or other emissions;
  - e) pollution, contamination or the use of/or storage of hazardous substances; and
  - f) external lighting.
- 2) Development should also have regard to the advice within the Joint Design Guide on neighbouring amenity.

## Policy DE6 - Outdoor Amenity Space

### What will this policy do?

This policy will require that all new homes are provided with private or communal outdoor amenity space, such as gardens, courtyards, patios, and balconies.

### Why is this policy needed?

Access to outdoor amenity spaces such as private and communal gardens have an important role in contributing positively to our health and wellbeing. These spaces play a functional role in providing opportunities for food/plant growing as well as clothes drying. They also have a recreational role by providing access to daylight and fresh air, and space to play in, socialise and enjoy wildlife.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments “create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users...”. Outdoor amenity space can promote health and well-being, and provide high standard of amenity in accordance with national policy. This policy ensures that all new dwellings are provided with private or communal outdoor amenity space, which will result in a high standard of amenity for future residents and will also contribute to the quality of life of the users of the outdoor space.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that:

- requires new dwellings are provided with either private or communal outdoor amenity space
- ensures the size of the amenity space is reflective of the size of the dwelling and character of the surrounding area
- requires that private outdoor seating areas should not be overlooked by neighbouring habitable rooms
- requires that outdoor amenity spaces are not compromised by:
  - Shading (from buildings or otherwise)
  - Parking areas or garages.

## Why we prefer Option A

This option ensures that outdoor amenity space is provided for new dwellings in new developments in the districts. It addresses the amount of space, and what factors should be considered to ensure any outdoor amenity space is not compromised. Providing these amenity spaces will positively contribute to residents' health and wellbeing and ensure a high standard of amenity in accordance with national policy.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Do not have a separate policy, instead include these requirements in the 'High quality design' policy.

A separate policy allows more specific requirements to be set than could be included in the broader 'high quality design' policy, therefore this option is not preferred.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Have no policy and instead rely on national policy and guidance set out in the NPPF/planning practice guidance.

This alternative option would not provide clear requirements on outdoor amenity space. Currently, national policy and guidance lacks detail on outdoor amenity space requirements, and therefore without specific policy requirements on outdoor amenity space, this alternative option could result in inappropriate or inefficient outdoor amenity space being provided on new developments.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy DE6 - Outdoor amenity space**

- 1) A high-quality, usable private outdoor garden or outdoor amenity space, or alternatively a shared outdoor 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 and by the character of surrounding development. Private outdoor sitting areas should not be overlooked by adjacent habitable rooms. They should also not be compromised by shading from buildings.
- 2) 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 or garages. They should also satisfy relevant requirements on outdoor amenity space, set out in the Joint Design Guide.

## **Policy DE7 - Waste collection and recycling**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will seek to ensure that on all new developments there are adequate facilities for the sorting, storage and collection of waste and recycling.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

The councils have a duty to collect waste and recycling from all households, and to fulfil this duty there must be space to sort and store waste in new developments, with appropriate access to ensure that waste and recycling can be safely collected. However, waste and recycling facilities in new developments are sometimes an 'afterthought' in new development proposals. This can lead to inadequate waste provision in new developments and our streets and spaces being cluttered or made unattractive by bins. However, they serve an important role, and when thoroughly considered as an important element of the design of new buildings and spaces they can blend in with their surroundings, or even become a complementary design feature. There are some innovative solutions such as underground refuse systems (URS) which offer an alternative to the normal mode of waste storage on housing developments. Therefore, in promoting good design and encouraging sustainable waste management initiatives, it is important to ensure that proper provision is made for waste and recycling, storage and collection, and that opportunities are taken for incorporating re-use and recycling facilities in all new developments. This is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirements on achieving well-designed places, as well as paragraph 20(b), which requires strategic policies to make sufficient provision for waste management.

### **Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)**

#### **Option A - Preferred**

Have a policy that ensures:

- adequate facilities are provided for the sorting, storage and collection of waste and recycling
- sufficient space is provided for the storage of recycling and refuse containers
- safe and convenient access is provided for users of these facilities, including collection vehicles
- that the location and design of recycling and refuse provision should be integral to the design of the proposed development
- recycling and refuse storage is separate from cycle storage, car parking and key circulation areas



- the impact on health and amenity of neighbouring development and the proposed development is considered, including any remote collection points and the proximity of these to properties
- the security of the provision against scavenging pests, vandalism and unauthorised use is considered
- that applicants comply with the Waste Planning Guidance in the design of facilities for the sorting, storage and collection of waste and recycling.

### Why we prefer Option A

This option ensures that adequate facilities for the sorting, storage and collection of waste and recycling is provided for in new developments in the districts. It also provides clarity regarding what factors should be considered to ensure these facilities are well designed and consider health and safety impacts, in line with national policy.

#### Option B - Alternative

Have no policy and instead rely on national policy and guidance set out in the NPPF/planning practice guidance.

This alternative option would not provide clear requirements on waste collection and recycling provision. Currently, national policy and guidance lacks detail on waste collection and recycling requirements, and therefore without specific policy requirements this alternative option could result in inappropriate or inefficient waste collection and recycling provision being provided on new developments.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### Policy DE7 - Waste collection and recycling

1) Development proposals for residential use must ensure:

- a) adequate facilities are provided for the sorting, storage and collection of recycling and waste;
- b) sufficient space is provided for the storage and collection of individual or communal recycling and refuse containers;
- c) access is provided that is safe for existing users/residents and for refuse and recycling collection vehicles;
- d) the location and design of recycling and refuse provision should be integral to the design of the proposed development; and
- e) all refuse and recycling storage and collection facilities comply with the council's waste collection and recycling guidance for planning applications.

2) Development proposals for non-residential use must ensure:

- a) sufficient space is provided for the storage of communal recycling and refuse containers;
- b) provision is made that is adequate for the proposed use;
- c) the location and design of recycling and refuse provision should be integral to the design of the proposed development; and
- d) all refuse and recycling storage and collection facilities comply with the council's waste collection and recycling guidance for planning applications.

3) The following factors will be material in assessing whether adequate recycling and refuse provision has been provided:

- a) the level and type of provision, having regard to the above requirements and relevant space standards;
- b) the location of the provision, having regard to the need to provide and maintain safe and convenient access for occupants, while also providing satisfactory access for collection vehicles;
- c) the impact of the provision on visual amenity, having regard to the need to minimise the prominence of the facilities and screen any external provision;
- d) the impact of the provision on health and amenity of neighbouring development and the proposed development; and;
- e) the security of the provision against scavenging pests, vandalism and unauthorised use.

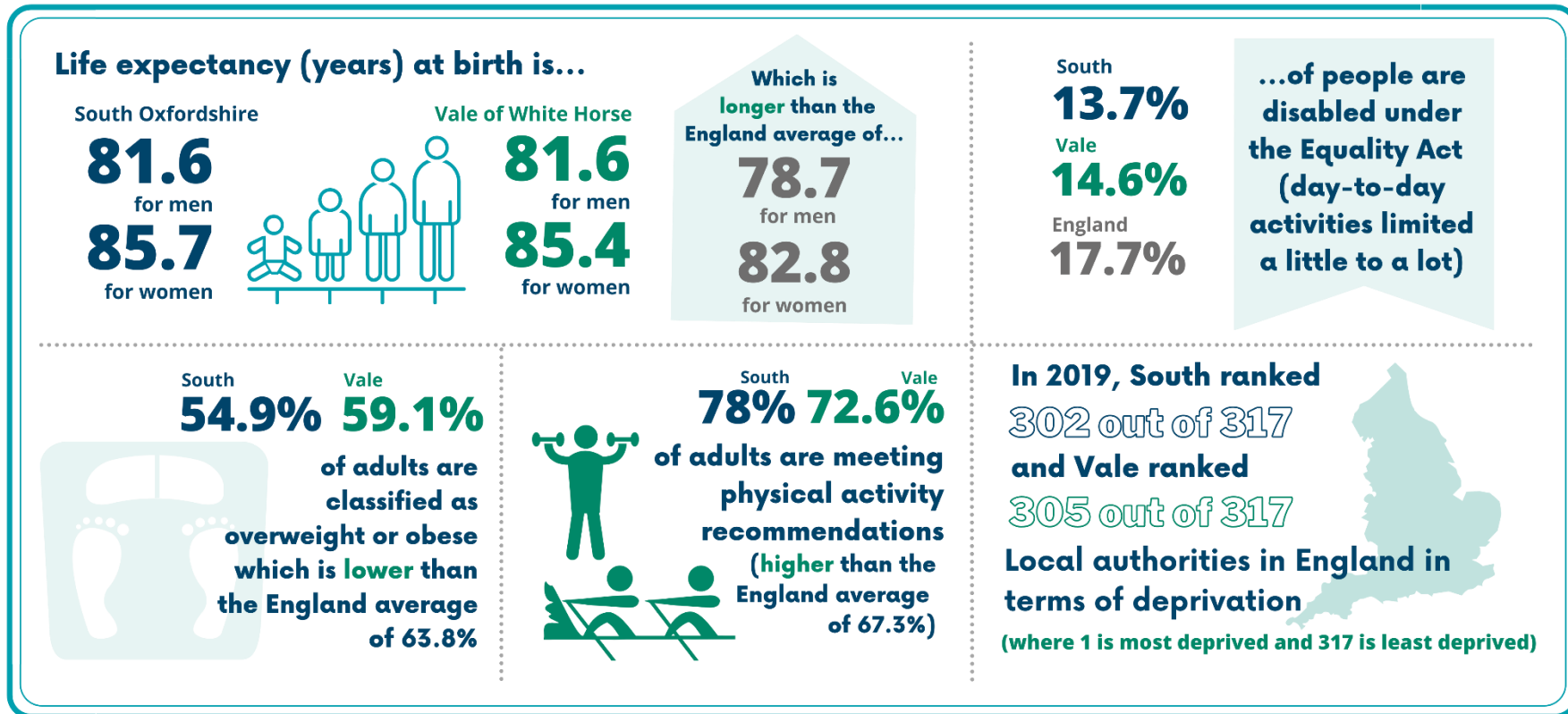
4) Recycling and refuse storage should be separate from cycle storage, car parking and key circulation areas.

- 5) Innovative new ways to collect and manage household recycling and waste are encouraged. Any innovative recycling and waste collection and management proposals must be agreed in consultation with the council's waste team at an early stage.
- 6) Development will not be permitted if recycling and refuse provision that meets the above requirements cannot feasibly or practicably be provided.

# 11. Healthy Places

## Introduction

Here are some facts and figures that help set the scene for this chapter.



If you find this, or any of our infographics, difficult to read, please email [planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk) and we will provide a text version.

## You told us

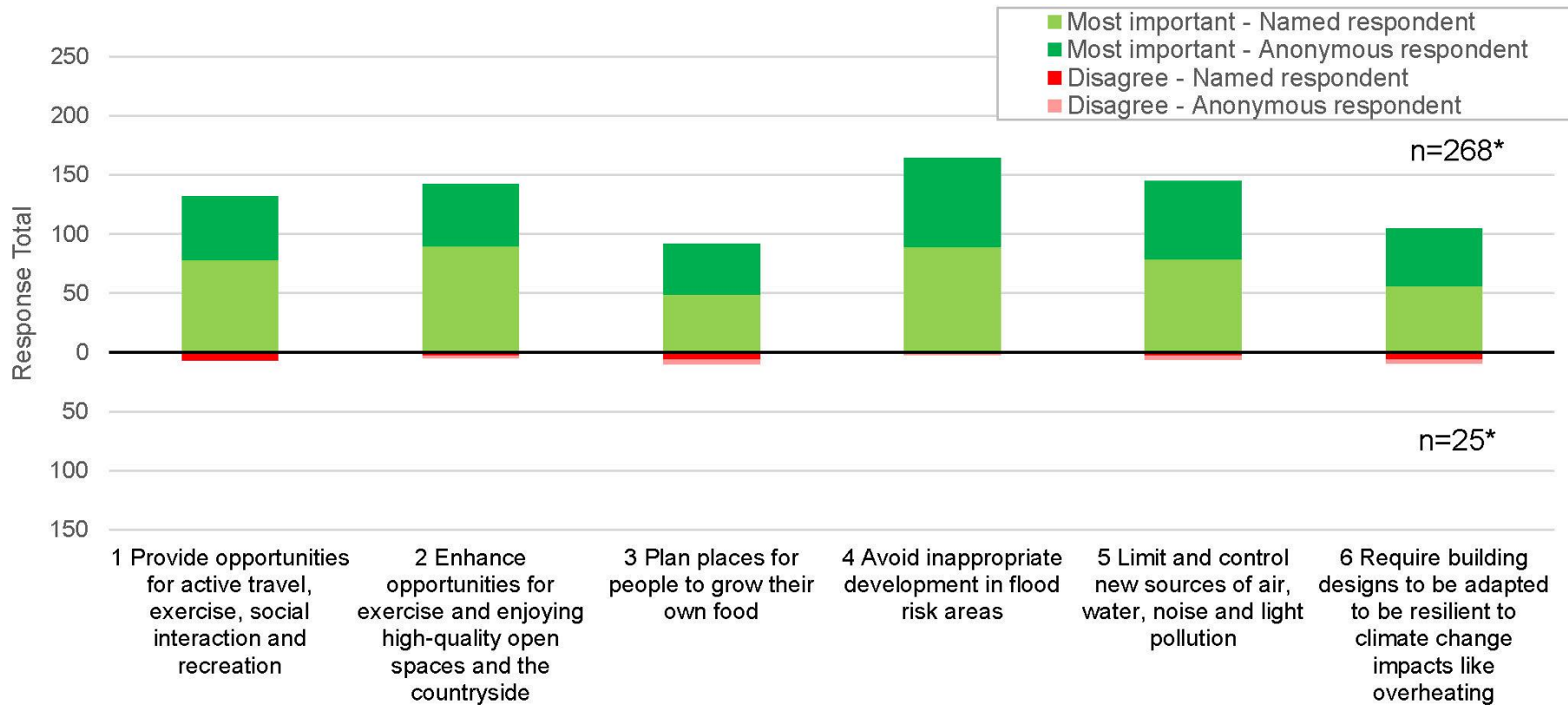
In response to our Issues Consultation, you told us that:

- avoiding inappropriate development in flood risk areas;
- limiting and controlling new sources of air, water, noise and light pollution; and
- enhancing opportunities for exercise and enjoying high-quality open spaces and the countryside

were all important to you.

This chapter had the fewest responses to the question ‘do you disagree with any of these opportunities’ which suggested there was general support for the ideas presented on this topic.

We have considered all feedback when developing our policy options, selecting our preferred option and proposed policy wording, which are presented in this chapter.



\*n = the number of times this question was answered (combining named responses and anonymous responses)

## **Policy HP1 - Healthy place shaping**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will ensure that health and wellbeing is a key consideration in new development proposals.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

An important relationship exists between planning and our health and wellbeing. The built and natural environment are key determinants of our health and wellbeing, and therefore it is important to recognise the role that planning plays in influencing both our physical health and mental wellbeing. The way in which we plan for, and design new developments has an influence not only on our health and wellbeing, but on the day-to-day choices we make, as well as our sense of safety, community and identity. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises this important relationship in Chapter 8 of the NPPF, dedicated to providing national policy on “Promoting healthy and safe communities”. This section sets out national policy requirements on how local plans should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social inclusion, are safe and accessible, and enable and support healthy lifestyles. Reflecting this, it is important that the Joint Local Plan includes a policy that ensures our health and wellbeing is considered in planning and design decisions, encouraging the creation of well-designed, healthy, safe and inclusive places.

To help achieve this aim, the plan will require Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) to be submitted for all new major development proposals in the districts. Through carefully evaluating the design of new developments, we can help to deliver a high quality of life in our districts, address health inequalities, improve accessibility, and maximise the health and wellbeing of residents. Currently HIAs are only required to be submitted for housing site allocations in Vale of White Horse, and for all strategic development in South Oxfordshire. Requiring HIAs to be submitted for all major development in the districts will ensure that health and wellbeing is considered and optimised in planning decisions more widely. We also acknowledge that health and wellbeing considerations will need to be integrated, not only in this policy, but throughout the plan. Therefore, we are currently undertaking a Health Impact Assessment of the Joint Local Plan itself to ensure all plan policies have thoroughly considered their health and wellbeing impacts, and where possible, have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the districts residents. This assessment will be published at the next stage of consultation (Regulation 19).

## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### **Option A - Preferred**

Include a policy that requires a Health Impact Assessment to be submitted alongside any major planning applications (where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more) within the districts.

### **Why we prefer Option A**

The requirement to submit an HIA as part of all major development proposals in the districts provides a successful approach to ensuring health and wellbeing is a key consideration in the planning process in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. It will also help us to meet our vision of enabling residents and visitors to live healthy lifestyles, and encourage the creation of high quality, sustainable places. Without this requirement in place, the emphasis and recognition given to how the built and natural environment can contribute to the creation of healthy places may be lost in the planning process, and opportunities missed to both improve positive health and wellbeing impacts and address any negative impacts arising as a result of new development across the districts.

### **Option B - Alternative**

To not require HIAs to be submitted for major development proposals.

HIAs can be time consuming to produce so this would relieve applicants of this requirement. However, this approach may lead to potential health impacts and health opportunities in new developments not being sufficiently considered in the planning application process. As a result, this alternative option is not preferred.



## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### Policy HP1 - Healthy place shaping

- 1) Major development proposals will be required to submit a rapid health impact assessment (HIA) demonstrating how the health and wellbeing impacts (benefits and harm) of new major development will be assessed and mitigated, and how the conclusions of the HIA have been taken into account in the design of the scheme. Development proposals should explicitly address the existing and projected local health and wellbeing needs identified by the HIA, including the needs of an aging population. The rapid health impact assessment must follow the methodology set out in the Oxfordshire Health Impact Assessment Toolkit\*\_or equivalent future document) and should be undertaken at a scale that is proportionate to a proposed development.

\* [futureoxfordshirepartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/210126-Oxon-HIA-Toolkit-FINAL.pdf](https://futureoxfordshirepartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/210126-Oxon-HIA-Toolkit-FINAL.pdf)

## **Policy HP2 - Community facilities and services**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will seek to safeguard essential community facilities or services (including schools, village halls, public houses, local shops etc) from change of use or redevelopment. It will also support the provision of new community facilities in accessible locations to meet local needs.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Paragraph 97(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the importance of supporting the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that local communities need (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship), highlighting that they can also enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

Paragraph 99 of the NPPF goes on to state the importance of providing sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities.

The Joint Local Plan therefore has an important role to play in ensuring that we can protect against the loss of existing community facilities and support the provision of new ones, in the interest of meeting residents' day-to-day needs, improving their health and well-being and reducing social and educational inequalities in both urban and rural parts of our districts.

Under Policy HP2, we consider essential community facilities to be those that fall within Use Class F2 (Local Community Uses) and Use Class F1 (Learning and Non-Residential Institutions), as well as other uses such as cemeteries, drinking establishments, cinemas, concert/dance/bingo halls and theatres. So, schools, further education colleges, community halls, small local shops, places of worship and public houses would all be covered by HP2.

The key design criteria set out in HP2 are needed to help us determine whether development proposals would actively support the councils' aims of ensuring new community facilities are accessible and inclusive and that they will help promote healthy lifestyles for those living and working in our districts.

Community facilities like public houses or village halls can be a focal point for local communities to meet and socialise. However, in South Oxfordshire and the Vale where land values and demand for residential properties are high, such facilities (particularly those in attractive rural locations) can often come under pressure for redevelopment to other uses. Consequently, there is a need for

HP2 to include robust criteria against which proposals that involve the loss of sites or premises in community use can be objectively assessed.

The councils will work positively with Oxfordshire County Council, town and parish councils, local voluntary organisations and others to support the protection and improvement of our existing community facilities. Town and parish councils can seek to do this through the preparation of neighbourhood plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders or they may construct or rebuild community buildings subject to a Community Right to Build Order. Local communities are also able to identify buildings or parcels of land that are of value to them so that they can be listed as Assets of Community Value. This allows them to bid for the assets if they are put up for sale.

New development should contribute to the provision of new or improved community facilities in a way that is proportionate to the scale of the proposed development and in accordance with Policy IN1, the councils' Infrastructure Delivery Plans and our adopted Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

South Oxfordshire District Council has existing guidance on how officers will assess planning applications which result in the permanent closure of commercial community facilities.<sup>44</sup>

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

Have a policy that:

- seeks to safeguard against the loss of essential community facilities and services from change of use or redevelopment, except in certain circumstances
- supports the provision of new or extended community facilities where they meet local needs and specific design criteria (such as being easily accessible by footpath, cycleway and public transport for all users including the disabled; being

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<sup>44</sup> [data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=1283190451&CODE=96FAD849B5185AA191263E2A1FB09B33](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=1283190451&CODE=96FAD849B5185AA191263E2A1FB09B33)

designed to offer potential for dual use by local community or sports groups; or being located within or adjacent to the built-up area of an existing settlement).

### Why we prefer Option A

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. It is also important to provide new facilities to meet local needs and to ensure that these can be accessed easily by the community they will serve.

#### **Option B - Alternative**

No policy, relying on national guidance.

This option is not preferred or appropriate given the important role that community facilities and services play in meeting residents' essential needs, improving their health and well-being and reducing social and educational inequalities across the districts. Furthermore, we want to set out key design criteria which will help us to determine whether new development proposals would actively support the councils' aims of ensuring that new facilities are accessible, inclusive and help promote healthy lifestyles for those living and working in our districts.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

**Policy HP2 - Community facilities and services**

### **Existing facilities**

- 1) Proposals that result in the loss of an essential community facility or service\*, through change of use or redevelopment, will not be permitted unless:
  - a) it would lead to the significant improvement of community services (within the existing site or premises), or where the development proposals include a replacement facility that is equally convenient to the local community it serves and gives access to an equivalent or improved level of service provision;
  - b) it has been determined to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the community facility is no longer needed; or
  - c) 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.

- 2) Planning conditions or legal obligations may be necessary to ensure that any replacement facility and its ongoing maintenance is provided. Any replacement facility should normally be available before the original facility is lost.
- 3) 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. This includes the protection of Public Rights of Way, including bridleways and by-ways. If suitable alternative provision already exists, any facility or service will not be considered essential.

### **New or extended facilities**

- 4) Development proposals for the provision of new or extended community facilities\* will be supported where they:
  - a) are located within or adjacent to the built-up area of a Tier 1-4 settlement;

- b) would clearly meet an identified local need;
  - c) provide high quality, safe active travel routes between the facility and the surrounding area;
  - d) include provision for cycle and scooter parking;
  - e) are accessible and inclusive for a range of users, including those who are disabled, and promote social inclusion;
  - f) deliver the potential, through appropriate design and management measures, for multiple use by local community or sports groups at different times of the day or week; and
  - g) deliver opportunities for new green infrastructure or food growing within the site, where it is feasible.
- 5) Where appropriate, the co-location of community, leisure, cultural or other local facilities (such as community workspace) will be supported.
- 6) Financial contributions will be sought towards the on-going maintenance of community facilities where appropriate.

*\* Facilities falling within: Use Class F2 - Local Community Uses (shops smaller than 280sqm and without another shop in 1,000 metres, a hall or meeting place for the principal use of the local community, outdoor sport or recreation locations, and swimming pools or skating rinks); Use Class F1 - Learning and Non-Residential Institutions; and Sui Generis Uses (such as: cemeteries, drinking establishments, cinemas, concert/dance/bingo halls, theatres).*

## **Policy HP3 - Health care provision**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will set out the councils' commitment to supporting the provision of facilities such as GP surgeries, dentists and hospitals to meet the health care needs of our districts.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

The Joint Local Plan will support the provision of new or improved facilities and services to meet the health care needs of our residents and help reduce health inequalities. The councils are committed to working with Public Health at Oxfordshire County Council, the Integrated Care Board and other local health partners to ensure that new and existing residents are provided with sufficient health care services in the most appropriate location. Over the lifetime of the plan there will be more changes in the ways that health and other public services are delivered and provided. Close partnership working will be essential to ensure that communities continue to have the best possible access to these facilities.

### **Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)**

#### **Option A – Preferred**

A policy that:

- supports the provision of new, refurbished or replacement health care facilities (including land and associated buildings), in locations that are easily accessible by walking, cycling, wheeling or public transport
- only permits the loss or change of use of health care floorspace (i.e. GP surgeries, dentists or hospitals) under specific circumstances, such as: where there is evidence that the current use is no longer needed or where health care services would be better provided on an alternative site within reasonable distance by public transport or active travel means.

## Why we prefer Option A

The councils are committed to working with Oxfordshire County Council, other health providers and developers to support the provision of necessary facilities and services to help reduce health inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities. It is essential that new health care facilities can be accessed by public transport or active travel means, wherever possible.

### **Option B – Alternative**

No policy.

This option is not preferred as the increase in population in our districts in recent years and the strain that the pandemic placed on the NHS have highlighted the importance of supporting the protection and improvement of the districts' health care provision where needed.

### **Option C – Alternative**

An even more restrictive policy that insists on new health care facilities only being located in the districts' most accessible locations within town centres.

This option is not preferred because it could have the unintended consequence of restricting the number of sites that could be considered to meet local health care needs and would exclude potential sites within smaller settlements or local centres.



## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy HP3 – Health care provision**

- 1) New, replacement, expanded or upgraded GP surgeries, dentist or hospital facilities will be supported within Tier 1 to 4 settlements in locations with good accessibility by walking, cycling, wheeling or public transport.
- 2) Where planning permission is required, the loss or change of use of existing health care floorspace will not be permitted unless:
  - a) it would lead to the significant improvement of services (within the existing site or premises), or where the development proposals include a replacement facility which is equally convenient to the local community it serves and gives access to an equivalent or improved level of service provision;
  - b) it has been determined to the satisfaction of the local planning authority\* that the facility is no longer needed; or
  - c) in the case of commercial services, it is no longer 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.

*\*In consultation with Public Health, the Integrated Care Board and other relevant health care partners.*

## **Policy HP4 - Existing open space, sport and recreation facilities**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will seek to protect existing open space, sport and recreation facilities from development.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Paragraph 102 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.

Paragraph 103 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless a number of specific criteria are met.

Ensuring that residents and visitors can live healthy lifestyles and access greenspace is a key objective of the Joint Local Plan. Protecting and maintaining our existing spaces will ensure that our local communities continue to enjoy the wide range of greenspaces available. Access to nature and green spaces can have positive benefits for our communities' physical and mental health.

In line with government guidance, this policy is required to protect all greenspaces, open spaces, sport and recreational spaces of value including (but not limited to); playing fields, parks and play spaces, gardens and communal green spaces within housing areas, natural and semi-natural greens spaces, cemeteries and churchyards, Local Green Spaces, common land, town and village greens and green corridors.

Protection for allotments is set out in Policy HP9 – Allotments and community food growing.

## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### **Option A – Preferred**

Have a policy that

- confirms that through its planning decisions, the councils will protect and enhance the districts' existing open space, sport and recreation facilities from development to ensure their continued contribution to the health and wellbeing of visitors and residents
- sets out the criteria against which proposals that impact upon the districts' open space, sport and recreation facilities will be considered
- includes references to the relevant local plan evidence base documents that address the district's open space, sport and recreation facilities.

### **Why we prefer Option A**

The Joint Local Plan should include a policy that seeks to protect and enhance the districts' existing open space, sports and recreation facilities and provides a framework for consideration of these policies.

### **Option B - Alternative**

No policy - rely on the text in national policy and guidance. This alternative is not preferred as it is important that the statutory development plan contains policies to protect our open space, sport and recreation facilities and highlights the local evidence prepared to support planning decision making and the collection of planning contributions.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Seek to widen the scope of the policy to include on the proposals maps and list in the plan all the green and open spaces that should be protected from development. This is not recommended as it would be difficult to identify all the green and open spaces of importance to local communities and some could be missed.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy HP4 - Existing open space, sport and recreation facilities**

- 1) The councils will seek to protect, maintain and where possible enhance existing open space, sport and recreation, play facilities and land including playing fields and allotments to ensure their continued contribution to the health and wellbeing of visitors and residents.
- 2) Development proposals that result in the loss of open space, sport and recreation facilities will only be permitted where:
  - a) it can be demonstrated that alternative facilities of equal or better quantity and quality will be provided in an equally accessible location as part of the development;
  - b) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss; or
  - c) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements.
- 3) Any replacement provision should be subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements and where possible made available before the existing provision is lost.
- 4) Proposals that improve access to the districts' open spaces by public transport and active travel means will be supported.
- 5) The council's Joint Local Plan evidence base should be used to inform any assessment against this policy including the emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy and Open Spaces Study, leisure facilities assessment and strategy and playing pitch strategy.

## **Policy HP5 - New facilities for sport, physical activity and recreation**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will set out what the requirements will be on new housing developments for new facilities for sport, physical activity and recreation. It will also support the provision of small-scale recreational facilities in the countryside.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Access to both indoor and outdoor leisure and sports facilities is important to allow local communities and residents to participate in sporting activities and contribute towards their health and wellbeing. Outdoor sports facilities can include natural or artificial playing pitches, bowling greens, tennis courts, skate parks, outdoor gyms and Multi Use Game Areas (MUGAs). Indoor sports facilities include sports halls, swimming pools, athletics tracks, and gyms.

The countryside in our districts is also used extensively for informal recreational activities, such as walking, cycling, running, riding and fishing. National policy and guidance make clear the importance of leisure activities, especially where they benefit communities and visitors. The council will support proposals for small scale recreational facilities in the countryside that may include the provision of facilities to support water sports, bike hire, high ropes courses, small picnic sites, roadside parking areas (provided they also include provision for electric vehicles and cycle parking facilities), small wetland and wildlife centres, viewing points and interpretation facilities. Appropriate landscaping may be required to ensure facilities to support recreation do not detract from the attraction that residents and visitors wish to visit. Proposals should consider how access can be improved for all users including wide footpaths and accessible toilets/parking for blue/orange badge holder.

The requirement to provide play space for children and young people on new developments is set out in a separate policy.

The co-location of sports facilities particularly within new and existing schools, colleges, commercial schemes and community centres should be considered positively in planning applications for mixed use development. This will help ensure the right mix of facilities in the right places to stimulate and to meet sporting demand and increase participation.

## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### **Option A – Preferred**

Have a policy that

- supports the provision of new facilities for sport, physical activity and recreation
- sets out the requirement for new sports facilities on larger development sites
- supports development proposals for small scale countryside recreational facilities.

### **Why we prefer Option A**

Maintaining and increasing access to a wide range of indoor and outdoor leisure and sports facilities is important to allow local communities and residents to participate in sporting activities and contribute towards their health and well-being. We will be updating our evidence on specific issues related to indoor and outdoor sport facilities in our districts, and these will be available at the next stage of Joint Local Plan.

### **Option B – Alternative**

No policy, relying on national guidance. This is not considered a reasonable alternative due to the need to respond to local opportunities and provide satisfactory provision to support development in a sustainable form.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy HP5 – New facilities for sport, physical activity and recreation**

- 1) The provision of new or expanded facilities for sport, physical activity and recreation will be encouraged where well related to the settlements they serve, being sited within or adjacent to settlements, particularly where they:
  - a) are co-located with other community uses;

- b) offer greatest accessibility to the public;
  - c) involve the use of brownfield land;
  - d) provide alternative or specialist sports and recreational provision;
  - e) are of a scale appropriate to the type and size of settlement; and
  - f) are accessible by walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport.
- 2) New residential developments will be expected to provide on-site provision where possible, or where appropriate, a financial contribution towards either off-site provision, or the enhancement of existing off-site facilities. This will be determined on a site-by-site basis, informed by the councils' leisure studies and accord with the requirements set out in the infrastructure delivery plan. Provision for the future long-term maintenance and management of new or expanded facilities must be agreed as part of the planning application.
- 3) Where small scale recreational facilities\* are provided in the countryside these will be supported provided that:
- a) it does not harm the North Wessex Downs/Chilterns National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) and/or their settings;
  - b) it does not adversely impact on heritage assets;
  - c) it will not impact negatively on the existing Public Rights of Way Network;
  - d) it respects the settlement character, locality and intrinsic beauty; and
  - e) it does not harm the ecology of the area and is consistent with the policies in Chapter 12.

*\* Small scale recreational facilities in the countryside may include the provision of small picnic sites, roadside parking areas, viewing points or interpretation facilities.*

## **Policy HP6 - Green infrastructure on new developments**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will support the provision of green infrastructure on new developments.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Green Infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green and blue space which can provide a wide range of benefits for nature and local communities. Features such as parks and gardens, woodlands, fields, hedges, ponds, reservoirs, streams and rivers are all elements of the green infrastructure network.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines green infrastructure as “a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity”. Natural England’s Green Infrastructure Framework identifies five of these wide-reaching benefits:

- 1) Nature rich beautiful places
- 2) Active and healthy places
- 3) Thriving and prospering communities
- 4) Improved water management
- 5) Resilient and climate positive places

The NPPF requires that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment and that plans should take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure, and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

Both councils have an existing joint Green Infrastructure Strategy (2017) and we are exploring how we might update this strategy to align with current guidance on green infrastructure. We intend to use the recently released Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework to work out the standards to apply in our predominantly rural districts. This will help us to create policies which will improve quality and access to green infrastructure and establish the need for green infrastructure in the districts.

We will also be assessing the need for securing and supporting large scale GI and/or open space in the districts through our GI Strategy update and Open Spaces Study. If the Strategy and Study advise that we need additional provision for larger GI, we will



include policies in the Local Plan at the next stage. Large scale GI and open space could be achieved as strategic scale sub-regional or country parks which may cross district boundaries.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

Have a policy that;

- ensures new development contributes towards the provision of green infrastructure
- ensures new development protects and enhances existing green infrastructure
- allows for space to be provided off-site under exceptional circumstances
- ensures arrangements are in place for the management and maintenance of new green infrastructure

#### Why we prefer Option A

We are required by national policy to set out a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries. Option A would help us meet this requirement.

Option A recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing green infrastructure, as well as providing new green infrastructure. The requirement for all major development proposals to submit a Green Infrastructure Statement ensures that this is a key consideration in the planning process and protects against missed opportunities to improve green infrastructure within the districts.

#### Option B - Alternative

An alternative could be to not have a policy on green infrastructure, and instead rely on national policy and guidance.

However, given NPPF requirements for plan-makers to make sufficient provision for the conservation and enhancement of green infrastructure, the option of not having a policy in the Joint Local Plan is not our preferred approach.

**Option C – Alternative**

An alternative could be to identify and safeguard specific green infrastructure links within the districts and to require new development to connect to this. However, this does not provide a very flexible approach.

**Option D – Alternative**

We could alternatively introduce an urban greening factor (UGF) requirement within the policy. This would be a tool used to evaluate the quality and quantity of natural features proposed as part of a development. The policy would set a UGF score that applications must meet. Going for this option would depend on emerging evidence for how effective UGF standards would be in our districts.

**Option E – Alternative**

Another alternative could be to require green infrastructure features on all new development with specific requirements set out in policy for different locations/sites or on different scales of development. This approach would not provide as much flexibility as Option A.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### Policy HP6 - Green infrastructure on new developments

- 1) Development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of additional green infrastructure and protect or enhance existing green infrastructure.
- 2) Development proposals should ensure that existing and new green infrastructure is considered and integrated into the scheme design from the outset.
- 3) Proposals should protect existing green infrastructure by:
  - a) avoiding the loss, fragmentation, severance or other negative impact on the function of green infrastructure;
  - b) providing appropriate mitigation where there would be an adverse impact on green infrastructure; and
  - c) providing an appropriate replacement where it is necessary for development to take place on areas of green infrastructure.
- 4) All new green infrastructure should:
  - a) meet needs identified in relevant council plans and strategies including the updated Green Infrastructure Strategy, Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan, AONB Management Plan, Habitats Regulations Assessment, the leisure studies and neighbourhood plans;
  - b) maximise opportunities to create a network of new and existing multifunctional green spaces which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities;
  - c) incorporate multifunctional, landscape-led sustainable drainage systems to deliver wider benefits including biodiversity improvements and amenity use and manage surface water, flood risks and significant changes in rainfall;
  - d) Be provided on site where possible;
  - e) Be of high quality design;
  - f) Maximise biodiversity benefits; and
  - g) Be publicly accessible and usable, where possible.

- 5) Where green infrastructure is provided, applicants should ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure its ongoing management and maintenance.
- 6) All major applications must be accompanied by a green infrastructure statement (can be part of the design and access statement) demonstrating that the proposal meets the above criteria taking into account the relationship of the proposed development to existing green infrastructure and how this will be retained and enhanced.

## Policy HP7 - Open space on new developments

### What will this policy do?

This policy will support the provision of open space on new developments.

### Why is this policy needed?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines Open Space as “all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity”.

Open space can include formal sports pitches, open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks. Access to a network of high-quality open spaces is important for health and well-being and can also deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.

The NPPF states that, in order to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies should plan positively for the provision and use of open space.

The requirement for planning policies to be based on robust and up to date assessments of the need for open spaces is explained in Paragraph 102 of the NPPF. We are expanding and updating our evidence base for open space as part of the JLP process. Information from these assessments will be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed.

This policy is supported by additional policies covering sport and recreation and food growing and allotments and play space for children and young people. We have commissioned a leisure facilities assessment and playing pitch assessment to assess the need for open space to support sport and recreation activities in the district.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

Have a policy that;

- ensures new development contributes towards the provision of open space
- relies on evidence for the amount of on-site provision of open space

- allows for open space to be provided off-site under exceptional circumstances
- ensures arrangements are in place for the management and maintenance of new open space
- requires submission of a green infrastructure statement for all major developments to make sure that open space is considered as a key component of the green infrastructure network.

### Why we prefer Option A

We are required by national policy to set out a positive plan for the provision and use of open space. Option A would help us meet this requirement by setting evidence-led standards for the provision of open space.

The requirement for all major development proposals to submit a green infrastructure statement ensures that this is a key consideration in the planning process and links the provision of open spaces in with opportunities to improve the network of green infrastructure within the districts.

#### **Option B - Alternative**

An alternative could be to have blanket standards, for example the policy could require a set percentage of a site's area to be open space. This alternative is not the preferred approach as it would not take into account evidence of need in specific locations.

#### **Option C – Alternative**

An alternative could be to not have a policy and instead rely on national policy and guidance.

However, given the NPPF requirement for planning policies to plan positively for the provision of open space, this is not the preferred approach.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy HP7 - Open space on new developments**

- 1) All development proposals must maximise on-site provision of inclusive and accessible open space having regard to the most up to date standards set out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Open Spaces Study. Proposals will also be required to contribute to the delivery of new open space in accordance with the relevant standards.
- 2) Where on-site provision cannot be fully achieved, developments must:
  - a) Make physical improvements to the public realm in the vicinity of the development to improve accessibility and quality of existing public open spaces; and
  - b) Make financial and/or physical contributions towards the provision of new open space, the enhancement of existing public open space or the enhancement of other green infrastructure and biodiversity in the locality.
- 3) All major applications must be accompanied by a green infrastructure statement (can be part of the design and access statement) demonstrating that the proposal meets the above criteria taking into account the relationship of the proposed development to existing open space and how this will be retained and enhanced.
- 4) Provision for the future long-term maintenance and management of the open space will be sought and must be secured as part of the planning application.

## **Policy HP8 - Provision for children's play and spaces for young people**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will secure provision for play equipment and facilities on new development for children and young people.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Chapter 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning policies should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other and enable and support healthy lifestyles.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international treaty that sets out universally accepted rights for children. It was officially approved by the United Nations in 1989. Article 31 states "that every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts".

Children and young people require places to play and interact. This policy sets out a requirement to ensure that these needs are met in new developments. It is important that in meeting these needs the requirements of different age groups, abilities and sex are also given consideration. Children and young people include all children between the ages of 0 and 18.

Through updated policies in the new Joint Local Plan the Councils will continue to require play space provision for children and young people on our larger development sites. A policy could include a quantity and quality requirement for play space based on expected population of the development. This approach is recommended in the current Fields in Trust Guidance for Outdoor Space and Play (2015).<sup>45</sup> Fields in Trust's recommended benchmark guidelines are 0.25 ha per 1,000 population for equipped/designated play areas and 0.30 ha per 1,000 population for other outdoor provision for young people (e.g. MUGAs and skate parks) This will be considered through a new Open Spaces Study.

The councils' leisure studies (in progress) will also help identify where there is a need for new sports facilities. Policy HP5 covers new facilities for sport, physical activity and recreation.

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<sup>45</sup> [www.fieldsintrust.org/guidance](http://www.fieldsintrust.org/guidance) - see Table 1, page 6 for benchmark guidelines



## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### **Option A – Preferred**

Have a policy that:

- sets out the requirements for good quality play space to be provided on new residential development for children of all ages and for all abilities including those with physical and sensory disabilities
- sets out the quantity required based on Fields in Trust’s recommended benchmark guidelines.

### **Why we prefer Option A**

It is important that new developments provide play provision for children of all ages and abilities and this policy will set out the councils’ expectations. This approach is recommended in the current Fields in Trust Guidance for Outdoor Space and Play (2015). Fields in Trust’s recommended benchmark guidelines are 0.25 ha per 1,000 population for equipped/designated play areas and 0.30 ha per 1,000 population for other outdoor provision. .

### **Option B – Alternative**

The councils could require developers to make a more detailed estimate of the number of children occupying a development and their ages. This would require the councils to develop a calculator for developers to help understand the likely number of children (in different age groups) that are expected to live in the development, based on the number of bedrooms/tenure mix. The Joint Local Plan could also include more detailed information about the types of play space required for different ages groups to guide developers. This approach is not currently preferred as it is considered that the Fields in Trust guidance is appropriate, with more detailed information set out within the South and Vale Joint Design Guide and the councils’ developer contributions document, is sufficient. However, this will be reconsidered following the completion of a new Open Spaces Study.

### **Option C – Alternative**

No policy or standards on play provision, leave for the developer to propose. This option is unlikely to secure the quality and quantity of play space in the right locations that communities and the council want.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy HP8 - Provision for children's play and spaces for young people**

- 1) All new residential developments should incorporate good quality accessible play provision for all ages and abilities. This should be provided on site in line with the most up to date standards [informed by the latest guidance from Fields in Trust]. Where new provision is made it should;
  - a) provide a stimulating environment;
  - b) be accessed safely from the street by children and young people independently;
  - c) form an integral part of the surrounding development;
  - d) incorporate trees and/or other forms of greenery;
  - e) be overlooked to enable passive surveillance;
  - f) not be segregated by tenure of the surrounding development; and
  - g) contain formal equipment.
- 2) New on-site play space must be publicly accessible. All dedicated play spaces should be genuinely playable and attractive to count as play provision.
- 3) Provision for young people is in addition to any need identified for new sports facilities arising from a development.

- 4) Developers of large-scale major development sites should undertake an assessment of existing play facilities within the surrounding area to ensure that the new provision offers complimentary provision to nearby sites.
- 5) Provision for the future long-term maintenance and management of play provision must be agreed as part of the planning application.

## Policy HP9 - Allotments and community food growing

### What will this policy do?

This policy will help to plan places for people to grow their own food. This will be through new allotment provision and/or community food growing on larger developments and through sufficient contributions towards new allotments and community food growing spaces from new developments that include 10 homes or more.

### Why is this policy needed?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises food production as one of the benefits of providing natural environments (ecosystem services). The significance of food growing to healthy communities is further reinforced in the government guidance to the NPPF where a healthy community is defined as a place where active healthy lifestyles are made easy through “the pattern of development, good urban design, good access to local services and facilities” and there are “green open space and safe places for active play and food growing”.

New developments provide an opportunity to embed food growing in the local environment from the outset. When people grow food at home, in allotments or community gardens they can learn about horticulture and healthier eating and gain access to affordable vegetables and fruit. They can connect with nature, meet and share with neighbours, engage in physical activity and enhance the appearance of their neighbourhood.<sup>46</sup>

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

Have a policy that:

- highlights the importance of protecting allotments from development
- requires all major housing developments to provide or contribute towards new allotments and community food growing space, and that larger developments should provide these on-site
- encourages new food growing space with employment uses, new schools and community centres

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<sup>46</sup> NHS (2019) Putting Health into Place: Principles 408 Design, Deliver and Manage

- encourages residential developments to make allotments an integral part of the green infrastructure provision where possible and appropriate
- requires agreement for the future long-term maintenance and management of allotments, orchards, and community food growing space, roof gardens and edible landscapes as part of the planning application.

### Why we prefer Option A

The provision of community food-growing opportunities, such as allotments, orchards, roof gardens and edible landscaping around new housing developments and in other locations, like new schools and community centres, is important to promoting healthier food choices. We want to update the current policies to encourage the provision of new allotments on development sites, but also secure a wider range of food growing space on other types and sizes of developments too.

### Option B – Alternative

Retain Vale of White Horse's existing policy requirements, by protecting existing allotments from development and requiring contributions or provision of new allotments on new larger housing sites. This option is not preferred as, in addition to allotment spaces on new developments, the councils also wish to support the provision of new spaces for community food growing on smaller housing developments and encourage food growing opportunities with employment developments and other uses.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### Policy HP9 - Allotments and community food growing

- 1) The council will protect existing allotments in accordance with Policy HP4.

- 2) The councils will support proposals for the provision of allotments, orchards, community food growing, roof gardens, and edible landscaping as part of new housing developments and in other appropriate locations, such as employment sites, new schools and community centres.
- 3) Proposals for major residential development must include provision of, or a contribution towards, allotment provision and/or communal food growing space\*, where there is an identified local need.
- 4) Residential developments of over 300 dwellings should provide on-site allotments and/or communal food growing space.\*
- 5) The provision of allotment space should, where possible and appropriate, be an integral part of the green infrastructure provision in residential development.
- 6) Provision for the future long-term maintenance and management of allotments, orchards, community food growing space, roof gardens and edible landscapes must be agreed as part of the planning application.

*\* Appropriate local standards will be developed through our Joint Local Plan evidence base.*

## **Policy HP10 - Watercourses**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will ensure that proposals for development that involve or affect a watercourse protect, and where possible enhance, the function and setting of the watercourse and its biodiversity.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Watercourses contribute towards the character of our landscape and form an important part of green infrastructure. They provide vital ecosystem services, help improve water quality, provide drainage and flood management and provide green space. The health of watercourses is under pressure from issues including abstraction, pollution and increased disturbance.

The term watercourse refers to main rivers, (larger rivers, brooks and streams) defined as those present on the main river map for England, and ordinary watercourses (headwaters, smaller brooks, streams and ditches). All types of watercourses create an important network of blue and green infrastructure and their corridors have a part to play in enhancing biodiversity across the district.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) explains that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Paragraph 185 explains that in order to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Watercourses need to be protected and positively integrated into the design of new development to protect their ecological importance and retain and enhance biodiversity.

## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### **Option A - Preferred**

Carry forward and combine policies from the existing local plans on watercourses. The policy will include requirements on developments to:

- protect and enhance the function and setting of watercourses and their biodiversity
- include a minimum buffer zone on both sides of the watercourse to create a corridor for biodiversity enhancement
- avoid culverting any watercourse and investigate the feasibility of de-culverting watercourses with existing culverts
- where relevant, agree a Construction Management Plan with the council.

The policy will also set out requirements for proposals for mooring stages, posts, earthworks and facing riverbanks with piles and planking.

### **Why we prefer Option A**

Option A allows a more bespoke approach to this specific element of green infrastructure than would be achieved through its inclusion in the green infrastructure or landscape policies. Option A would also help us to meet the NPPF requirements set out above.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Not to have a watercourses policy and instead rely on the green infrastructure and landscape policies.

This is not the preferred approach as we want to highlight the importance of protecting and enhancing our watercourses for biodiversity, landscape, heritage, recreation and tourism. Rivers are a cherished feature of our area and deserve a specific policy.



## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

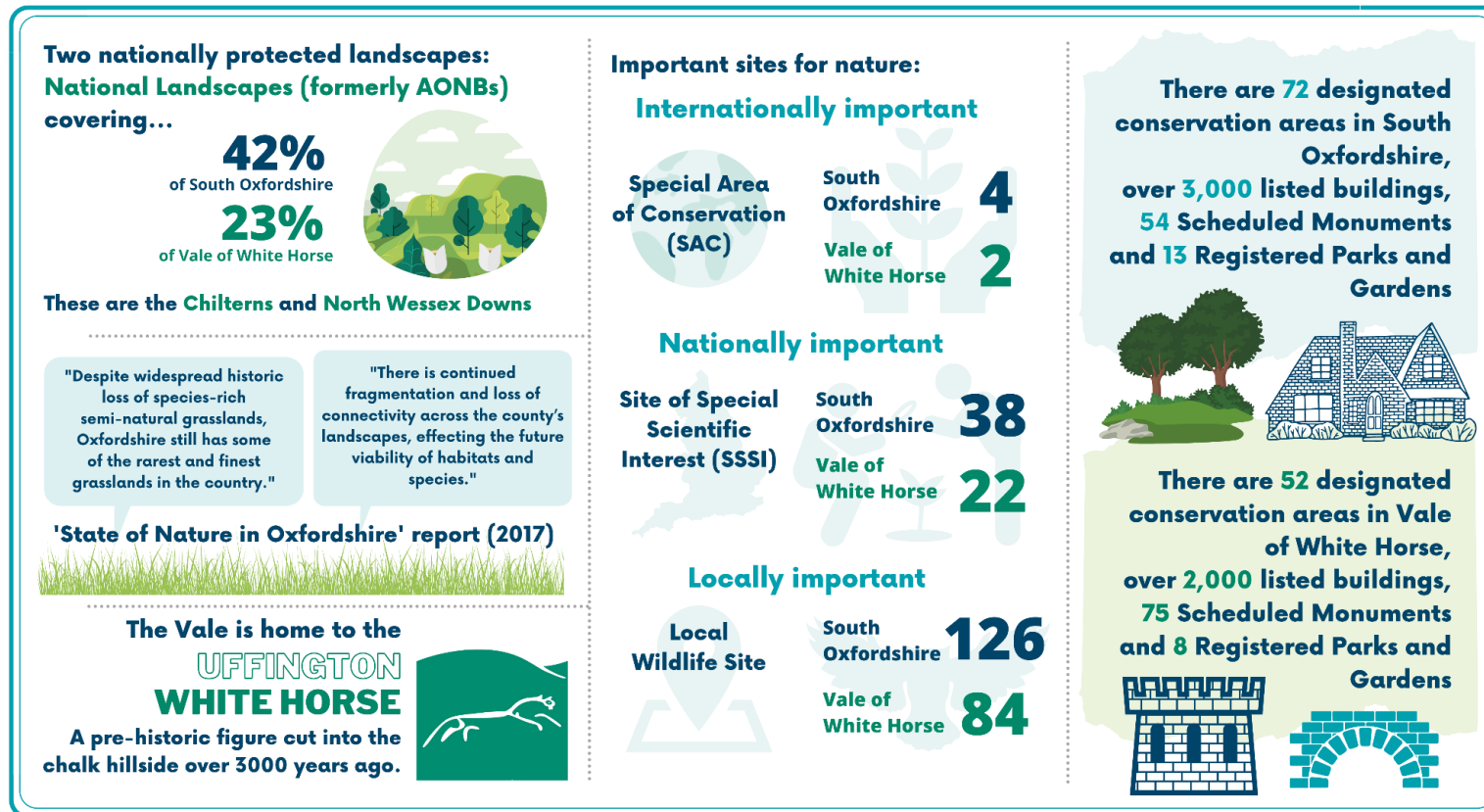
### Policy HP10 - Watercourses

- 1) Development of land that contains, is adjacent to, or has hydrological links with, a watercourse must protect and, where possible, enhance the function and setting of the watercourse and its biodiversity. As a last resort development should provide mitigation for any unavoidable impacts.
- 2) Development should include a minimum 10m buffer zone along both sides of the watercourse to create a corridor favourable to the enhancement of biodiversity. Where a 10m 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 10m buffer should be maintained.
- 3) Proposals should avoid the culverting of any watercourse. Opportunities taken to remove culverts will be supported.
- 4) Outside settlements, proposals for mooring stages will not be permitted. Proposals for posts, earthworks or facing riverbanks with piles and planking will not be permitted except under exceptional circumstances and in agreement with the Environment Agency. 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, including its biodiversity.
- 5) Major development proposals which are located within 20m of a watercourse will require a Construction Management Plan to be agreed with the Council before commencement of work to ensure that the watercourse will be satisfactorily protected from damage, disturbance or pollution.
- 6) 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.

## 12. Nature recovery, heritage and landscape

### Introduction

Here are some facts and figures that help set the scene for this chapter.



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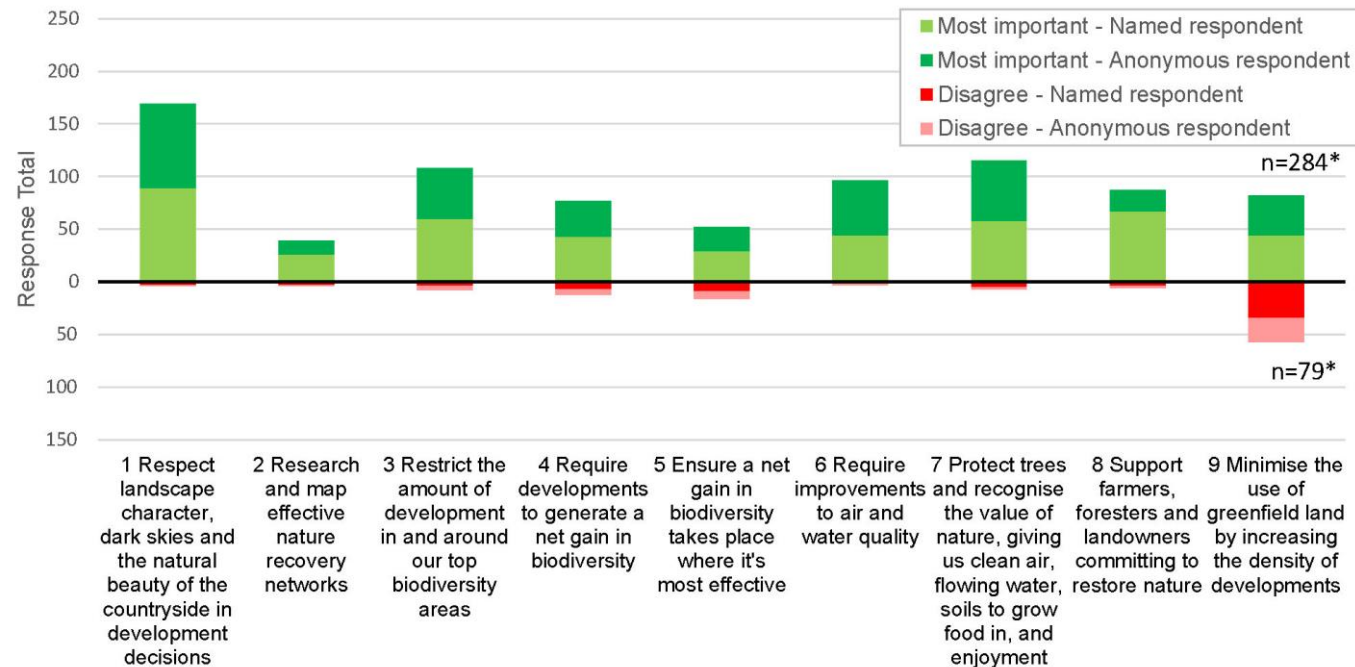
## You told us

### Nature recovery and landscape

In response to our Issues Consultation, you told us that:

- respecting landscape character, dark skies and the natural beauty of the countryside in development decisions;
- restricting the amount of development in and around our top biodiversity areas; and
- protecting trees and recognising the value of nature

were important to you.



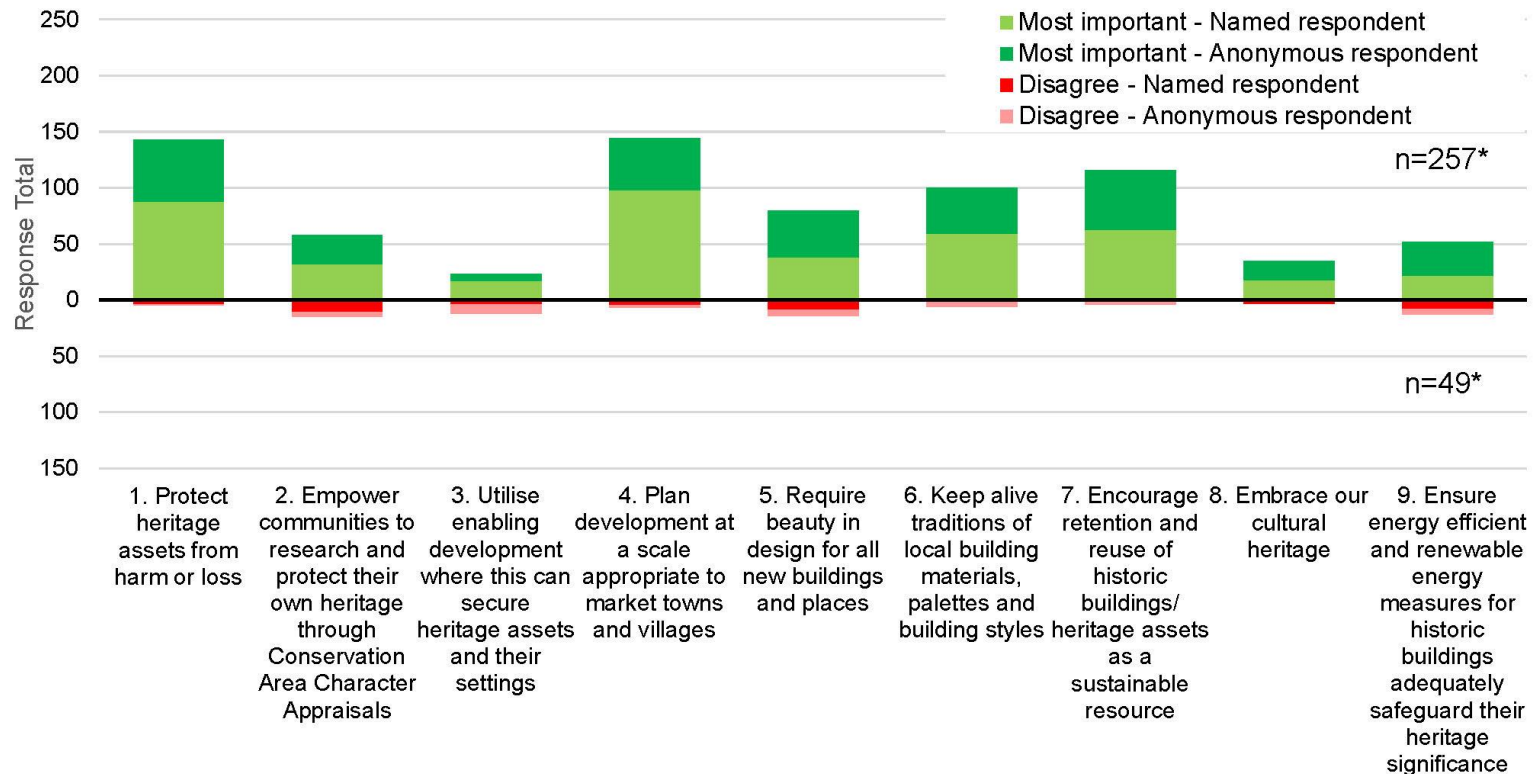
\*n = the number of times this question was answered (combining named responses and anonymous responses)

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## Heritage

Protecting heritage assets from harm or loss and planning development at a scale appropriate to market towns and villages were also important to you.

We have considered all feedback when developing our policy options, selecting our preferred option and proposed policy wording, which are presented in this chapter.



\*n = the number of times this question was answered (combining named responses and anonymous responses)

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## Policy NH1 - Nature recovery

### What will this policy do?

This policy will support the restoration and enhancement of biodiversity in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

### Why is this policy needed?

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse are home to a rich variety of habitats and species. However, continued fragmentation and loss of connectivity across the districts' landscapes, caused by issues such as the intensification of farming practices, built development, hydrological changes and insufficient management, is affecting the future viability of habitats and species<sup>47</sup>.

The councils commissioned Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre (TVERC) to provide evidence on habitats and species trends in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. This June 2023 study concluded that across South and Vale, biodiversity has been in decline. More grassland has been lost to built-up areas here than across Oxfordshire and England as a whole. This is concerning as grassland is an important habitat for many species that inhabit our districts and is an important tool to tackle climate change. There has been a decrease in grassland butterflies and bird species that live on farmland. There has been a slight increase in woodland land cover, however we still have only a fraction of woodland we used to, and woodland species are not doing as well as these gains might suggest. The increase in woodland has not benefited populations of bird and butterfly species. It takes time for newly-planted woodland to reach high levels of biodiversity, and if trees are not planted in suitable locations, they will not benefit many species.

In February 2021, South Oxfordshire District Council declared an ecological emergency<sup>48</sup> in response to biodiversity decline and the council committed to protecting and restoring the natural world.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 180-185 states that plans and planning policies should:

- protect and enhance sites of biodiversity or geological value (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).
- minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

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<sup>47</sup> Wild Oxfordshire (2017), State of Nature in Oxfordshire: [www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/oxfordshires-nature/oxfordshires-state-of-nature](http://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/oxfordshires-nature/oxfordshires-state-of-nature)

<sup>48</sup> [www.southoxon.gov.uk/climate-emergency/ecological-emergency-declared-by-south-oxfordshire-district-council/](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/climate-emergency/ecological-emergency-declared-by-south-oxfordshire-district-council/)

- distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats.
- identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and steppingstones that connect them, and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

The Environment Act 2021 introduces new measures and legal obligations to support nature recovery, including:

- A mandatory requirement for development to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain. This is additional to any measures required to avoid, mitigate or compensate for biodiversity losses resulting from development. It involves assessing the biodiversity value of a site prior to development taking place and then requiring development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value, either on site or elsewhere. This requirement is expected to come into force from January 2024, for large developments and from April 2024 for small developments. Regulations setting out the details of how biodiversity net gain will work in practice have been drafted<sup>49</sup>, but are still subject to change. At the end of February 2023 the Government published its response<sup>50</sup> to the consultation on biodiversity net gain which provided a steer on the contents of the regulations. Based on this, it is expected that this requirement will apply to most types of development.
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) that will set out biodiversity priorities for an area and will map designated sites, areas that are or could become important for biodiversity and areas where biodiversity recovery/enhancement could make a particular contribution to other environmental benefits. At the end of March 2023 Defra published the Local Nature Recovery Strategy statutory guidance document<sup>51</sup> and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy regulations<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> (November 2023): [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-biodiversity-gain-town-and-country-planning-modifications-and-amendments-england-regulations-2024](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-biodiversity-gain-town-and-country-planning-modifications-and-amendments-england-regulations-2024)

<sup>50</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-biodiversity-net-gain-regulations-and-implementation/outcome/government-response-and-summary-of-responses](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-biodiversity-net-gain-regulations-and-implementation/outcome/government-response-and-summary-of-responses)

<sup>51</sup> [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1146160/Local\\_nature\\_recovery\\_strategy\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1146160/Local_nature_recovery_strategy_statutory_guidance.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/341/made](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/341/made)

## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that:

- seeks to conserve, protect and, where appropriate, restore or enhance habitat connectivity within the district's ecological networks
- goes beyond the minimum mandatory requirement of delivering at least 10% biodiversity net gain, instead requiring at least 11-25% biodiversity net gain across the districts (whatever is the maximum assessed as deliverable through the Joint Local Plan Viability Assessment)
- establishes a strong preference for the delivery of biodiversity net gain on-site where possible. Where it is not possible to deliver full biodiversity net gain requirements on-site, set out a sequential approach to direct biodiversity net gain in a way that prioritises delivery within the districts in locations where it would help to achieve the greatest benefits for nature recovery (i.e. within identified ecological networks)
- recognises the role played by the urban environment in nature recovery
- requires or encourages different types of development to incorporate features to support wildlife (such as bird boxes, water sources bat boxes, bee bricks, hedgehog highways, swift bricks and insect hotels).

Note: This is subject to forthcoming regulations that will set out the details of how biodiversity net gain will work in practice.

### Why we prefer Option A

#### Ecological Networks

A series of Conservation Target Areas (CTA) have been identified across Oxfordshire, which form the current ecological network for the county. The CTA provide the best opportunities for targeted conservation action. They protect and buffer important habitats and species and have been designed to provide resilience to climate change. The CTA are well established and have been used to inform previous South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse local plans, as well as other local plans in Oxfordshire, providing consistency across the county and over time.

The CTA are likely to feed into the forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which is required by law. The LNRS will set out biodiversity priorities and will map designated sites, areas that are or could become important for biodiversity, and areas

where biodiversity recovery/enhancement could make a particular contribution to other environmental benefits. We want to ensure the Joint Local Plan supports the delivery of the LNRS, which will be a key tool in achieving nature recovery. However, at the moment we do not know exactly what the LNRS will look like or when it will be produced. We therefore need to be quite flexible at this stage, with the hope that more information on the LNRS will become available as work on the Joint Local Plan progresses. We may be able to provide more specific detail at the next stage of consultation.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

Setting a higher biodiversity net gain requirement is one way that we can do more to support nature recovery.

This is important due to the declines in biodiversity not just across the UK, but locally too. The loss of grassland to built up areas (as identified in the TVERC commission) within South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse is likely to be compounded by current and future development pressure in the districts. Government reports<sup>53</sup> stated that 10% biodiversity net gain is the bare minimum necessary to ensure that biodiversity is still not being lost through the planning system, rather than resulting in a positive gain. Therefore, a higher biodiversity net gain will help to reverse the decline and make up for past losses, as well as delivering multiple benefits for people and nature.

We will test whether 15%, 20% and 25% biodiversity net gain would be deliverable in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, alongside other policy aspirations, through the Joint Local Plan viability assessment.

Whilst much of the detail for how biodiversity net gain will work is expected to be set out at the national level, there may be opportunities for a local policy to add detail by setting out an approach to direct off-site biodiversity net gain in a way that will provide the greatest benefits for nature recovery in the districts.

### **Features to Support Wildlife**

Features to support wildlife can help to better integrate nature into built environments and contribute to nature recovery. For example, insect hotels can provide a safe space for insects to shelter, lay eggs, raise their young and seek refuge from predators.

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<sup>53</sup> The evidence presented by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs consulting on the introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain into the planning system (December 2018-February 2019)



Hedgehog highways increase hedgehogs' access to private gardens, which increases their access to food and provides a safer alternative to crossing roads.

A specific policy requirement on features to support wildlife is required because these features are not considered in the metric used to calculate biodiversity net gain and otherwise may not be provided in development.

In addition, whilst most smaller developments will be exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gain (e.g. householder developments and those under the minimum size threshold), these planning applications are often the most numerous processed by local planning authorities and could have a notable role to play in achieving nature recovery. We consider it is appropriate and justifiable that small developments are encouraged/required to make proportionate and appropriate contributions to nature recovery. In many cases, there will be limited scope for local planning authorities to secure the delivery and long-term management of habitats within smaller development sites (private gardens). As such, the provision of species enhancements into the built environment (e.g. integrated bat and bird boxes) is an appropriate way to achieve ecological benefit on smaller development sites. These enhancements could be delivered at a prescribed ratio, but have flexibility to respond to the context of the site and relevant formal strategies (e.g. local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies, etc). It is important that we harness the potential for smaller developments to contribute positively to nature recovery, in a piecemeal but cumulative way.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Define a sequential approach to directing off-site biodiversity net gain in a different way, for example we could prioritise delivery close to where development is taking place (such as within the same town/parish boundary as development) or in areas with identified biodiversity deficits, or a combination of approaches could be used.

This would be the same as Option A, but instead of focusing off-site biodiversity net gain delivery where it would help to achieve the greatest benefits for nature recovery (i.e. within identified ecological networks), an alternative approach to prioritisation would be taken.

There are many ways that the delivery of off-site biodiversity net gain could be prioritised.

Prioritising delivery close to where development is taking place, or within the same parish/town boundary, would help to ensure that biodiversity gains are delivered near to the habitats and communities affected by change. However, this could be restrictive and difficult to achieve, particularly in the early years of the Joint Local Plan as schemes to deliver off-site biodiversity gains become established.

Delivery could be prioritised in areas with identified biodiversity deficits to help ensure a more equal distribution across the districts. This could help to ensure that all communities have opportunities to access benefits provided by biodiversity.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Have different minimum biodiversity net gain requirements for different types of development and/or development in different parts of the districts.

This would be the same as Option A, but instead of requiring higher biodiversity net gain across the entire districts, we would take a more nuanced approach informed by development viability.

If the Joint Local Plan viability assessment were to find that a higher biodiversity net gain requirement, when tested alongside other policy requirements, is not deliverable across the districts, then it may be appropriate to take a more nuanced approach.

This means that the percentage of biodiversity net gain required could vary according to:

- development type - for example, a higher biodiversity net requirement could apply only to certain land uses (such as residential development) or certain scales of development (such as major development), if this were demonstrated to be financially viable
- development location - for example, a higher biodiversity net requirement could apply only to areas where it would help to meet other environmental objectives (such as in National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) or at the Garden Village and Didcot Garden Town) or areas where significant change is taking place (such as site allocations), if this were demonstrated to be financially viable.

This is not the preferred option, as it would limit higher biodiversity net gain to certain development types and/or locations, meaning that the overall level of biodiversity enhancement achieved would be lower than Option A.

### **Option D - Alternative**

Do not have a policy.

This would mean:

- we would not require more than the mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain in districts. This would reduce additional pressures on developers, but opportunities to maximise biodiversity gains are likely to be missed.
- we would rely entirely on the legal framework to direct off-site biodiversity net gain. This is likely to provide greater flexibility for developers to choose how and where off-site biodiversity net gain is delivered, in line with national guidance. However, there is a risk that the delivery of off-site biodiversity net gain may not align with local priorities.
- development would not be required to incorporate features to support wildlife. We would need to rely on the adopted Joint South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Design Guide and/or neighbourhood plans (where applicable) to deliver this. The Joint Design Guide states: “It is strongly recommended that at least 50% of new structures should have at least one faunal enhancement feature (bat box, bird box, bee brick, etc.) integrated into the built fabric. In many cases it will be appropriate to integrate multiple features into a single structure.”<sup>54</sup> However, this is only guidance, it does not have the same weight as a policy requirement. Therefore, there is a risk that features may not be delivered.

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<sup>54</sup> South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council (2022) Joint Design Guide. Paragraph 35.  
[data.southoxon.gov.uk/SAV/Menu.html](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/SAV/Menu.html)

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### Policy NH1 - Nature recovery

#### Ecological Networks

- 1) Development in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse must conserve, protect and, where appropriate, restore or enhance, habitat connectivity within the districts' ecological networks, which include:
  - a) Conservation Target Areas;
  - b) areas identified in the forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy as being, or having potential to become, important for biodiversity; and
  - c) local ecological networks identified in made Neighbourhood Development Plans.
- 2) Where development may result in harm to an ecological network, the mitigation hierarchy must be followed.\*
- 3) Development likely to result in significant harm to an ecological network, that cannot be effectively mitigated, will not be supported.

#### Biodiversity net gain

- 4) Development\*\* in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse must deliver at least 11-25% biodiversity net gain (*whatever is the maximum assessed as deliverable through the Joint Local Plan Viability Assessment*) measured using the latest DEFRA Biodiversity Metric.
- 5) Biodiversity net gains should be delivered on-site where possible. Where the full biodiversity net gain requirement cannot be delivered on-site, the following sequential approach must be used to direct the creation and enhancement of habitats off-site:
  - a) deliver off-site biodiversity net gains where it would enhance habitat connectivity within ecological networks within the same district as development.
  - b) if (a) is not possible, deliver off-site biodiversity net gains within the same district as development, outside of ecological networks.
  - c) if (b) is not possible, deliver off-site biodiversity net gains where it would enhance habitat connectivity within ecological networks within the Joint Local Plan area.

d) if (c) is not possible, as a last resort, purchase national biodiversity credits.

### Features to support wildlife

6) Development should include appropriately designed and located features to support wildlife\*\*\* in accordance with the requirements below:

Development Type	Requirement
Householder development	The inclusion of features to support wildlife is encouraged.
New homes	Developments of two or more units must deliver features to support wildlife at a ratio of one feature per two units (i.e. 50%).
Non-residential development	Minor non-residential development - the inclusion of features to support wildlife is encouraged, where appropriate. Major non-residential development - proportionate and appropriate features to support wildlife must be provided.
Other development	The inclusion of features to support wildlife is encouraged, where appropriate.

7) Development proposing new boundary treatments (such as fencing and walls) must include access holes for wildlife, for example hedgehog highways.

*\* The mitigation hierarchy is a framework that seeks to reduce harm to environmental biodiversity. The framework uses prioritised steps to alleviate biodiversity harm firstly by (i) avoidance, then (ii) minimisation (or reduction), then (iii) restoration. These three steps must be taken in sequence, whereby the goal is first and foremost to avoid. After these three steps have been taken, a fourth step can be taken as a last resort; to (iv) offset.*

*\*\* Exemptions will be set out in the forthcoming regulations and are expected to include development impacting habitat of an area below a 'de minimis' threshold of 25 metres squared (or 5m for linear habitats such as hedgerows), householder*

*development, biodiversity gain sites (where habitats are being enhanced for wildlife), and small-scale self-build and custom housebuilding.*

*\*\*\* Features to support wildlife include, but are not limited to, features such as bird boxes, water sources, swift bricks, bat boxes, bee bricks, and insect hotels.*

## Policy NH2 - Biodiversity designations

### What will this policy do?

This policy will protect South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse's most important habitats and species.

### Why is this policy needed?

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse are home to a rich variety of habitats and species, many of which are identified as being of not just local significance but of national or international importance:

	South Oxfordshire	Vale of White Horse
International significance	4 Special Areas of Conservation	2 Special Areas of Conservation
National significance	38 Sites of Special Scientific Interest 1 National Nature Reserve	22 Sites of Special Scientific Interest 1 National Nature Reserve
Local significance	126 Local Wildlife Sites <sup>55</sup> 4 Local Nature Reserves 5 Local Geological Sites	84 Local Wildlife Sites <sup>56</sup> 2 Local Nature Reserves 6 Local Geological Sites

There are also numerous other important habitats and species across the districts, including priority habitats and species, irreplaceable habitats, legally protected species, important or ancient hedges and hedgerows, ancient woodland and veteran trees. It is important that these habitats and species are appropriately protected.

Many of these habitats and species have specific legal protections. All National Nature Reserves (NNRs) in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse are legally protected as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states at paragraphs 180-185 that planning policies should:

- protect and enhance sites of biodiversity or geological value (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).

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<sup>55</sup> Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre maintains a "living list" of the Local Wildlife Sites in each local authority area in Berkshire and Oxfordshire, which is updated annually each May for the previous year ([www.tverc.org/cms/content/local-wildlife-sites](http://www.tverc.org/cms/content/local-wildlife-sites)).

<sup>56</sup> Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre maintains a "living list" of the [Local Wildlife Sites](http://www.tverc.org/cms/content/local-wildlife-sites) in each local authority area in Berkshire and Oxfordshire, which is updated annually each May for the previous year ([www.tverc.org/cms/content/local-wildlife-sites](http://www.tverc.org/cms/content/local-wildlife-sites)).

- distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats.
- identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and steppingstones that connect them, and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Our current local plan policies provide proportionate protection for the hierarchy of biodiversity designations in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse and work well. Our preferred approach would be to roll forward the existing approach, updated where needed to ensure that it remains up to date.

For example, one update would be to highlight specific legal requirements in relation to the River Lambourn SAC that were introduced by Natural England on 16 March 2022. The River Lambourn SAC is a globally rare chalk stream, of international importance for the conservation of biodiversity, but has been assessed as being in an unfavourable ecological condition. This unfavourable condition is primarily due to nutrient pollution (specifically phosphorus) from agriculture and sewerage. The River Lambourn SAC is located in West Berkshire, however part of Vale of White Horse falls within the River Lambourn SAC's hydrological catchment area. Therefore, the council is required by law to consider whether granting planning permission in this area would have an adverse impact on the River Lambourn SAC. Whilst this requirement may be removed if the situation improves, it is expected to remain in place for the foreseeable future.

#### Why we prefer Option A

This approach protects our most important habitats and species. It distinguishes between the hierarchy of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites in accordance with the requirements of national planning policy.



This policy should be considered alongside the nature recovery policy, which seeks to promote the restoration and enhancement of biodiversity in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

No alternatives identified. It would not be reasonable to take an alternative approach as this would not comply with national planning policy.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### **Policy NH2 - Biodiversity designations**

- 1) 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 will need to satisfy the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).
- 2) Development within the River Lambourn SAC nutrient neutrality catchment area that would result in additional overnight accommodation\*, and any other development that could result in the input of additional nutrients within the identified catchment, must demonstrate nutrient neutrality in relation to phosphorus.
- 3) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are of national importance. Development that is likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI (either on its own or in combination with other developments) will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh any harm to the special interest features and the SSSI's contribution to the local ecological network. In such circumstances, measures should be provided (and secured through planning conditions or legal agreements) that would fully mitigate or, as a last resort, fully compensate for the adverse effects resulting from development.
- 4) The approach to sites of international and/or national importance should be applied proportionately to any subsequent designations that may be introduced.

- 5) Development likely to result directly or indirectly to the loss, deterioration or harm to important or ancient hedges or hedgerows, Legally Protected Species, Local Geological Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites, or Priority Habitats and Species will only be permitted if:
  - a) the need for and benefits of the development in the proposed location outweigh the adverse effect on the interests;
  - b) it can be demonstrated that the development could not reasonably be located on an alternative site that would result in less or no harm to the interests;
  - c) it can be demonstrated that there is no alternative design that would result in less or no harm to the interests; and
  - d) measures will 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.
- 6) Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) will be refused planning permission unless there are wholly exceptional reasons justifying the granting of planning permission and a suitable compensation strategy exists.
- 7) Where development has the potential to affect a proposed Local Wildlife Site\*\*, the developer must undertake surveys and assessments to determine whether the site meets the criteria for Local Wildlife Site status.

*\* This includes, but is not limited to, new homes, student accommodation, care homes, hotels, guest houses, bed and breakfasts, self-catering holiday chalets, static caravan sites, tourism attractions and tourism accommodation and permitted development which gives rise to new overnight accommodation.*

*\*\* Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre ([www.tverc.org/cms/LWSLivingLists](http://www.tverc.org/cms/LWSLivingLists)) maintains a list of proposed Local Wildlife Sites and proposed extensions to existing Local Wildlife Sites in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.*

## **Policy NH3 - Trees and hedgerows in the landscape**

### **What will this policy do?**

The policy will protect existing trees and hedgerows, as well as require that the right trees and hedgerows are planted in the right places to ensure their long-term maintenance.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Trees and hedgerows, individually and collectively, make an important contribution to biodiversity and the landscape. They also absorb atmospheric pollution and have a beneficial influence on the climate.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states at paragraph 136 that:

“Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.”

Where possible, existing trees and hedgerows should be retained in new development. Development proposals should provide a net increase in tree canopy cover where this is possible, having regard to other considerations including site size, heritage protection, landscape character, habitat protection, residential amenity, and the need to make the best use of land.

Site designs should consider the species growth habits and characteristics (for both existing and new) and allow for enough space so that a wide range of species can be incorporated into the design and facilitate their long term retention.

The Councils will protect trees of significant amenity value 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.

## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### **Option A - Preferred**

Have a specific policy on trees and hedgerows, which addresses the protection, enhancement and management of these important features.

### **Why we prefer Option A**

The preferred option brings together all the relevant strands of protection and maintenance of trees and hedgerows into one policy, so it is easy to find and clear what is expected.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Do not have a separate tree policy.

Elements of option A would be incorporated into other policies on landscape, nature recovery or green infrastructure.

Trees and hedgerows make an important contribution to biodiversity and the landscape of our districts. Mixing the policy approach for trees and hedgerows with the approach for other policies could be confusing and less effective. Having a separate policy enables us to provide a comprehensive and dedicated approach.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy NH3 - Trees and hedgerows in the landscape**

- 1) Development should make every effort to retain important hedgerows and existing trees. Where retention is not possible, and a proposal seeks the removal, compensatory planting with a mixture of native hedgerow species and a wide variety of tree species, including long lived, large canopied species, must be provided.
- 2) Developments must secure the long-term maintenance of landscaping elements on site, including trees and hedgerows, through a management and maintenance plan.
- 3) The design of developments must allow sufficient space for the future growth of all proposed trees and all retained existing trees, taking into consideration the tree species growth habits and characteristics. Developments must prevent poor relationships with retained or new trees by allowing sufficient space for their long term retention without residents finding the tree overbearing, or a cause of nuisance, such as shading or leaf litter.

## **Policy NH4 - Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes (formerly AONBs)**

On 22 November 2023 all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales were renamed National Landscapes. Accordingly, the Joint Local Plan refers to The Chilterns National Landscape (formerly The Chilterns AONB) and North Wessex Downs National Landscape (formerly North Wessex Downs AONB).

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will help to ensure that the landscape and scenic beauty of our National Landscapes is conserved and enhanced.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

National Landscapes are designated at a national level due to their natural beauty and are subject to the highest level of protection. It is essential that any development in or affecting a National Landscape conserves and enhances its landscape and scenic beauty.

42% of South Oxfordshire and 23% of Vale of White Horse are within National Landscapes. These are the Chilterns National Landscape and North Wessex Downs National Landscape. However, these percentages could change, as Natural England is currently considering expanding the Chilterns National Landscape boundary.

Paragraphs 181-183 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) say:

- Plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of designated sites.
- Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
- The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in AONBs.
- The scale and extent of development within AONBs should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.
- When considering applications for development in AONBs, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. (Whether a proposal is “major development” is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.)

Every National Landscape is required to have a management plan, which is reviewed every five years. For our two National Landscapes, which cross several counties, these management plans are produced by a partnership, so that the future of the protected landscape is considered across local authority boundaries. National Landscape management plans provide further detail on the special qualities of a National Landscape, its current condition and vulnerability to change. They also provide a strategy for managing change affecting a National Landscape. The government's planning practice guidance tells us that they contain information which is relevant when preparing plan policies, or which is a material considerations when assessing planning applications. National Landscape Partnerships or Conservation Boards may also produce a range of other documents relevant to planning decisions such as design guides, position statements and technical notes on complex or contentious planning issues.

We are commissioning a suite of landscape evidence to inform the Joint Local Plan, including a Landscape Character Assessment, Tranquillity Assessment and Renewable Energy Sensitivity Assessment. This evidence will consider the whole plan area, including areas within National Landscapes and their settings.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### **Option A - Preferred**

Have a specific National Landscape policy, which addresses the protection and enhancement of our most important landscapes.

This policy could also signpost to management plans and other documents produced at a National Landscape-scale relevant to planning decisions such as design guides and technical notes on complex or contentious planning issues.

We may also want to link to, or incorporate recommendations from, the Joint Local Plan's emerging landscape evidence base when this is available.

#### **Why we prefer Option A**

Option A would provide specific policy requirements for National Landscapes, separate to the approach taken to other landscapes. This is considered appropriate because National Landscapes are subject to the highest level of protection. The policy requirements for National Landscapes will therefore be stronger than they are for other landscapes.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Do not have a separate National Landscape policy. Elements of Option A would be incorporated into a general landscape policy.

National Landscapes are our most important landscapes and are subject to the highest level of protection. The policy requirements for National Landscapes will therefore be stronger than they are for other landscapes. Mixing the policy approach for National Landscapes with the approach for other landscapes could be confusing and less effective. Having a separate National Landscape policy would enable us to provide a comprehensive and dedicated approach as is appropriate for this important designation.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy NH4 - Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes**

- 1) Great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes.
- 2) Major development\* will only be permitted in the National Landscapes in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest, that alternative locations (outside of the National Landscape) have been considered and excluded, and that any detrimental effects on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities will be minimised and mitigated.
- 3) Development within the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes will only be permitted where it meets all of the following criteria:
  - a) conserves and enhances the National Landscape's natural beauty, special qualities, distinctive character, cultural heritage, tranquillity and remoteness.



- b) is appropriate to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area and/or supports the public understanding and enjoyment of the area.
  - c) meets the aims of the relevant National Landscape Management Plan.
  - d) is of high-quality design which conforms with relevant National Landscape design guides and technical notes, respects the natural beauty of the National Landscapes, their traditional built character, sense of place and local character.
  - e) avoids adverse impacts (including cumulative impacts) unless these can be satisfactorily mitigated.
- 4) Development within the setting of a National Landscape must be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the National Landscape.
  - 5) Development proposals that could affect the key characteristics which contribute to the natural beauty of a National Landscape (including the setting of a National Landscape) either individually or in combination with other developments, should be accompanied by a proportionate Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

\* Whether a development constitutes “major development” will be assessed on a case-by-case basis taking account of the nature, scale and setting of the proposal and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes of the National Landscape designation.

## Policy NH5 - Landscape

### What will this policy do?

This policy will protect, and where possible seek to enhance, the districts' landscapes, countryside and rural areas.

### Why is this policy needed?

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse are mainly rural districts. The quality and character of the countryside, and its relationship with settlements, is key part of what makes the districts such desirable places to live, work and visit. We need to manage development in a way that protects and enhances what makes our districts special.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) says that local plans should:

- ensure development is sympathetic to local character and history, including landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.
- recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services.
- distinguish between the hierarchy of designations.

We are proposing separate Joint Local Plan policies for national and local landscape designations, but we still need a policy that will protect our other landscapes, countryside and rural areas. To do this effectively, we need to understand the features and characteristics that make these areas special. We have commissioned a suite of landscape evidence to inform the Joint Local Plan and its future implementation. This includes a Landscape Character Assessment that will assess variations in landscape character across the districts and will provide recommendations on managing change to 2041 and beyond. This assessment will be published for the next stage of consultation (Regulation 19).

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that:

- protects the districts' landscapes, countryside and rural areas from harmful development

- ensures development appropriately responds to landscape character, as defined in a new Joint South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Landscape Character Assessment
- protects the setting of settlements and separation between settlements
- encourages the enhancement of damaged and/or poor quality landscapes
- identifies specific landscape functions and features that should be protected and enhanced.

### Why we prefer Option A

Option A would help to protect the districts' landscapes, countryside and rural areas from harmful development. It would ensure that development responds appropriately to landscape character and landscape features and functions, with strong links to the Joint Local Plan's emerging evidence base.

#### Option B - Alternative

Have a single landscape policy that covers all landscape types/designations. This would combine Option A with policy approaches for National Landscapes (formerly AONBs), valued landscapes and tranquillity into a single policy.

Having a single landscape policy covering the entire hierarchy of designations could be confusing. There is a risk that policy requirements for different designations may not be addressed effectively.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### Policy NH5 - Landscape

- 1) South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse's landscapes, countryside and rural areas will be protected from harmful development.
- 2) Development must appropriately respond to its setting by:

- a) responding to landscape character (as defined in a new Joint South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Landscape Character Assessment and other relevant Landscape Character Assessments in Neighbourhood Plans);
  - b) being physically sensitive to and visually integrated into the landscape;
  - c) preserving settlement character and setting; and
  - d) maintaining the physical and visual separation between settlements, with consideration given to cumulative impacts with other existing or proposed development.
- 3) Development will only be permitted where it protects and, where possible, enhances the features and functions that contribute to the nature and quality of the landscape, in particular:
- a) trees (including individual trees, groups of trees and woodlands), hedgerows and field boundaries;
  - b) irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland;
  - c) the landscapes, waterscapes, cultural heritage and user enjoyment of the River Thames, its tributaries and flood plains;
  - d) other watercourses and waterbodies, including globally rare chalk streams;
  - e) topographical features;
  - f) areas or features of cultural and historic value, including historic landscape patterns;
  - g) good quality views and visually sensitive skylines, including the Oxford View Cones\* and their backdrops/settings; and
  - h) aesthetic and perceptual factors such as tranquillity, wildness, intactness, rarity and enclosure.
- 4) Where appropriate, development should consider opportunities to enhance and restore damaged and/or poor-quality landscapes, features and functions.

*\*Oxford City Council (2015), Assessment of the Oxford View Cones:*  
[www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20064/conservation/876/oxford\\_views\\_study](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20064/conservation/876/oxford_views_study)

## Policy NH6 - Valued landscapes

### What will this policy do?

This policy will identify, protect and enhance locally designated valued landscapes.

### Why is this policy needed?

There is a hierarchy of landscape designations:

- 1) National landscape designations (e.g. National Parks and National Landscapes (formerly AONBs)) - These are statutory designations that protect areas of national importance. These landscapes are subject to the highest level of protection.
- 2) Local landscape designations - These are non-statutory designations that aim to protect areas of local importance. Local landscape designations can be made in local and neighbourhood plans.
- 3) Other landscapes, countryside and rural areas - Not subject to a particular landscape designation.

The current adopted local plans for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse do not make local landscape designations. We are considering introducing two new local landscape designations through the Joint Local Plan: locally valued landscapes (covered by these policy options); and tranquil areas (considered separately).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 180a) says that local plans should protect and enhance valued landscapes in a manner proportionate to their identified quality in the development plan.

Broadly, valued landscapes are those that are valued by, or important to, communities due to a range of factors (such as cultural interest, distinctiveness, recreational opportunities, etc). These factors need to elevate the landscape above other more everyday landscapes. There is no set approach for identifying valued landscapes, although there is technical guidance which can help to shape this process.

The councils have commissioned consultants to undertake a Valued Landscapes Assessment to inform the Joint Local Plan that will:

- Assess landscape value across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (outside of national designations).
- Identify and map South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse's valued landscapes.
- Describe the special characteristics and features of each valued landscape.
- Provide recommendations on the appropriate management of each valued landscape to 2041 and beyond.

The Valued Landscapes Assessment will be published for the next stage of consultation (Regulation 19).

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a valued landscapes policy that:

- identifies the districts' valued landscapes and their special qualities (with valued landscapes also shown on the Joint Local Plan policies map).
- ensures development protects and enhances valued landscapes by setting criteria for assessing development proposals affecting valued landscapes.

The policy would be closely related to the Valued Landscapes Assessment that is being produced to inform the Joint Local Plan.

#### Why we prefer Option A

- Option A would introduce a new local landscape designation for valued landscapes which would help to protect areas that are particularly important to local communities.
- Using a robust, consistent approach to identify valued landscapes in the Joint Local Plan would help to avoid landscape value being debated on a case-by-case basis through planning applications and appeals, which can use significant resources and risks a piecemeal approach.
- Identifying valued landscapes in the Joint Local Plan would help to provide greater certainty and clarity for communities and developers.

#### Option B - Alternative

Do not identify valued landscapes. This could miss an opportunity to protect areas of importance to local communities.

Whilst we could rely on neighbourhood plans to identify valued landscapes, not all areas are covered by neighbourhood plans and not all neighbourhood plans may wish to identify valued landscapes. In any case, there are benefits in identifying valued landscapes at a district scale, looking beyond parish boundaries and using a single, consistent approach. Although Neighbourhood Plans could also have a role in adding further local detail.

Landscape value is likely to continue to be debated on a case-by-case basis through planning applications and appeals, using significant resources and risking a piecemeal approach. Less certainty and clarity would be provided for communities and developers.

### Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

#### Policy NH6 - Valued landscapes

8) South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse's valued landscapes (as shown on the policies map) are:

- XXX\*
- XXX, etc.

9) Development within or affecting a valued landscape will be assessed based on its specific landscape and visual impact.

10) Development which protects and enhances the districts' valued landscapes will be supported.

11) Development within a valued landscape must have regard to the Joint Local Plan Valued Landscapes Assessment (or subsequent update) and:

- a) appropriately respond to the special characteristics and significance of the valued landscape;
- b) avoid loss of or harm to the special characteristics and features that underpin the scenic quality and significance of the valued landscape; and
- c) appropriately respond to the recommendations for managing the valued landscape.

*\*This will be informed by the Tranquillity Assessment that will be published for the next stage of consultation.*

## **Policy NH7 - Tranquillity and tranquil areas**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will help to protect and enhance tranquillity in the districts, which includes the identification, protection and enhancement of locally designated tranquil areas.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Tranquillity is related to the feeling of calm and connection to nature experienced in places with lots of natural features and few disturbances from manmade features. For example, places where natural sounds such as birdsong or flowing water are more prominent than background noise from traffic. Tranquillity adds to sense of place and landscape character, as well as having benefits for human health and for nature. For many people, the Covid-19 pandemic emphasised the importance of local access to tranquil places, including within the urban environment.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 191b) says that planning policies should identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason. However, tranquillity is not just about noise. There are a range of factors that can positively or negatively impact upon tranquillity, including visual features (such as manmade structures, moving traffic and artificial light).

We have not had a tranquillity assessment or produced a tranquillity map for the districts before, so the councils have commissioned consultants to undertake a Tranquillity Assessment to inform the Joint Local Plan that will:

- assess, describe and map relative levels of tranquillity across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse
- provide recommendations on how tranquillity can be protected and enhanced in the districts to 2041 and beyond
- identify areas to be designated as tranquil areas in the Joint Local Plan
- provide recommendations on how development, land use change and environmental improvements (including biodiversity net gain and green infrastructure schemes) should be managed in tranquil areas in order to protect and enhance tranquillity.

The Tranquillity Assessment will be published for the next stage of consultation (Regulation 19).



## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that:

- seeks to protect and enhance tranquillity in the districts
- identifies the districts' tranquil areas as a local designation (with tranquil areas also shown on the Joint Local Plan policies map)
- ensures development protects and enhances tranquil areas by setting criteria for assessing development proposals affecting tranquil areas.

The policy would be closely related to the Tranquillity Assessment that is being produced to inform the Joint Local Plan.

### Why we prefer Option A

Option A would provide a strong approach to protecting and enhancing tranquillity in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, closely linked to the Joint Local Plan's emerging evidence base. It would support the health and wellbeing of communities and nature. It would introduce a new "tranquil area" designation which would help to protect areas that are particularly important to local communities.

### Option B - Alternative

Do not have a tranquillity policy or identify tranquil areas.

This would not align with the NPPF, which states that we should identify and protect tranquil areas. It would miss an opportunity to protect areas that are particularly important to local communities.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### Policy NH7 - Tranquillity and tranquil areas

- 1) South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse's locally designated tranquil areas (as shown on the policies map) are:
  - XXX\*
  - XXX, etc.
- 2) Development in locally designated tranquil areas will only be permitted where it conserves and enhances, and does not cause harm to, relative tranquillity.
- 3) In determining planning applications in or affecting locally designated tranquil areas, the following factors will be considered:
  - a) visual and aural impacts;
  - b) direct and indirect impacts; and
  - c) impacts on users of the public right of way network and other publicly accessible locations.
- 4) Proposals that are likely to negatively impact on the tranquillity in locally designated tranquil areas should have regard to this tranquillity by seeking to (a) avoid and (b) minimise impacts through appropriate mitigation.
- 5) Development in areas with lower levels of relative tranquillity should take opportunities to enhance tranquillity where these exist (for example through high quality design and the provision of green infrastructure).

*\*This will be informed by the Tranquillity Assessment that will be published for the next stage of consultation.*

## **Policy NH8 - The historic environment**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the districts' historic environment.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. The NPPF requires that local plans set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and that this strategy should take into account:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- b) the wider social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring.
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.”

The NPPF further emphasises the role that the historic environment has in place-making, explaining that “well-designed places should draw on the historic environment, respecting the contribution it makes to the character of a place and ensuring that new development makes a positive contribution to this local character and distinctiveness”.

Both districts already have existing planning policies to protect and enhance the historic environment. For the Joint Local Plan, we will combine these policies and update them where necessary to ensure that planning decisions protect and enhance the historic environment in line with the requirements of the NPPF and legislation.

## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### **Option A - Preferred:**

Have an over-arching introductory historic environment policy which captures all heritage assets including those that are not necessarily protected by legislation or by the other individual policies in this chapter.

This policy will:

- set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in the districts
- ensure that development proposals do not cause harm to the historic environment
- encourage putting heritage assets to viable uses consistent with their conservation
- require that proposals conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings
- require proposals to make a positive contribution towards local character, distinctiveness, and wider public benefits
- encourage protection of heritage assets most at risk
- recognise non-designated heritage assets in accordance with guidance.

### **Why we prefer Option A**

We are required by national policy to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, Option A would allow us to meet this requirement.

Option A also allows for the distinction to be made between different assets and their level of protection. Those assets that require specific protection by law are addressed through individual policies set out later in this chapter. One combined policy for all heritage assets would need to be very long in order to capture enough detail and to make these distinctions between assets.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Since national policy covers heritage, an alternative could be not to have an overarching local plan policy on heritage and rely on the NPPF and legislation. However, given NPPF requirements for plan-makers to set out a strategy, the option of not having a policy in the Joint Local Plan is not considered to be reasonable.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy NH8 – The historic environment**

- 1) Proposals for new development that may affect designated and non-designated heritage assets should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of those assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Heritage assets include statutorily designated Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings or structures, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, archaeology of national and local interest and non-designated buildings, structures or historic landscapes that contribute to the local historic and architectural interest of the district's historic environment, and also includes those heritage assets identified by the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record.
- 2) Proposals for new development should be sensitively designed and should not cause harm to the historic environment. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that they have considered this through the heritage assessment. Proposals that have an impact on heritage assets (designated and non-designated) will be supported particularly where they:
  - a) conserve and enhance the significance of the heritage asset and its setting. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight that will be given to its conservation;
  - b) make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (through high standards of design, reflecting its significance, including through the use of appropriate materials and construction techniques);

- c) make a positive contribution towards wider public benefits;
  - d) provide a viable future use for a heritage asset that is consistent with the conservation of its significance; and/or
  - e) protect a heritage asset that is currently at risk:
- 3) When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight that will be given). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset will require clear and convincing justification.
  - 4) Non-designated heritage assets, where identified through local or neighbourhood plan-making, Conservation Area Appraisal, or review or through the planning application process, will be recognised as heritage assets in accordance with national guidance and any local criteria. Development proposals that directly or indirectly affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset will be determined with regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.
  - 5) In support of planning applications, applicants will be required to describe, in line with best practice and relevant national guidance, the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance. It should be demonstrated that, where relevant, surveys and field work have been carried out prior to submission and that the results have informed the heritage assessment. In some circumstances further survey, analysis and/or recording will be made a condition of consent.
  - 6) Encouragement will be given to schemes that will help secure the long-term conservation of vacant and under-used historic buildings to prevent deterioration of condition and bring them back into appropriate use.
  - 7) Encouragement will be given to alterations to historic buildings to improve energy efficiency and the delivery of renewable energy measures, providing that they are technically appropriate for the building and respect the character and significance of the affected heritage assets and their settings.

8) Developers will also be expected to report, publish, and deposit the results of any investigations into heritage assets with the Historic Environment Record (HER) and the relevant local and county authorities.

## Policy NH9 - Listed Buildings

### What will this policy do?

This policy will ensure that proposals for development that involve or affect a Listed Building and/or its setting conserve and enhance the heritage significance of the Listed Building and its setting.

### Why is this policy needed?

A “Listed Building” is a building, object or structure fixed to the building or within the building’s curtilage that has been judged to be of national importance in terms of architectural or historic interest and included on a special register, called the “National Heritage List for England”<sup>57</sup>.

There are over 5,000 Listed Buildings across the districts, including country houses, cottages, bridges, telephone kiosks and more. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), these assets must be “conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations”. The NPPF sets out requirements that local planning authorities should follow when determining applications and considering potential impacts of proposed developments on the significance of a designated heritage asset. We have interpreted these requirements and included them in the policy below. Full details of these requirements are set out in Chapter 16 of the NPPF.<sup>58</sup>

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a Listed Buildings policy which addresses the requirements of the NPPF and legislation. The policy will outline local level requirements that proposals will be assessed against, including:

- conserving, enhancing or better revealing elements which contribute to the heritage significance of a Listed Building and/or its setting

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<sup>57</sup> [historicengland.org.uk/listing/](http://historicengland.org.uk/listing/)

<sup>58</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2)



- respecting features of special architectural or historic interest
- being sympathetic to the Listed Building and its setting in terms of its siting, size, scale, height, alignment, materials and finishes, design, and form.

The policy will also set out how proposals will be assessed where they would lead to harm to a Listed Building and/or its setting.

### Why we prefer Option A

As with the other historic environment policy options in this chapter, we are required by national policy to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. The NPPF also sets out specific requirements regarding development that would potentially impact on the significance of a Listed Building. Option A, along with the other proposed historic environment policies, would help us to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

Option A also allows for the distinction to be made between Listed Buildings and other heritage assets and their level of protection.

### Option B - Alternative

As requirements relating to the historic environment are set out in national planning policy and legalisation, there is limited scope for alternative approaches. One alternative approach to setting out the policies in this chapter could be to have one combined historic environment policy which captures all the different types of heritage assets in one policy, but this would need to be very long in order to capture enough detail and to make these distinctions between assets.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### Policy NH9 - Listed Buildings

- 1) Proposals for development, including change of use, that involve any alteration of, addition to, or partial demolition of a Listed Building or within the curtilage of, or affecting the setting of a Listed Building will be expected to:
  - a) conserve, enhance or better reveal those elements which contribute to the heritage significance and/or its setting;
  - b) respect any features of special architectural or historic interest, including, where relevant, the historic curtilage or context, such as burgage plots, parklands or fields or its value within a group and/or its setting, such as the importance of a street frontage or traditional shopfronts, designed landscapes or historic farmyards; and
  - c) be sympathetic to the Listed Building and its setting in terms of its siting, size, scale, height, alignment, materials, and finishes (including colour and texture), design and form, in order to retain the special interest that justifies its designation through appropriate design, with regard to the Joint Design Guide SPD\*.
- 2) Development proposals affecting the significance of a Listed Building or its setting that will lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that demonstrably outweigh that harm or loss or where the applicant can demonstrate that:
  - a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;
  - b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;
  - c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
- 3) Development proposals that would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of a Listed Building will be expected to:
- a) minimise harm and avoid adverse impacts, and provide justification for any adverse impacts, harm, or loss of significance;
  - b) identify any demonstrable public benefits or exceptional circumstances in relation to the development proposed including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use as supported by relevant evidence; and
  - c) investigate and record changes or loss of fabric, features, objects, or remains, both known and unknown, in a manner proportionate to the importance of the change or loss, and to make this information publicly accessible.
- 4) Changes of use will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the new use can be accommodated in a manner appropriate to its significance and historic character without any adverse effect on the special architectural or historic interest of the building and its appearance, character, and setting.

*\*<https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/SAV/JDG.html#gsc.tab=0>*

## Policy NH10 - Conservation Areas

### What will this policy do?

This policy will ensure that proposals for development that involve or affect a Conservation Area or its setting, adequately safeguard the heritage significance of the Conservation Area and its setting.

### Why is this policy needed?

Conservation Areas are defined as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”<sup>59</sup>. Section 69 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, requires that the councils designate Conservation Areas to cover parts of the district that are of special architectural or historic interest. There are 123 of these Conservation Areas in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse which form an important part of the districts’ cultural heritage.

To preserve Conservation Areas in line with national policies and legislation, this policy will set out criteria that proposals must meet in order to show that the proposed development can conserve or enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the asset and its setting.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a Conservation Areas policy that addresses the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and legislation. The policy will outline local level requirements that proposals will be assessed against, including:

- conserving or enhancing the Conservation Area’s special interest, character, setting and appearance
- taking into account important views within, into or out of the Conservation Area
- respecting the local character and distinctiveness of the Conservation Area

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<sup>59</sup> Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- being sympathetic to the original curtilage of buildings and pattern of development
- being sympathetic to important spaces such as paddocks, greens, gardens and other gaps or spaces between buildings
- ensuring no loss of, or harm to any building or feature that makes a positive contribution to the special interest, character, or appearance of the Conservation Area.

The policy will also set out how proposals will be assessed where they would lead to harm to a Conservation Area and/or its setting.

### Why we prefer Option A

As with the other historic environment policy options in this chapter, we are required by national policy to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. Option A, along with the other proposed historic environment policies, would help us to meet this requirement.

Option A also allows for the distinction to be made between Conservation Areas and other heritage assets and their level of protection.

### Option B - Alternative

As requirements relating to the historic environment are set out in national planning policy and legislation, there is limited scope for alternative approaches. One alternative approach to setting out the policies in this chapter could be to have one combined historic environment policy which captures all the different types of heritage assets in one policy, but one combined detailed policy for all heritage assets would need to be very long in order to capture enough detail and to make these distinctions between assets.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy NH10 - Conservation Areas**

- 1) Proposals for development within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area must conserve or enhance its special interest, character, setting and appearance and comply with any additional restrictions\*. Development will be expected to:
  - a) contribute to the Conservation Area's special interest and its relationship within its setting. The special characteristics of the Conservation Area (such as existing walls, buildings, trees, hedges, burgage plots, traditional shopfronts and signs, farm groups, medieval townscapes, archaeological features, historic routes etc.) should be preserved;
  - b) take into account important views within, into or out of the Conservation Area and show that these would be retained and unharmed;
  - c) respect the local character and distinctiveness of the Conservation Area in terms of the development's: siting, size, scale, height, alignment, materials and finishes (including colour and texture), proportions, design, and form and should have regard to the Joint Design Guide SPD and any relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisal;
  - d) be sympathetic to the original curtilage of buildings and pattern of development that forms part of the historic interest of the Conservation Area;
  - e) be sympathetic to important spaces such as paddocks, greens, gardens and other gaps or spaces between buildings which make a positive contribution to the pattern of development in the Conservation Area;
  - f) ensure the wider social and environmental effects generated by the development are compatible with the existing character and appearance of the Conservation Area; and
  - g) ensure no loss of, or harm to any building or feature that makes a positive contribution to the special interest, character, or appearance of the Conservation Area.

- 2) Where a development proposal within a Conservation Area would enhance or better reveal the significance of the Conservation Area and its setting, this will be encouraged. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) will be supported.
- 3) Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a Conservation Area, consent will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.
- 4) Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a Conservation Area, this harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 5) Wherever possible the sympathetic restoration and re-use of structures which make a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area will be encouraged to prevent harm through the cumulative loss of features which are an asset to the Conservation Area.

*\* Including any Article 4 (1) Directions or legal agreements*

## Policy NH11 - Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

### What will this policy do?

This policy will provide greater guidance and criteria for proposals in order to support the conservation and enhancement of nationally important archaeological remains, Scheduled Monuments and other non-designated archaeological sites that are of demonstrably equivalent significance.

### Why is this policy needed?

Archaeological remains are an irreplaceable resource that provide us with a unique window into the past. There is likely to be archaeology that is not yet known and therefore it is important that appropriate assessment and surveys are carried out as part of development proposals. To support the continued conservation and enhancement of archaeological remains, development proposals must comply with national policy and legislation. Our proposed policy is designed to ensure that the significance of the districts' rich archaeological legacy is sustained in line with national requirements.

Some nationally important sites are listed as Ancient Monuments by the government on the advice of Historic England. A Scheduled Monument is a site that's legally protected because of its historical importance. According to the government's "Protecting rural landscapes and features" guidance<sup>60</sup>, Scheduled Monuments range from archaeological sites, such as ancient burial mounds to more recent remains, such as from World War 2. Scheduled Monuments are given statutory protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Scheduled monument consent is required for most works and other activities that physically affect a scheduled monument<sup>61</sup>. Historic England guidance sets out that this is a very strict regime under which very little, if any, disturbance of the monument is possible without consent from the Secretary of State. There are 129 Scheduled Monuments across the two districts which must be protected in line with our statutory duties.

Climate change mitigation actions, for example tree planting, can have an impact on archaeological remains. Our draft policy encourages applicants to adequately protect archaeological remains from potential impacts from climate change mitigation measures. Consideration of alternative climate change mitigation measures that wouldn't negatively affect archaeological remains should be explored by applicants.

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<sup>60</sup> [www.gov.uk/protecting-rural-landscapes-and-features/print](http://www.gov.uk/protecting-rural-landscapes-and-features/print)

<sup>61</sup> [historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/consent/smc/](http://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/consent/smc/)



As with other designated and non-designated heritage assets, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out requirements that local planning authorities should follow when determining applications and considering potential impacts of proposed developments on archaeological remains. We have interpreted these requirements and included them in the policy below.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

Have an Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments policy that addresses the requirements of the NPPF and legislation. The policy will ensure that development proposals protect the site and setting of Scheduled Monuments or nationally important designated or non-designated archaeological remains.

The policy will explain that applicants must undertake an assessment to determine whether the development site is known to, or is likely to, contain archaeological remains. It then sets out the steps to be taken where the assessment indicates that development could disturb or adversely affect archaeological remains and/or their setting.

The policy will also set out how proposals will be assessed where they would lead to harm to the significance of archaeological remains.

#### Why we prefer Option A

As with the other historic environment policy options in this chapter, we are required by national policy to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. There are also requirements set out in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 that apply to these assets. Option A, along with the other proposed historic environment policies, would help us to meet these policy and legislative requirements.

Option A also allows for the distinction to be made between archaeological remains, Scheduled Monuments and other heritage assets and their level of protection.

### **Option B - Alternative**

As requirements relating to the historic environment are set out in national planning policy and legislation there is limited scope for alternative approaches. One alternative approach could be to have one combined detailed historic environment policy which captures all the different types of heritage assets in one policy. This would need to be very long in order to capture enough detail and to make these distinctions between assets.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy NH11 - Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments**

- 1) Development must protect the site and setting of Scheduled Monuments or nationally important designated or non-designated archaeological remains.
- 2) Applicants will be expected to undertake an assessment of appropriate detail to determine whether the development site is known to, or is likely to, contain archaeological remains. Proposals must show the development proposals have had regard to any such remains and that they have consulted the Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 3) Where the assessment indicates archaeological remains on site, or the potential for such remains to be present, and development could disturb or adversely affect archaeological remains and/or their setting, applicants will be expected to:
  - a) submit an appropriate archaeological desk-based assessment; and
  - b) to undertake a field evaluation (conducted by a suitably qualified archaeological organisation), where necessary.

Applicants must agree the scope of assessment and field evaluation with the County Council through a written scheme of investigation and in advance of any trial trenching/groundworks.

- 4) Nationally important archaeological remains (whether scheduled or demonstrably of equivalent significance) should be preserved in situ. Non-designated archaeological sites or deposits of significance equal to that of a nationally important monument will be assessed as though those sites or deposits are designated.
- 5) Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of such remains, consent will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.
- 6) Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of such remains, this harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 7) For other non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, the effect of a development proposal on the significance of the remains, either directly or indirectly, will be taken into account in determining the application. As such assets are irreplaceable, the presumption will be in favour of the avoidance of harm. The scale of the harm or loss will be weighed against this presumption and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 8) In exceptional cases, where harm to or loss of significance to the asset is considered to be justified, the harm should be minimised, and mitigated by a programme of archaeological investigation, including excavation, recording and analysis. The aim of mitigation should be where possible to preserve archaeological remains in situ, to promote public enjoyment of heritage and to record and advance knowledge. Planning permission will not be granted until this programme has been submitted to, and approved by, the council and development must not commence until these works have been satisfactorily undertaken by an appropriately qualified organisation. The results and analysis of findings subsequent to the investigation must be published and made available to the relevant local and county authorities. Archive will also need to be submitted to the county museum store.
- 9) Applicants will be required to adequately protect archaeological remains from impacts arising from climate change mitigation measures such as tree planting.

## **Policy NH12 - Historic Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Landscapes**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will support the conservation and enhancement of Historic Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Landscapes. South Oxfordshire currently has such a policy in the local plan, but this will be filling a policy gap for Vale of White Horse.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Historic battlefields, landscapes and parks and gardens are an important part of the districts' heritage and environment.

Historic England's Register of Historic Battlefields identifies important English battlefields with the purpose of protecting them through the planning system and promoting better understanding of their significance. Although there are no Historic Battlefields in Vale of White Horse, the South Oxfordshire site of the Civil War Battle of Chalgrove 1643 is included on the Register of Historic Battlefields.

There are also 21 Registered Parks and Gardens across the districts, 13 in South Oxfordshire and 8 in Vale of White Horse. The main purpose of Historic England's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England is to celebrate notable designed landscapes and encourage their protection.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out requirements that local planning authorities should follow when determining applications and considering potential impacts of proposed development on the significance of heritage assets. We have interpreted these requirements and included them in the policy below.

### **Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)**

#### **Option A - Preferred**

Have a Historic Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Landscapes policy that addresses the requirements of the NPPF and legislation. The policy will require proposals to conserve or enhance the special historic interest, character or setting of a battlefield, or park or garden on the Historic England Registers of Historic Battlefields or Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England.

The policy will also set out how proposals will be assessed where they would lead to harm to a Historic Battlefield, Registered Park and Garden or a Historic Landscape.

### **Why we prefer Option A**

As with the other historic environment policy options in this chapter, we are required by national policy to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. Option A, along with the other proposed historic environment policies, would help us to meet this requirement.

Option A also allows for the distinction to be made between Historic Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens, Historic Landscapes, and other heritage assets. One combined policy for all heritage assets would need to be very long in order to capture enough detail and to make the distinctions between assets and their associated levels of protection.

### **Option B - Alternative**

As requirements relating to the historic environment are set out in national planning policy and legalisation, there is limited scope for alternative approaches. One alternative approach to setting out the policies in this chapter could be to have one combined historic environment policy which captures all the different types of heritage assets in one policy. This would need to be very long in order to capture enough detail and to make these distinctions between assets.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy NH12 - Historic Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Landscapes**

- 1) Proposals should conserve and enhance the special historic interest, character or setting of a battlefield, or park or garden on the Historic England Register of Historic Battlefields or Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England.
- 2) Any harm to or loss of significance of any heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of these assets should be wholly exceptional in the case of Registered Historic Battlefields and Grade I and Grade II\* Registered Historic Parks and Gardens and exceptional in the case of Grade II Registered Historic Parks and Gardens.
- 3) Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, consent will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. Applicants must demonstrate that all other options for their conservation or use have been explored.
- 4) Development proposals that directly or indirectly affect the significance of non-designated historic battlefields, parks and historic landscapes, including historic routes, will be determined with regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.
- 5) Applicants will be required to describe, in line with best practice and relevant national guidance, the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting. It should be demonstrated that, where relevant, surveys and field work have been carried out prior to submission and that the results have informed the heritage assessment. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance. In some circumstances, further survey, analysis, and recording will be made a condition of consent.

## Policy NH13 - Historic environment and climate change

### What will this policy do?

This policy will set out how the protection and enhancement of historic buildings and heritage assets should be balanced with the need to respond to the Climate Emergency.

### Why is this policy needed?

Both councils have declared climate emergencies and have set targets to become carbon neutral districts, with South Oxfordshire aiming to reach this in 2030, and Vale of White Horse by 2045. Paragraph 157 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that the planning system should “support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate” and that it should “encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure”.

The examples set out in the NPPF of “encouraging the reuse of existing resources” and “converting existing buildings” does not need to be limited to newer buildings. The districts are home to a unique and rich historic environment, with around 5,000 Listed Buildings, over 120 Conservation Areas and many other unique designated and non-designated heritage assets. The districts’ historic buildings will therefore need to play their part in the transition to a low carbon future.

The “Heritage Counts”<sup>62</sup> report’s closing recommendation states that: “The climate change crisis demands a new approach to managing change to the built environment. We must prioritise our existing buildings by making refurbishment and re-use of existing buildings worthwhile, compared to knocking them down. We must move towards a whole life carbon approach for buildings to ensure we make more holistic and sustainable decisions”.

Historic England emphasise the importance of a “whole building approach”<sup>63</sup> to energy efficiency in the historic environment. This approach deals with specific situations rather than generalised solutions. The opportunities and constraints for a particular building or site can vary widely depending on the context. The optimum approach to improving energy efficiency or reducing carbon in one case is likely to differ from another case, even if buildings appear to be similar. As a result, a site-specific approach is needed.

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<sup>62</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2019/hc2019-re-use-recycle-to-reduce-carbon/>

<sup>63</sup> [historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/eehb-how-to-improve-energy-efficiency/heag094-how-to-improve-energy-efficiency/](https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/eehb-how-to-improve-energy-efficiency/heag094-how-to-improve-energy-efficiency/)

In many cases proposals for energy efficiency measures or small-scale renewable energy measures, for example solar panels on a house, would not require planning permission as they would fall under permitted development. It is important to note that in the historic environment additional protections are in place to avoid harm to significance. There is a perception based on this that the historic environment is a barrier to carbon reduction and energy efficiency improvements. This policy helps to determine cases where an appropriate solution can be found to sensitively retrofitting a historic building.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

The policy will encourage proposals for renewable energy and energy efficiency measures for historic buildings where they would comply with policies and legislation to protect the heritage significance of the building and its setting.

The policy will also encourage the retention and re-use of historic buildings as a sustainable resource, recognising the sustainability and heritage benefits of making a historic building fit for long-term use.

#### Why we prefer Option A

Introducing this new policy in the Joint Local Plan would make the link between historic buildings and climate change and could help to encourage the delivery of energy efficiency measures and renewables wherever suitable. Option A recognises the sustainability benefits of retaining and re-using older buildings, particularly their embodied carbon, and encourages this approach.

Having this as a standalone policy, rather than captured within another policy provides an opportunity to highlight the relationship between historic buildings and climate change. It makes clear that energy efficiency and renewable energy measures are an option for historic buildings and will be encouraged, but also sets out that these works need to align with safeguarding heritage significance.

This kind of policy would be about actively encouraging best practice rather than allowing harm. We're not saying that we would permit things that would be harmful, historic buildings would still be protected as required in line with national policy and legislation.



### **Option B - Alternative**

Include retrofit of historic buildings as a consideration or criteria in other policy/policies

### **Option C – Alternative**

Have no policy or criteria on historic buildings and climate change. Given the rich historic environment in the districts, and the need to respond to the climate emergency, we do not consider the option of not having a policy to be appropriate.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

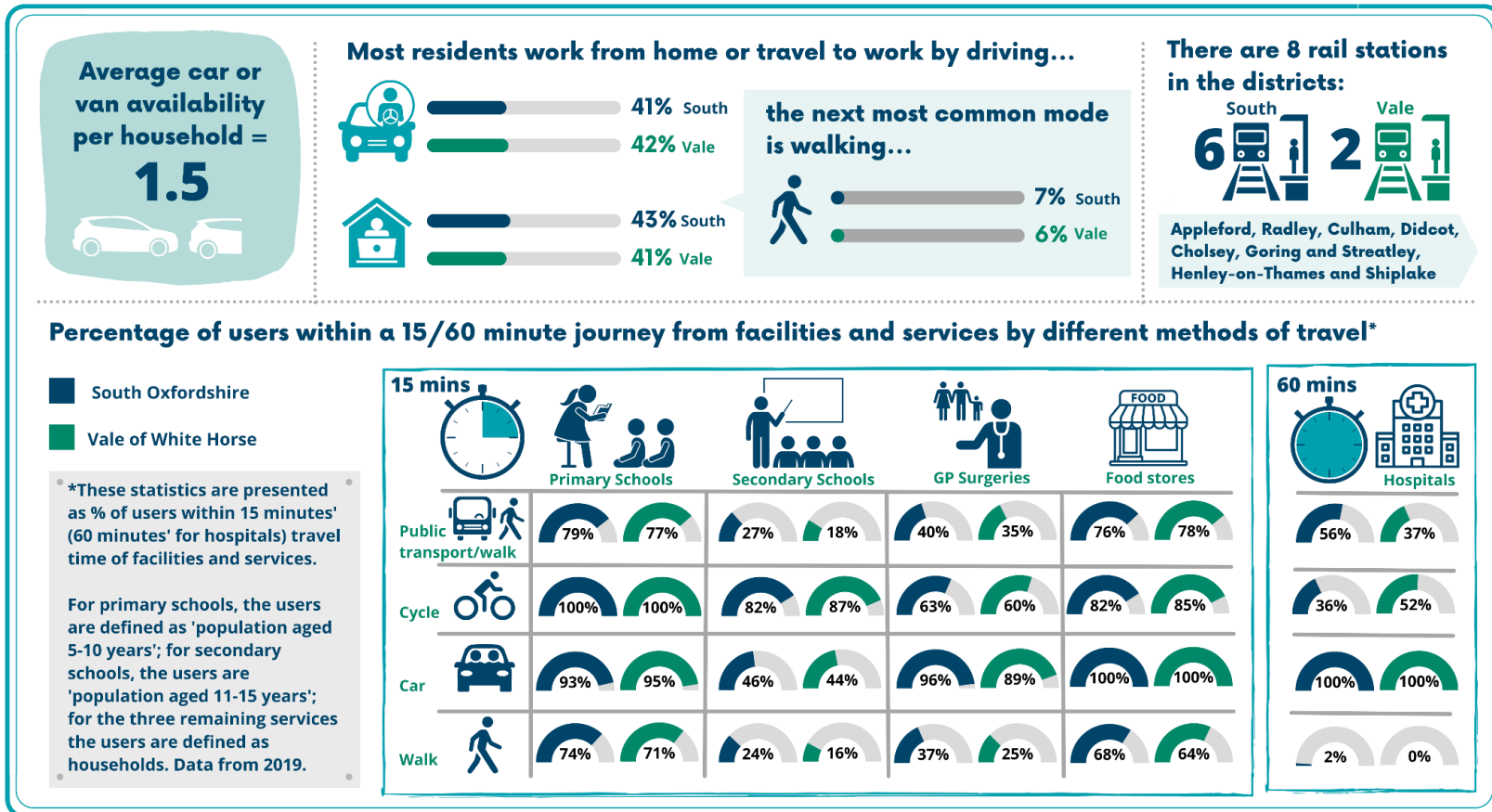
#### **Policy NH13 – Historic environment and climate change**

- 1) Proposals for small-scale renewable and low carbon energy generation affecting the historic environment will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and supported provided that they are designed to minimise harm and not cause a significantly adverse effect to the historic environment, both designated and non-designated assets, including development within their settings.
- 2) Interventions requiring planning permission and/or Listed Building Consent should demonstrate that traditional and/or reversible methods of improving energy efficiency have been fully explored before proposing irreversible and potentially harmful interventions to historic fabric of traditional construction.
- 3) The retention and re-use of historic buildings, buildings of traditional construction and other heritage assets will be encouraged as a sustainable resource. The retention and re-use of historic buildings and historic fabric will also be encouraged where the embodied carbon within the existing structure would lower the carbon footprint of the proposed development.

# 13. Infrastructure, transport, connectivity and communications

## Introduction

Here are some facts and figures that help set the scene for this chapter.

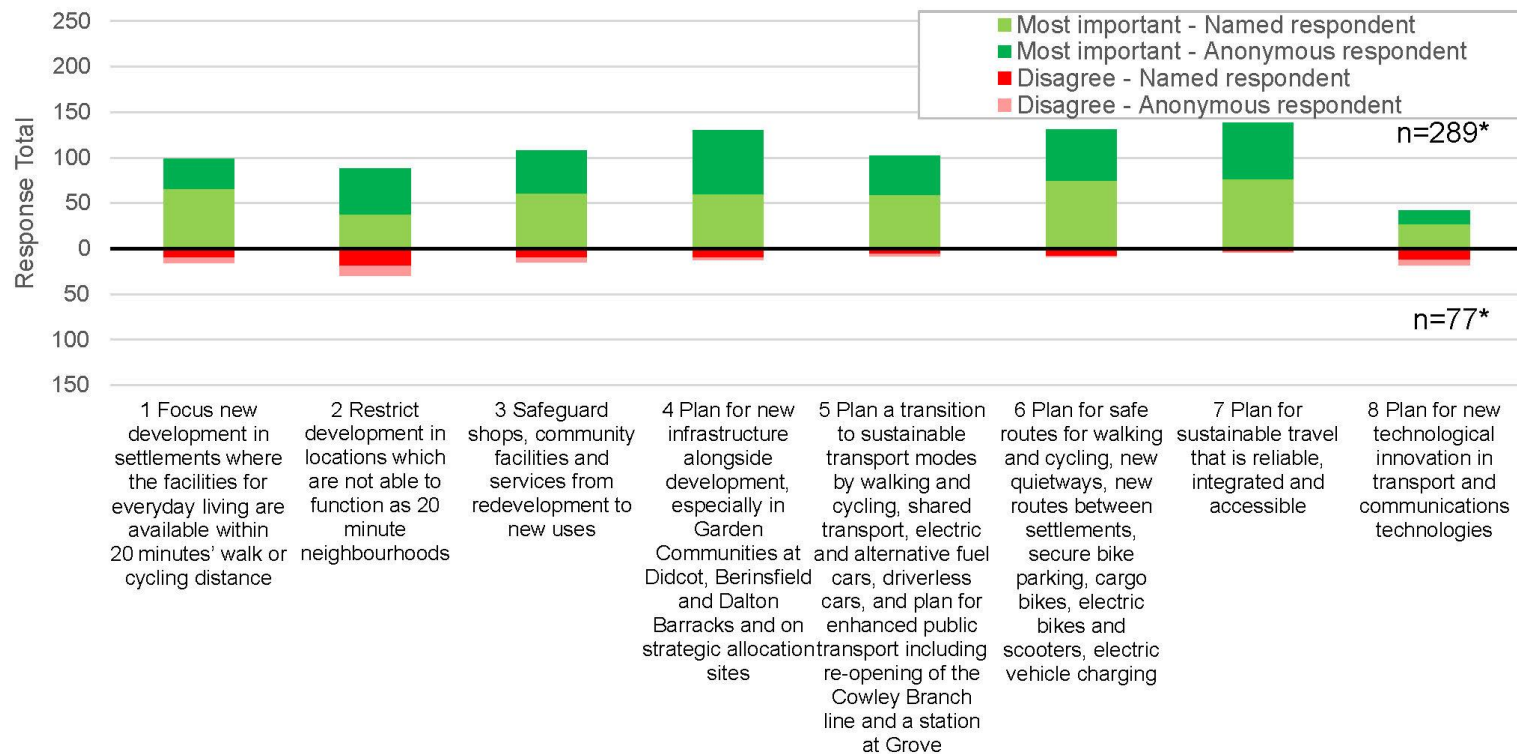


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## You told us

You showed a fairly equal amount of support for the opportunities presented on transport and facilities in response to our Issues Consultation. The exception to this was planning for new technological innovation in transport and communications technologies which less respondents selected as most important.

We have considered all feedback when developing our policy options, selecting our preferred option and proposed policy wording, which are presented in this chapter.



\*n = the number of times this question was answered (combining named responses and anonymous responses)

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## **Policy IN1 - Infrastructure and service provision**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy sets the requirement for all new development to be served and supported by appropriate on-site and off-site infrastructure and services.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Successful and sustainable communities and new developments depend on suitable physical, environmental 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, health, 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.

New development needs to make best use of existing infrastructure where capacity exists to accommodate needs, and the infrastructure is an appropriate attractiveness and quality. Where improvements to existing infrastructure are required, new development is expected to meet the costs of any improvements, along with providing any additional infrastructure requirements arising from the development.

New development may also need to take into account existing infrastructure constraints, such as the presence of overhead powerlines or gas pipelines. It will be important for developers to engage early in the planning process with the organisations responsible for these distribution networks, including National Grid or Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, to see how these can best be accommodated within new development.

A policy is required to ensure that all necessary infrastructure is secured at the time planning permission is granted and that it is provided and phased as appropriate, to serve development when it is needed. Developers will need to evidence this in support of planning applications.

The provision or improvement of infrastructure needed to support development will usually be secured through the use of planning conditions attached to a planning permission, or through contributions from, or direct delivery by, developers through legal agreements. Alternatively, we can attach planning conditions or secure funding via the Community Infrastructure Levy to deliver this infrastructure. The government is planning to change at a national level the way in which contributions are collected, so we might need to reflect some changes as our plan progresses.

To maintain and provide infrastructure and other community services effectively, it is essential that there is a partnership working approach between the public, private and voluntary sector agencies involved. The councils will continue to work closely with a wide range of infrastructure providers and stakeholders. Key organisations include Oxfordshire County Council, National Highways, the NHS Integrated Care Board, Town and Parish Councils, Thames Water and the Environment Agency.

The council's existing Infrastructure Delivery Plan and local plan evidence, including the leisure studies, green infrastructure strategy and transport evidence are being updated to inform this policy.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

To provide an overarching infrastructure policy for the plan to cover the following requirements, including that:

- new development is served and supported by appropriate infrastructure and services
- permission for development is only granted 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 and service requirements are those set out in the relevant council documents including the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, leisure studies, green infrastructure strategy, any made Neighbourhood development plans and any other infrastructure needed to mitigate the impact of new development
- planning contributions will be collected to provide infrastructure and to support the maintenance for infrastructure through planning obligations, through the Community Infrastructure Levy or other mechanisms
- development takes account of existing infrastructure, such as sewage treatment works, electricity pylons or gas pipelines running across development sites.

#### Why we prefer Option A

It is considered that an overarching infrastructure policy is required to set out the councils' expectations for the infrastructure that should be provided to support new development. This will include identifying the key documents that developers should refer to when preparing planning applications.

### **Option B – Alternative**

No policy. This is not considered an appropriate alternative as the plan should include a requirement to ensure that developers mitigate the impacts of their developments on communities and the environment. A policy is also required to signpost developers to the information that will help them prepare their mitigation and to determine what additional infrastructure may be needed and how it will be secured.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy IN1 – Infrastructure and service provision**

- 1) New development must be served and supported by appropriate and adequate on-site and off-site infrastructure and services.
- 2) Planning permission will only be granted for developments where the infrastructure and services needed to meet the needs of the new development are already in place or will be provided to an agreed timescale. Where appropriate, and agreed with the council, financial contributions will be sought to deliver infrastructure to an agreed timetable. Infrastructure includes the requirements set out in the councils' Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document, the safeguarded schemes listed in Policy IN3 -Transport Infrastructure and Safeguarding, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, leisure facilities assessment and playing pitch strategy, green infrastructure strategy, any relevant made Neighbourhood Development Plans, and/or infrastructure and services needed to mitigate the impact of the new development.
- 3) Infrastructure and services required as a consequence of development, and provision for their maintenance, will be sought from developers, and secured through planning obligations, conditions attached to a planning permission,

other agreements, and funding through the council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Section 106, or other mechanisms. This applies equally where external funding for infrastructure necessary for development has been secured (including where the infrastructure is delivered ahead of development), on the expectation that funding shall be recovered from development.

- 4) Development will also need to take account of existing public utility infrastructure on or affecting sites, for example, sewage treatment works, electricity pylons or gas pipelines running across development sites. Early engagement with infrastructure providers will be necessary, with any changes set down and agreed at planning application stage, for example through planning conditions.

## **Policy IN2 - Sustainable transport and accessibility**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy supports the improvement of transport infrastructure, prioritising active, sustainable travel, aiming to improve access for all, health benefits and place making, as well as ensuring climate resilience. The policy ensures that developers suitably assess the travel impacts of proposed developments and provide reasonable mitigation measures to reduce negative impacts on the transport network and ensures that suitable options exist for active and sustainable travel to other locations.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

This policy seeks to ensure that appropriate locations are chosen for development and the appropriate travel infrastructure and services are provided to support sustainable travel. Development can generate additional demand for travel (and associated infrastructure) for example, residents of new housing need to access day-to-day amenities such as shops, places of work and education. Developers need to address this demand through delivery of improved or alternative transport infrastructure and services, to ensure the development is sustainable. Transport infrastructure could include additional footways and cycleways, while services could include funding buses at more times of the day. Travel improvements and infrastructure can be delivered as part of a development or be provided off-site as agreed with Oxfordshire County Council, as the Highway Authority.

National policy seeks to ensure that developers and developer teams design schemes that “contribute to high quality places”. Designing schemes for walking and cycling first helps to prevent barriers to access for everyone. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development of proposals (paragraph 108). This enables planning for sustainable travel opportunities to be explored first and prevent the need for retrofitting later in the process.

The NPPF also seeks to ensure that significant development is placed in locations where there is “a genuine choice of transport modes” (paragraph 109). The infrastructure requirements set out in the policy seeks to ensure that a range of travel opportunities are provided for new and existing planned growth.

Oxfordshire’s Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) outlines a long term vision for transport and travel across Oxfordshire to 2050. The vision seeks to deliver an inclusive and safe net-zero transport system that will tackle inequality and improve health and wellbeing. Vision Zero is one of the LTCP’s policies that seeks to get to zero road fatalities or life-changing injuries on Oxfordshire’s



transport system. The LTCP also seeks to achieve improvements to air quality and to reduce the need to travel and reduce private car use.

The LTCP brings a new approach to travel planning. Historically transport planners would use the Predict and Provide Approach, where existing transport characteristics for an area would be used to estimate the travel demands for a new development. This tends to result in a car-centric assessment, with increases to highway capacity for more cars being given priority, without economies of scale in supporting travel by public transport incorporated, while travel by walking, wheeling, and cycling can be overlooked. The new approach is known as the Decide and Provide Approach (or Vision and Validate), whereby transport planners estimate high uptake proportions for walking, cycling and public transport and provide the required infrastructure to support that level of travel. This policy seeks to ensure this new approach is utilised by developers when designing transport infrastructure to support their development.

The LTCP uses a Transport user Hierarchy to prioritise the needs of users of the highway. For example, where there is a new development that has limited combined road and pavement space between buildings, priority for space will initially be given to walking and wheeling, then cycling and riding, then public transport, then motorcyclists, then shared vehicles, and finally other motorised modes (i.e. private cars and vans). This policy in the LTCP also seeks to ensure the Transport User Hierarchy is used when developers alter or design new transport infrastructure.

Our Joint Local Plan policy seeks to support the delivery of the LTCP vision within the districts, by promoting development in sustainable locations where there are opportunities to minimise travel and where travel by walking, cycling and wheeling, and public transport is, or can be made, available for typical day-to-day needs of residents and employees. Elsewhere, where local amenities and travel opportunities are limited, the plan is more restrictive of development.

The policy specifically supports a number of the LTCP policies, through promotion of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), and the Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN), as well as the Area Travel Plans (formally Area Transport Strategies) and Transport Corridor Strategies. The policy highlights the transport assessment requirements for development at different scales and seeks to promote the delivery of planned transport infrastructure. The policy requires provision of electric vehicle charging facilities. We encourage innovative and flexible solutions to reduce the demand for car parking and car ownership in suitable locations, which could involve provision of car club bays instead of standard car parking spaces.

Simultaneously active and sustainable travel promotion helps to address the climate emergency, through reducing transport generated pollution, and also helps to improve public health through increased physical activity. Considering the rural nature of much

of the districts, where often there are currently few alternatives to the private car travel, the policy promotes the transition from the combustion engine to electric and other fuel types, as well as innovative strategies for travel.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

Include a policy that ensures all planning applications:

- minimise (non active) travel and facilitate non car travel
- apply the Oxfordshire County Council’s Decide and Provide Approach to assess transport impacts
- apply the transport user hierarchy
- use good design principles from relevant guidance documents
- prioritise highway safety
- provide suitable and proportionate contributions to and or provisions for transport infrastructure
- consider and facilitate, where relevant, provision of shared transport and future transport technology.

#### Why we prefer Option A

We prefer this option because it will help us to achieve a net zero transport system and improve infrastructure provision for sustainable and active travel. The policy provides detail on the transport requirements for developments without the need to review other documents for fundamental details.

Our intention is to minimise the number of transport policies, while still providing sufficient information about the requirements for developments.

#### Option B – Alternative

Same as above but rely on reference to LTCP for transport user hierarchy, Decide and Provide, and future technology in transport.

However, this is not the preferred option as it requires the reader to research elsewhere to gain the information they need.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Retain existing policies. This is not the preferred option as there are a number of different policies in the existing South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse local plans which address some of the content of this policy, and there is an opportunity to bring these together and update them in the Joint Local Plan. Retaining the existing policies would not go as far in recognising the role of decarbonising the transport network in addressing the climate emergency, not help us move towards meeting the districts' climate targets, or capture the latest work undertaken by Oxfordshire County Council to bring in new approaches to transport planning and management.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy IN2 – Sustainable transport and accessibility**

1) Development proposals must demonstrate that:

- a) the location and proposed layout will maximise active and sustainable travel opportunities, minimising the need to travel by car, with sustainable travel opportunities integrated into the design;
- b) viable active and sustainable travel choices have been assessed for suitability where currently available or will be delivered where levels are insufficient for users of the development to access day-to-day amenities. Any improvements to travel choices must be delivered ahead of occupation; and
- c) access to the development is safe and convenient for all highway users, in line with Oxfordshire County Council's Transport User Hierarchy.

2) All major development proposals must demonstrate that:

- a) the application is consistent with the guiding principles of the Oxfordshire's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and supporting documents, as well as Planning Practice Guidance on Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements and guidance from National Highways;

- b) provision of infrastructure and services has been prioritised in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's Transport User Hierarchy;
- c) they address any road safety issues in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's Vision Zero Approach;
- d) they do not worsen air quality issues and provide air quality mitigation measures where suitable;
- e) they contribute to and enhance the provision of active and sustainable transport infrastructure (both on and off-site) and, where feasible, implement new travel and transportation technology and services necessary to support that development, either through direct delivery or developer contributions;
- f) the methodology in Oxfordshire County Council's Implementing Decide and Provide document has been used to assess the need for infrastructure and provision of transport services;
- g) they have made reasonable provision of car club and lift sharing opportunities for users of the development. Provision of community transport and innovative transport projects, as well as projects that develop the use of new technologies, will be encouraged, to promote greater travel choice; and
- h) they align with and help to deliver planned transport infrastructure (as set out in Policy IN3) where future users of the development are likely to utilise the infrastructure.

### **Transport Documents to support Planning Applications**

- 3) Transport Statements, Transport Assessments and Travel Plans must be provided to support planning applications in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's thresholds for developments of different sizes/ types. These should apply the principles set out in County guidance documents and should also follow the latest relevant national guidance.
- 4) Travel Plans, where required, must set out measures that seek to promote and support modal shift to walking, cycling and wheeling, and public transport use for a range of trip purposes through agreed targets and monitoring arrangements. Travel Plan initiatives must seek to reduce demand for travel by private cars. Where travelling by modes other than a private car is challenging, initiatives and infrastructure provision should facilitate electric, or other fuelled vehicle use. Mitigation strategies will be used to address anticipated impacts, these should initially relate to active and sustainable travel. Mitigation strategies must be monitored to ensure the anticipated outcomes are achieved, if they are not achieved, further mitigation measures may be required.

## **Policy IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy identifies the councils' approach to existing transport infrastructure, sets out our approach to safeguarding land for future transport projects, and addresses the requirements for potential future infrastructure schemes. The transport infrastructure set out in this policy seeks to improve the existing transport network and provide for future travel demands.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

This policy is needed to ensure that, where appropriate, existing transport infrastructure is improved, that there are opportunities for walking, wheeling, cycling, and public transport and that planned transport infrastructure is prioritised early on in the plan making process. Further planned transport infrastructure may be added into this policy in the later phases of the Joint Local Plan development, once locations for any new allocations are firmed up.

Safeguarding for transport infrastructure is of paramount importance to ensure that future growth and associated travel is suitably planned for. Transport safeguarding considers where land may be appropriate to cater for existing travel demands to help facilitate the delivery of schemes that are currently in development or not yet fully funded. It also caters for travel demands that may arise in the future and helps to 'future proof' the transport network. Safeguarding land for potential future transport schemes allows forward planning and prevents new development being built that might prejudice their delivery.

The policy includes a list of transport safeguarding schemes. This list comprises a number of retained safeguarded schemes that are included in the currently adopted Local Plans for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (Parts 1 and 2). The list of transport safeguarded schemes includes updated areas where scheme designs have progressed since their inclusion into the adopted Local Plans, retained schemes where areas previously safeguarded are still required. Should new safeguarded schemes be needed, such as routes related to the County Council's emerging Strategic Active Travel Network, these will be included in the next consultation stage of the Joint Local Plan.

We seek the input from the County Council, strategic infrastructure providers, England's Economic Heartland and other transport bodies on whether any further new safeguarding of land is required. All retained, revised and new safeguarded schemes will be shown on the policies map at later stages of the Local Plan process. In line with the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) aims, the transport corridors safeguarded will cater for a range of transport modes, therefore all retained and revised safeguarded schemes will allow for more travel modes than the private car alone.

The policy will acknowledge that different considerations apply to roads managed by National Highways (the A34 and M40) compared with those managed by Oxfordshire County Council. National Highways roads are designed to operate for longer distance journeys whilst the majority of the County's roads should facilitate local journeys by all modes.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

Include a policy that considers the councils' approach to safeguarding for transport and identifies safeguarded schemes and other transport infrastructure schemes that the councils seek to promote.

#### Why we prefer Option A

The policy will capture the current priorities for transport infrastructure schemes in the adopted Local Plans for both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse and adds further transport priorities which align with Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.

There is a clear emphasis for prioritising active and sustainable travel while acknowledging that some locations will need to support car and freight travel.

#### Option B – Alternative

Considering the rural nature of the districts, this policy could provide more emphasis on reducing congestion for cars and freight. However, this option is not supported because there is a need to promote active travel and more sustainable travel to respond to the climate emergency, to reduce the number of car trips journeys made, and reduce pollution from transport for public health.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Not having this policy. This option is not supported because it would bring a risk to the delivery of established and new transport safeguarded infrastructure and other transport schemes. This would also jeopardise the improvement of existing infrastructure to support modal shift away from the private car for people living and working in the districts.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy IN3 – Transport infrastructure and safeguarding**

##### **Pipeline Transport Schemes and Transport Priorities**

- 1) The council, working with Oxfordshire County Council and relevant stakeholders, will support the following infrastructure schemes and transport priorities. Development should contribute to the delivery of these schemes and priorities where appropriate:
  - a) maintaining and improving walking and cycling infrastructure, including through development of further Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and delivery of schemes included in existing LCWIPs as well as delivering schemes included in the Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN);
  - b) protecting and enhancing the Public Right of Way (PROW) network, national and recreational trails, and Open Access Areas (OAAs);
  - c) protecting former rail facilities and lines for re-use as public transport corridors or for the purpose of active travel;
  - d) delivery of mobility hubs to support transport interchanges;
  - e) maintaining and improving public transport services and associated facilities;
  - f) a new Wantage and Grove Railway Station;
  - g) improvements to Culham Railway Station;
  - h) the delivery of East West Rail through to Didcot and the safeguarded Wantage and Grove Railway Station;

- i) improvements to bus connectivity, including new and enhanced services, bus stop facilities, active travel connections to bus stops, and bus priority measures;
- j) the provision of infrastructure to facilitate public and shared transport using electric and other sustainable fuelling;
- k) the delivery of safeguarded and identified transport infrastructure which are required to support the development required in the plan period and beyond; and
- l) planning and delivery of route-based strategies on the road network, including mitigation for congestion and highway safety issues.

### **Safeguarding for Transport**

- 2) Land in the districts will continue to be safeguarded to support the future movement of people and services, until such time that it is deemed no longer required, the scheme has been delivered, or an equivalent scheme is delivered.
- 3) New development that encroaches within or adjoins safeguarded land must demonstrate that it will support the delivery of the safeguarded scheme (in part or in full), deliver an alternative suitable facility or not jeopardise the delivery of the safeguarded scheme. Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the transport schemes.
- 4) In order to deliver a safeguarded scheme an alternative options study is to be undertaken, where appropriate, to ensure the most suitable solution, location and route is provided. Additionally, as options for the safeguarded schemes progress, where appropriate, they should complete an environmental impact assessment, an archaeological assessment and a flood risk assessment with scope of each assessment agreed with district and county councils.

### **Safeguarding Transport Schemes**

- 5) The current list of safeguarded schemes can be found below and in the emerging Policies Map. If not already incorporated, active and sustainable transport infrastructure improvements should be incorporated into the transport infrastructure scheme at the detailed design stage.
  - Didcot to Culham River Crossing
  - Didcot Science Bridge



- Southern Didcot Movement Corridor
- Southern Abingdon Movement Corridor
- Clifton Hampden Bypass
- Watlington Relief Road
- Benson Relief Road
- Didcot Northern Perimeter Road Phase Three
- Didcot Central Corridor
- A4130 Road Safety Improvements
- Sandford Mobility Hub
- Golden Balls Junction Improvements
- A4130 Widening
- Wantage Eastern Link Road
- Wantage Western Movement Corridor
- Wantage and Grove Railway Station
- Milton Heights Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge
- Improved Access to A34 near Milton Park
- Cinder Track Active Travel Improvements
- Upgrading Hagbourne Hill
- Chilton Interchange and Harwell Campus entrance
- Improvements to Featherbed Lane and Steventon Junction and Relief to Rowstock and Harwell to Didcot Busway
- Lodge Hill Mobility Hub & Upgraded A34 Slips
- A34 Bus Lane
- Cumnor Mobility Hub
- Upgraded Active Travel Route between Shippon and Abingdon-on-Thames
- Marcham Movement Corridor and Improvements to Frilford Lights
- Great Coxwell Road Junction
- Townsend Road Junction with A420

## **Policy IN4 - Wilts and Berks Canal safeguarding**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy retains the council's support for the restoration of the Wilts and Berks Canal.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Canals provide a valuable ecological, recreational and socio-economic value. This policy is needed because once the canal is delivered it will provide valuable active travel and blue infrastructure provision across the width of Vale of White Horse District.

Strategic active travel infrastructure is a key requirement to enable people to switch to walking and cycling and leave their cars at home. This transport infrastructure, alongside others, will help to facilitate that change in order to achieve car reduction aspirations by providing additional walking and cycling infrastructure.

### **Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)**

#### **Option A – Preferred**

Revise the existing policy to match wording that other local planning authorities will use for the restoration of the Wilts and Berks Canal network in their areas.

The policy considers:

- safeguarding a travel corridor for the historic canal route, with deviations where existing development prevents its restoration
- support for the restoration of the canal
- width requirements for the canal
- prevention of development and associated infrastructure that may prejudice the delivery of the canal
- requirements for development that directly relate to the canal safeguarded corridor.

## Why we prefer Option A

Vale of White Horse District Council retains support for the canal's restoration and there has not been any change to the canal's restoration priorities since the adoption of the previous Local Plan.

The revised policy is the preferred option because it retains the council's intention for reinstating the canal and is in keeping with policy wording to be used by other neighbouring local planning authorities for the restoration of the waterways.

### **Option B – Alternative**

Retaining the existing policy unchanged. This would be reasonable but would not reflect the policy wording used by other local planning authorities who are also seeking to restore the canal in their districts.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Removing the policy. This is not appropriate as the project will provide a blue and green infrastructure resource and will be a valuable asset to our local communities. If the route of the canal was no longer safeguarded, developments in the path of the route could make it impossible to re-open the canal in the future.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### Policy IN4 – Wilts and Berks Canal safeguarding

- 1) The restoration and reconstruction of the Wilts and Berks Canal as navigable waterways is supported in principle and Vale of White Horse will facilitate this subject to other planning policy restraints. The historic alignments of the canal and appropriate diversions in certain locations, as identified on the emerging Policies Map, will be safeguarded with a view to their long-term re-establishment as navigable waterways.
- 2) The canal route will be safeguarded by:
  - a) not permitting development likely to prejudice the canal alignment or its associated structures, or likely to make restoration more difficult;
  - b) ensuring that where the canal is affected by development, the alignment is protected or an alternative alignment is provided; and
  - c) ensuring, where the width of the protected route is not currently defined, that a 30m wide corridor for the canal and associated infrastructure is protected.
- 3) Proposals will be considered positively where they support the delivery of canal infrastructure, including recreational and nature conservation potential, in particular, the use of canals for boating and the towpath for walking, cycling, and (where possible) horse riding.
- 4) All development adjacent to the historic and safeguarded Wilts and Berks Canal routes must consider the character, setting, biodiversity and historic value of the canal as well as have regard to improving and enhancing views along and from the canals. Development should not detract from the navigation of the canal and/or pedestrian, cycle, and horse riding movement alongside, where applicable. Development must support the delivery of the canal restoration where it adjoins the land safeguarded for the canal.
- 5) Proposals for the reinstatement of canal along these historic alignments or any alternative alignments will need to demonstrate that the cultural, historic and natural environment will be protected and enhanced, with no overall adverse effect, and that potential impacts on ecology, landscape, flood risk, water resources (abstraction) and water quality have been fully assessed and taken into account.

6) The entirety of the historic canal route is safeguarded. Where deviations from the route are made in the restoration of the canal, the historic line will be safeguarded for walking, cycling, and (where possible) horse riding.

## **Policy IN5 - Parking standards**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy identifies the need to apply Oxfordshire County Council parking standards for cycles and cars and provides design requirements for cycle parking, car parking, and electric vehicle charging for all types of development. This policy also promotes the provision of welfare facilities to support the uptake of active travel.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Provision of cycle and car parking in line with Oxfordshire County Council's standards will help to encourage modal shift away from the private car, through provision of appropriate cycle parking facilities within homes, as well as destinations where people will cycle to. There are different car parking standards set for residential sites located in the edge of Oxford City and in Towns than in the rest of Oxfordshire. Requirements for car parking and electric car charging are also included in the parking standards. The parking standards also help ensure that vehicles can be parked safely and avoid obstructing the public highway, including pavements and cycle lanes, and do not block access for emergency services.

Please refer to Oxfordshire County Council's parking standards document for car and cycling parking requirements and guidance<sup>64</sup>.

Modal shift to active, sustainable, and low or zero carbon travel will help to deliver a net-zero transport system in Oxfordshire and reduce private car use. The transition from petrol and diesel cars to electric and other sustainable fuel types will need car parking with electric vehicle charging and other sustainable fuelling infrastructure, built-in. Acknowledging that the take up of electric vehicles will develop over time, with the phasing out of sales of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030, some of the proposed electric vehicle charging provision will be passive, where channels are installed but cables and charge points are not yet provided. This will allow EV charging to be activated when there is demand, and avoid the need to retrofit, whilst also preventing charging devices being installed that may not be used and may become obsolete.

Alongside provision of cycle parking, providing welfare facilities in the right locations is important to support the uptake of active travel. Education and employment places are key locations where welfare facilities, such as showers, lockers, and cycle maintenance stations, enable employees and students to travel further in all weather conditions.

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<sup>64</sup> [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-policies-and-plans/PARKINGS.PDF](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-policies-and-plans/PARKINGS.PDF)

## Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

### Option A – Preferred

A policy that:

- identifies where district parking standards can be found
- sets out a range of design considerations for cycle parking
- identifies requirements for electric vehicle charging
- considers the provision for electric charging for bicycles
- sets out requirements for welfare facilities in buildings of employment and education.

### Why we prefer Option A

The policy identifies the need to apply Oxfordshire County Council parking standards and explicitly sets out the key requirements / expectations for cycle parking, car parking and EV charging for all types of planning applications in the districts. National planning policy requires that policy on parking is provided, however district specific parking standards are not considered necessary as Oxfordshire County Council parking standards suitably address the variation in parking characteristics across the districts.

### Option B – Alternative

The policy could refer to County parking standards only and not explicitly set out further design principles for the provision of parking, such as cycle spaces being secure and well-lit. Explicit requirements for cycle and car parking may become out of date, with potential updating of parking standards by Oxfordshire County Council. However this can be resolved by stating that the latest adopted parking standards should be used.

### **Option C – Alternative**

No policy. This is not considered reasonable as national planning policy requires consideration of parking and this policy summarises the standards and helps identify where to find Oxfordshire County Council's parking standards.

### **Option D – Alternative**

Set district specific parking standards. Not chosen as Oxfordshire County Council parking standards provide a suitable level of variation to address the changing in parking characteristics presented across the districts.

## **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

### **Policy IN5 – Parking standards**

- 1) New development must provide cycle and car parking in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's adopted parking standards.
- 2) Where development provides parking provision, facilities must provide cycle parking that has:
  - a) where provided, a minimum door width of 1 metre wide for doorways used to access cycling parking;
  - b) wheeling ramps available in convenient locations to prevent the need for lifting a bike up stairs for the whole journey to the public highway;
  - c) an air pump and multi-tool facility where 15 or more cycle parking spaces are clustered together; and
  - d) where new developments seek to provide internal cycle parking, the cycle parking must be convenient, with no more than 2 doors required to access internal cycle facilities.



- 3) Major developments providing employment and education must provide active travel (walking, running, wheeling and cycling) welfare facilities. The requirement will be identified on a case-by-case basis during pre-application discussions with Oxfordshire County Council. Active travel welfare facilities include (list is not exhaustive) the following:
- a) lockers;
    - i) Device charging can be supplied within lockers to allow e-bike batteries and bike lights to be charged securely.
    - ii) When a drying room is not provided, lockers can be heated/well-ventilated to allow wet equipment to dry.
  - b) changing rooms;
  - c) showers; and
  - d) drying room.

## Policy IN6 - Deliveries and freight

### What will this policy do?

The policy sets out requirements for large vehicle management and strategies to reduce large vehicle road miles through supporting the consolidation of goods and transfer to rail freight. It ensures development is designed to support deliveries transported by cargo bikes. The policy also supports provision of service facilities to ensure long distance freight drivers are suitably catered for.

### Why is this policy needed?

The policy is needed to ensure that developments are designed to accommodate well thought through servicing arrangements, where all types of delivery vehicles are well catered for and materials can be transferred into / out of the development with relative ease.

The policy will identify when there is a need for Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), as well as Delivery and Servicing Plan (DSP). These planning application documents ensure that the transport impact of a development, both during construction and during ongoing operation, is considered and managed appropriately. The CTMP and DSP can provide targets and restrictions to the times and routes used by large vehicles in order to help limit the impact on congestion, as well as sensitive roads and receptors. Sensitive receptors include; schools, residential dwellings, and hospitals. For example a DSP may limit deliveries during school pick-up and drop-off to prevent increased demand on the highway at this time and prevent conflict between HGVs and vulnerable road users.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

A policy that considers:

- requirements for deliveries by cargo bike
- large vehicle management where sensitive receptors and highway issues are known
- the location of development with high demands for large vehicles

- the council's support for rail freight
- provision of roadside service facilities in accordance with Department for Transport requirements.

### **Why we prefer Option A**

This policy is preferred because it considers a range of design principles for developments to support ongoing operation. It considers when large vehicle management is necessary, through CTMPs and DSPs. It also highlights the council's support for rail freight, delivery consolidation, and provision of suitable service facilities to support the Strategic Road Network.

### **Option B – Alternative**

A policy which refers to Oxfordshire County Council's guidance on freight management only. There are a number of design considerations contained within this policy that may be missed by developers.

### **Option C – Alternative**

No policy. This would not be supported because good design for waste collection and deliveries, as well as freight management are fundamental to the ongoing operation of new development. Additionally, planning for service facilities is a requirement for the districts to support the strategic road networks that run through South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy IN6 – Deliveries and freight**

- 1) Access and loading arrangements suitable for cargo bikes should be considered for all developments (for current and future operations).
- 2) Suitable vehicle turning and circulation for a large refuse vehicle and emergency services must be provided and demonstrated through swept path analysis for major developments, and this will also be required for minor developments subject to highway access arrangements.
- 3) Developments that require dedicated loading and unloading facilities (such as supermarkets and retail shops) must be provided with convenient access arrangements, such as dropped kerbs in suitable locations for transfer of goods on trollies.
- 4) Design of new development, particularly employment sites and any related transport infrastructure, needs to consider ongoing freight/delivery so that these can function well, with appropriate freight access to and from the strategic transport network without adverse impacts on local communities, other road users and the environment.
- 5) Development that includes industrial or commercial elements that are estimated to generate freight movements should be assessed in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's Transport for New Developments: Transport Assessments and Travel Plans document. Suitable highway and environmental mitigations must be provided. Wherever possible, such development should be located on or near the strategic road network, major road network, or other suitable A roads.
- 6) Major development identified by the Highways Authority as being located by sensitive receptors and/or via a public highway that is unsuitable for large vehicle traffic, must provide a Construction Traffic Management Plan to support the management of construction vehicles, and a Delivery and Servicing Management Plan to support ongoing servicing by larger vehicles for the life of the development.

- 7) Opportunities to achieve and improve rail freight capability in the districts in appropriate locations to de-carbonise the delivery network and reduce air pollution will be supported, particularly where the transfer of goods is between rail and electric vehicles or cargo bikes.
- 8) Provision of roadside services including refilling, fast electric charging and other sustainable fuelling (such as hydrogen), car and lorry parking, toilets, refreshments and picnic areas will be supported in appropriate locations. The district councils will work with National Highways and Oxfordshire County Council to support provision of additional roadside facilities at Milton Interchange, the location of which is shown on the policies map.

## **Policy IN7 - South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) safeguarding**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will safeguard land for a reservoir in the Upper Thames catchment, south-west of Abingdon.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 safeguarded land for the possible future provision of a South East Strategic Reservoir Option within the Vale between the villages of Drayton, East Hanney and Steventon. The purpose of the safeguarding is to discourage development from taking place within the identified area, to keep it available for the reservoir development, should it come forward. The policy also provides a framework for any future proposal to be considered against.

Since the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 was adopted, Thames Water has advanced plans for the reservoir with support from Affinity Water.

Vale of White Horse District Council passed a motion in 2021 that reaffirmed the council's opposition to the proposed reservoir. Through consultations on regional water resources planning the council has advised Thames Water and Water Resources South East that we oppose their plans. The council has also queried the draft decisions of the regulatory body, the Regulators' Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development (RAPID). South Oxfordshire District Council has also raised concerns regarding the proposed reservoir development and its potential impact on the environment.

If the proposed reservoir comes forward it will be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). The planning process for NSIPs means that Thames Water can seek planning permission for the reservoir from the government, not the local planning authority. This is through the submission of a development consent order. More information about NSIPs and the planning process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website: [infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/](https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/)

Thames Water has indicated that they intend to submit the application for a development consent order in 2026.

Whilst the NSIP process is run by the Planning Inspectorate, the local planning authority still has a key role providing information and advice about impacts. The councils consider it is important that the new Joint Local Plan includes a policy as this is an opportunity to set out the priorities the councils believe must be addressed for any reservoir should it gain approval through the NSIP process. For example, the previous Vale of White Horse Local Plan policies for the reservoir included provision for a new route of the Wilts and Berks Canal and an area identified by the Environment Agency as important for a flood alleviation scheme to the west of Abingdon and these are retained.

Thames Water has asked us to retain the safeguarded area as in the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2. We will continue dialogue with Thames Water as this plan is prepared and will reduce the area proposed for safeguarding if appropriate. Also, if it becomes apparent through the water resources planning process that the reservoir is not needed, and is removed from the water resources plans, the safeguarding will be removed from future drafts of the plan.

More information about the government requirements of DCO applicants for new reservoirs is set out in the government's National Policy Statement:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1150075/E02879931\\_National\\_Policy\\_Statement\\_for\\_Water\\_Resources.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1150075/E02879931_National_Policy_Statement_for_Water_Resources.pdf)

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A – Preferred

Have a policy that safeguards land for the reservoir and provides criteria for the reservoir and its ancillary facilities, including a pumping station, that address the design, construction, infrastructure, environment, additional measures to reduce carbon emissions and recreation in the following ways:

#### Design

- information that reassures the public that it will be safe and secure. For example, addressing concerns about the potential for the reservoir to be breached
- demonstrates how the proposals will reduce the carbon emissions resulting from construction of the reservoir
- use the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LIVA) process

#### Construction

- mitigation for the impact of construction on local people, the environment and roads, planning for the workforce through an Employment and Skills Plan and also how the workforce will be accommodated and access the site
- provide construction management plan
- provide an employment and skills plan

#### Infrastructure

- provision of a flood alleviation scheme for Abingdon

- provision of new routes for the Hanney to Steventon road, access roads, footpaths and cycle routes on site, and improvements to junctions
- provide new rail infrastructure
- construct the replacement section of the Wilts and Berks Canal
- a travel plan for the site and associated measures to support access to the reservoir by active travel and sustainable transport during construction and when operational
- adequate cycle and car parking provision (to include EV charging) during construction and when operational

### **Environment**

- mitigation for any adverse effects identified through the environmental impact assessment. No increased flood risk to surrounding areas
- maximise the creation of wildlife habitats with appropriate biodiversity net gain within the site
- minimise any adverse impact on the amenity of local residents and business from noise, vibration, artificial lighting, dust and fumes
- undertake an archaeology assessment
- undertake a heritage assessment

### **Additional measures to reduce carbon emissions**

- be built to net zero operational carbon standards once completed
- replacement of the solar farm on the site
- include measures to generate renewable energy from the operation of the development when complete

### **Recreation**

- detailed plans for recreational use of the reservoir
- provision of a jetty to support water sports
- provision of an education and visitor centre



The policy will include text explaining that the proposed development is an NSIP and will be decided by the government. It will also state that it no longer applies in the event that the reservoir proposal is withdrawn from the Water Resources South East regional plan and the water companies' Water Resources Management Plans.

### Why we prefer Option A

It is intended to carry over this safeguarding policy from the previous Vale Local Plan 2031 (Parts 1 & 2). The inclusion of a safeguarding policy ensures that no development will take place in this area that will later need to be removed to make way for the proposed reservoir.

If it comes forward, the proposed reservoir would be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). This means that an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) would be considered by the Planning Inspectorate, not the Local Planning Authority. The inclusion of criteria within an emerging plan will provide an updated policy framework for any future proposal to be considered against.

Including a safeguarding policy is not evidence that the proposal for the reservoir is supported by either council. Neither council supports the reservoir proposals and the inclusion of this policy should not be viewed as support for the reservoir.

### Option B – Alternative

The plan could be silent on the reservoir and not include a policy until a decision is made on the Thames Water WRMP24 (Water Resources Management Plan).

This is not recommended as the removal of the safeguarding policy could result in development coming forward within the safeguarding area that may then later need to be removed to make way for the reservoir.

Also not including the policy would mean that the councils miss the opportunity to set out our expectations from the applicant in respect of mitigation and benefits and to consult our local communities on these.

Without a replacement for the existing Vale of White Horse Local Plan safeguarding policy, the Planning Inspector at any future examination of a development consent order may only have the adopted Local Plan policy to rely upon.

### **Option C – Alternative**

Thames Water has advised that they will likely prepare the Development Consent Order application to construct the reservoir and the proposal is included in the Thames Water and Affinity Water draft Water Resource Management Plans and the regional draft Water Resources South East Plan. An alternative policy would be to make a site allocation for the reservoir.

However, this major construction project will have a significant carbon footprint, particularly in its construction and will disrupt local communities and damage the environment. Both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have made a commitment to address the climate emergency, including through the policies of the Joint Local Plan. The councils have responded to the draft water resources plans indicating that there is no need for a reservoir if other options for water supply are prioritised. For these reasons, it is not considered appropriate to allocate the site in the emerging plan as the proposed reservoir is not currently supported by either council.

### **Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)**

#### **Policy IN7 – South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) safeguarding**

- 1) Land is safeguarded for a reservoir and ancillary works, as shown on the policies map, between the settlements of Drayton, East Hanney and Steventon, unless it is not included in the final version of Thames Water's Water Resources Management Plan 2024 (if it is not included in WRMP24 it will be removed). Development that might prejudice the implementation of a new reservoir on the safeguarded area will be refused.

- 2) The proposed reservoir, if the government approves its inclusion in the final Thames Water Resources Management Plan 2024, is expected to be advanced through a development consent order (DCO) as the proposal is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and will be decided by the Secretary of State, not the Local Planning Authority. If any development consent order for the reservoir made is refused by the Secretary of State, this safeguarding will be removed.
- 3) The Vale of White Horse District Council strongly objects to the proposed reservoir and the inclusion of this policy in the plan should not be interpreted in any way as support for the proposals.
- 4) The DCO process is established by the Planning Inspectorate involving consultation with the community, the local authority, the county council and the statutory environmental bodies and utility providers.
- 5) The government has set out in its National Policy Statement for Water Resources Infrastructure its expectations of DCO applicants. The councils consider that the applicant must:

### **Design**

- a) ensure that structural design of the reservoir is safe and explain how the design has taken on board the recommendations of the Health and Safety Executive and Environment Agency;
- b) produce and implement a carbon mitigation strategy which focuses primarily on reducing the operational and embodied carbon emissions of the reservoir, including throughout the construction phase in line with the target for the Vale of White Horse to be a carbon neutral district by 2045;
- c) use the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LIVA) process to ensure the siting, scale, design and mitigation of the reservoir and ancillary works minimises the landscape and visual impact;

### **Construction**

- d) mitigate the impact of construction on local people, the environment (i.e. local air quality, dust, artificial lighting, noise and vibration) and roads in accordance with Policy CE9 – air quality, Policy 10 – pollution sources and receptors] and Policy IN6 – deliveries and freight;
- e) provide a construction management plan;

- f) provide an Employment and Skills Plan and a plan setting out how the workforces will be accommodated, including how they will access the site;

#### **Infrastructure**

- g) provide a flood alleviation scheme for Abingdon in consultation with the Environment Agency;
- h) include a new route for the diverted Hanney to Steventon road, to include provision for an off-road cycle path and improved connectivity to public rights of way;
- i) provide new rail infrastructure to minimise construction traffic on the highway network by including measures to ensure construction materials reach the site via new rail sidings, the design of which should seek to facilitate a permanent rail station at Wantage and Grove;
- j) construct a replacement for the section of the Wilts and Berks Canal affected by the reservoir. The route of the canal is set out in Policy IN4 – Wilts & Berks Canal Safeguarding;
- k) include a travel plan and associated measures to enable access to the site by active travel and sustainable transport means, including links to the towns of Didcot, Wantage and Grove and their associated rail stations and with surrounding villages including Drayton, East Hanney and Steventon;
- l) provide cycle and car parking, including EV charging during and post construction;

#### **Environment**

- m) include measures to avoid or mitigate any other significant adverse effects identified through the environmental impact assessment of the proposal, including on the local and wider highway networks and on surface water and fluvial flooding;
- n) maximise the creation of wildlife habitats and biodiversity, including biodiversity net gain in line with Policy NH1 – Nature Recovery;
- o) minimise any adverse impact from the operations of the reservoir on the amenity of local residents and businesses from noise, vibration, artificial lighting, dust and fumes;
- p) an archaeological assessment, informed by a full geophysical survey and archaeological trenched evaluation of the site, will need to be submitted with any application for consent to fully identify any heritage assets and assess their significance, in line with Policy NH11 - Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments. Following this assessment, a scheme of appropriate mitigation should be established, to include the physical preservation of significant archaeological features and their setting where appropriate;
- q) undertake a heritage assessment that considers the effects of the proposed development on heritage assets and the historic environment with reference to Policy NH8 – The Historic Environment;

### **Measures to reduce carbon emissions**

- r) be built to net zero operational carbon standards;
- s) replace the solar farm lost as a result of the proposed development either within the site or a suitable alternative location in the district prior to the commencement of development;
- t) include measures to maximise the generation of renewable energy from the development once operational in addition to the replacement solar farm. This should include the incorporation of hydropower turbines;

### **Recreation**

- u) enable sport and recreational use of the reservoir consistent with the landscape and biodiversity values of the proposal and having regard to the traffic impacts of such uses;
- v) include proposals for a jetty to support water sports uses on the reservoir, cycle and walking trails around the reservoir and interpretation boards for visitors; and
- w) provide an education and visitor centre to support recreational use of the site and support access to nature.

## **Policy IN8 - Digital connectivity**

### **What will this policy do?**

This policy will set out requirements on developments for the provision of broadband, mobile phone infrastructure and infrastructure to accommodate future advancements in digital technology.

### **Why is this policy needed?**

As explained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), high quality, reliable and advanced communications infrastructure is essential for social wellbeing and economic growth. Chapter 10 of the NPPF “Supporting high quality communications” further demonstrates the step-change that digital communications are expected to take over time. It sets out that planning policies should:

- support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections
- set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time;
- prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution)

In addition to the requirements above, Paragraph 121 of the NPPF specifies that “Applications for electronic communications development (including applications for prior approval under the General Permitted Development Order) should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development”.

Oxfordshire County Council’s Local Transport and Connectivity Plan explains how digital connectivity can help to reduce the need to travel by providing people with the ability to work, shop and access services from home. The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) defines ‘Digital connectivity’ as the collective term for full fibre broadband connectivity, 4G and 5G mobile data connectivity. It also covers potential next generation technology such as 6G mobile data connectivity. Policy 24 of the LTCP states that Oxfordshire County Council will support delivery of district council policies on fibre broadband provision as set out in relevant local plans. In addition, Policy 25 of the LTCP sets out that Oxfordshire County Council will work with district councils to promote proposals for the upgrading of existing or siting of new mobile infrastructure to provide faster, more reliable and more comprehensive coverage of both 4G and 5G mobile communications and encourage new developments to integrate and support 5G infrastructure, in line with the Innovation Framework.

Oxfordshire County Council is also leading on The Digital Infrastructure Programme for Oxfordshire<sup>65</sup>. Since 2014, the programme has taken availability of superfast broadband in homes and businesses in Oxfordshire from 69% to over 98%. As the volume of internet and mobile data traffic continues to grow each year, increasingly the programme is looking towards the next generations of digital technology. The scope of the digital infrastructure programme now includes a focus on ‘full-fibre’ broadband connectivity, mobile coverage (including 5G), and the wider adoption of smart-enabled infrastructure in local planning. Our proposed policy aims to support this digital rollout using the tools we can as local planning authority.

This policy also provides an opportunity to facilitate future advancements in digital technology and encourages consideration of future-proofing developments. For example, encouraging fibre connections to street furniture could enable a whole host of services such as charging points for phones, public wi-fi and information screens. It could also enable collection of data to improve public services for example use of public facilities, pedestrian traffic or even monitoring when bins are full.

### Proposed options (with preferred and alternatives)

#### Option A - Preferred

Have a policy that captures requirements and encourages improvements in digital connectivity. This policy will:

- show support for more reliable and more comprehensive coverage and access to electronic communications
- ensure appropriate infrastructure is provided during development, sufficient to enable all properties to be connected to full fibre broadband
- encourage fibre connections that enable connection to street furniture to facilitate future advancements in digital technology including smart street furniture
- ensure that there is sufficient mobile communications coverage in proposed developments
- ensure developments don't have an adverse impact on existing digital infrastructure
- set out criteria for telecommunications installations.

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<sup>65</sup> [digitalinfrastructureoxfordshire.co.uk](https://digitalinfrastructureoxfordshire.co.uk)

## Why we prefer Option A

National policy sets out that planning policies should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, set out how high-quality digital infrastructure is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time, and prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments. Option A would allow us to meet this requirement and would go further than the existing policies in the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse local plans to encourage advancements in digital connectivity.

### **Option B - Alternative**

Continuing the current policy approach by combining policies from the existing South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse local plans. This approach would include less detailed requirements than Option A and could be less effective in promoting proposals that would support an increasing reliance on digital infrastructure.

### **Option C – Alternative**

No policy. This is not the preferred approach due to the importance of provision of digital infrastructure for social well-being, economic growth, and other co-benefits such as the reduction of carbon emissions.

## Proposed draft policy (for the preferred option)

### **Policy IN8 - Digital connectivity**

- 1) The council will work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to promote faster, more reliable and more comprehensive coverage of electronic communications and allow businesses and residents to access services and information more effectively, thereby helping to reduce the need to travel.



- 2) All proposals for new development must ensure appropriate infrastructure is provided during development, sufficient to enable all properties to be connected to full fibre broadband without any post-development works. Applicants will also be encouraged to demonstrate that there is flexibility in the ducting to future-proof additional connectivity.
- 3) Where relevant, proposals will be encouraged to demonstrate that fibre connections are easily accessible to enable connection to street furniture to facilitate future advancements in digital technology.
- 4) All residential developments and all new employment generating development should meet expected demand for mobile connectivity generated by the development and take appropriate measures to avoid reducing mobile connectivity in surrounding areas. This is to ensure that there is sufficient coverage.
- 5) Adverse impacts on the successful functioning of existing digital infrastructure should be avoided. Where this is not possible, appropriate mitigation must be provided.

#### **Telecommunications Installations**

- 6) 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.
- 7) Proposals for telecommunications development will be permitted provided that the following criteria are met:
  - a) the siting and appearance of the proposed apparatus and associated structures should 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;
  - b) 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;

- c) if proposing a new mast, it should be demonstrated that the applicant has fully explored the possibility of erecting apparatus on existing buildings, masts or other structures; and
  - d) 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.
- 8) 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.

## 14. Get Involved and Next Steps

Your views on this document will help to shape the draft Joint Local Plan for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. We're giving you two ways to respond to this consultation to make it as easy as possible for you to give us your thoughts.

We will review all the comments we receive and will summarise the main issues in a consultation statement.



We want to hear your views at each stage of preparation. In Autumn 2024, we expect to publish a full draft Joint Local Plan for consultation. This is also known as a 'pre-submission' document as it is the last stage of public engagement before the Plan is submitted to a Government Planning Inspector for independent examination. Rather than seeking views on options as this consultation has done, it will instead provide an opportunity to comment on the draft content of the Joint Local Plan prior to its submission to government.

We have provided two easy ways you can respond to the consultation:

- If you want to give us your thoughts on particular policy topics or draft planning policies, you can give your detailed feedback in the full online survey.
- If you would rather review a short summary of what's in the Joint Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation we also offer the option to review our 'Joint Local Plan in a Nutshell'. You can use this shorter survey to provide answers to quickfire questions.

You can answer as many or as few questions as you like on each survey. Whichever you choose, we're really grateful for your time, your comments will help shape the local plan.

If you would like to know more about the timetable for preparing the Joint Local Plan and when we will be consulting you again, please take a look at our Local Development Scheme on our websites:

Joint Local Development Scheme – South Oxfordshire: [www.southoxon.gov.uk/local-development-scheme/](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/local-development-scheme/)

Joint Local Development Scheme – Vale of White Horse: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/local-development-scheme/](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/local-development-scheme/)

You can also look out for news of our next consultation on the Joint Local Plan webpages:

South Oxfordshire: [www.southoxon.gov.uk/jointlocalplan](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/jointlocalplan)

Vale of White Horse: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/jointlocalplan](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/jointlocalplan)

If you're not already on our consultation database and want to be, please follow this link to register and we'll keep you up to date with when our next consultation is:

[www.southandvale.gov.uk/sign-up](http://www.southandvale.gov.uk/sign-up)

If you have any questions on the consultation, please email the planning policy team on [planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk) or call 01235 422600.

If you have any questions on the comment form or require any of the consultation material in an alternative format (for example large print, Braille, audio, email, Easy Read and alternative languages) please email [jointheconversation@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:jointheconversation@southandvale.gov.uk) or call 01235 422425.

We are in the process of gathering evidence to support the plan. We expect to prepare assessments and evidence on the topics below. We will refine this list following your comments and further scoping work.



Air Quality Evidence



Employment Land Assessment



Green Belt Evidence



Habitats Regulations Assessment



Health Impact Assessment



Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment and Capacity Evidence



Housing Needs Evidence (such as housing mix and tenure)



Landscape and Green Infrastructure Evidence



Natural Environment Evidence



Net Zero Carbon Evidence



Open Space/Sports/Leisure Evidence



Strategic Flood Risk Assessment



Sustainability Appraisal



Town Centres and Retail Evidence



Transport Evidence



Viability



Water Cycle Study



Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

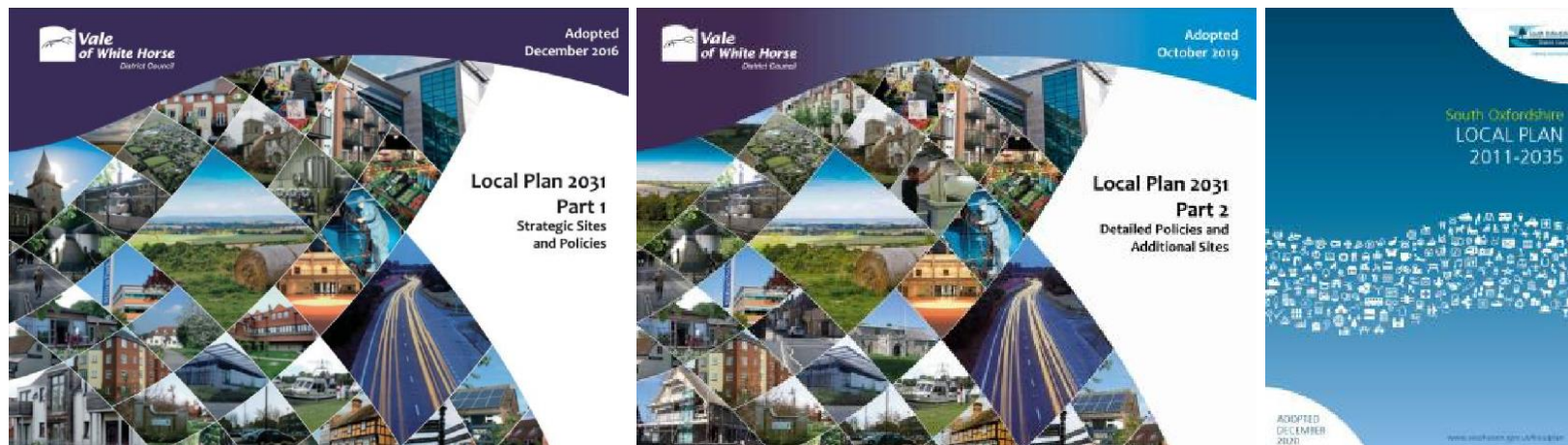
## 15. Local Plan explainer

### A new Joint Local Plan for our area

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have come together to work on a new Joint Local Plan to 2041.

The Joint Local Plan will contain policies that will help to guide planning application decisions for the districts.

Once adopted, the Joint Local Plan will replace the current South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031, Parts 1 and 2.



### Existing planning documents

Once the new Joint Local Plan is adopted, it will replace the current Local Plans for South Oxfordshire (Local Plan 2035) and Vale of White Horse (Local Plan 2031: Parts 1 and 2). While we are preparing the new Joint Local Plan, nearly all of the existing policies and site allocations within these current documents remain relevant and will continue to be used to determine planning applications until replaced.

Vale of White Horse District Council undertook a review of the Local Plan Part 1, before it became 5 years old – that review is available here: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/12/Local-Plan-Part-1-Review-Dec-2021..pdf](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/12/Local-Plan-Part-1-Review-Dec-2021..pdf)

Neighbourhood planning will remain in place and used when determining planning applications. They should be reviewed to ensure conformity with the Joint Local Plan when it is adopted.

Existing Supplementary Planning Documents will also remain in place and be used to support the determination of planning applications, unless they are inconsistent with the new policies of the Joint Local Plan.

The diagram below shows what our Future Development Plan will look like, you can find out more in the Local Development Scheme: [www.southoxon.gov.uk/local-development-scheme/](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/local-development-scheme/)

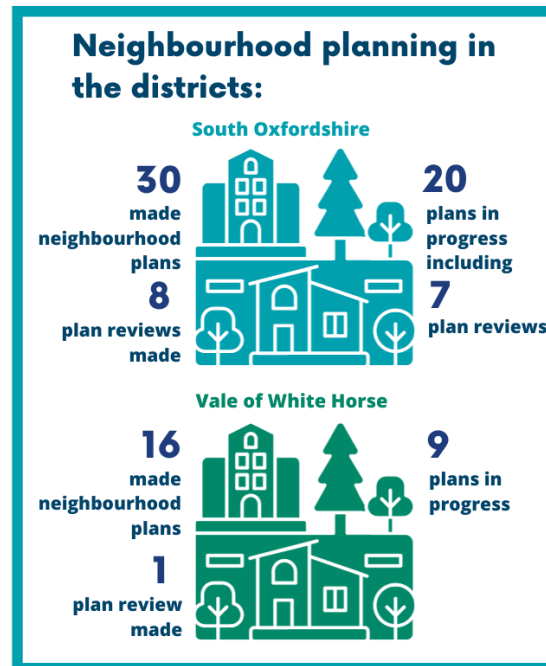


## Oxfordshire Strategic Vision

All the Councils in Oxfordshire (including South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse) have signed up to the Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire, which sets out where the county needs to be in 2050. Achieving this will require bold, collaborative and inclusive thinking, with decisions and actions that deliver real and lasting change in ways that build resilience and enhance our shared prospects for the future. It is already influencing the direction of both the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and our Joint Local Plan vision.

Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire: [futureoxfordshirepartnership.org/projects/oxfordshire-strategic-vision/](http://futureoxfordshirepartnership.org/projects/oxfordshire-strategic-vision/)

## Neighbourhood Plan Context



*If you find this, or any of our infographics, difficult to read, please email [planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk) and we will provide a text version.*



Neighbourhood planning allows communities to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.

Our councils strongly advocate neighbourhood planning and offer a range of support to neighbourhood planning groups, via advice and guidance throughout plan-making and the preparation of neighbourhood plan reviews. The Joint Local Plan will set the overall context for future Neighbourhood Development Plans. Neighbourhood plans empower communities by giving them the opportunity to allocate sites for development, protect demonstrably special open spaces, identify opportunities for renewable energy schemes and nature recovery as well as develop policies to protect and enhance the character of towns and villages.

You can view the status of Neighbourhood Plans in the districts on our emerging Joint Local Plan policies map:

[jlp.southandvale.gov.uk/pages/policies-map](http://jlp.southandvale.gov.uk/pages/policies-map)

## Oxfordshire Plan 2050 update



A countywide strategic plan, known as the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, was previously being prepared by the five Oxfordshire authorities of Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council, in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council.

You may have already responded to consultations on this Plan, the latest one being an options consultation in July 2021.

The role of the Oxfordshire Plan was to set out the overall development requirement and identify broad areas for development across Oxfordshire. South and Vale would then develop detailed planning policies and site allocations at a district level in the Joint Local Plan.

Since we last consulted you, work on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 has ceased and we have transitioned to a process focused on Local Plans only. For more information, you can read a Joint statement from the leaders of South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, and West Oxfordshire District Council on our websites:

South Oxfordshire: [www.southoxon.gov.uk/uncategorised/joint-statement-from-the-leaders-of-south-oxfordshire-district-council-vale-of-white-horse-district-council-cherwell-district-council-oxford-city-council-and-west-oxfordshire-district-council/](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/uncategorised/joint-statement-from-the-leaders-of-south-oxfordshire-district-council-vale-of-white-horse-district-council-cherwell-district-council-oxford-city-council-and-west-oxfordshire-district-council/)

Vale of White Horse: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/uncategorised/joint-statement-from-the-leaders-of-south-oxfordshire-district-council-vale-of-white-horse-district-council-cherwell-district-council-oxford-city-council-and-west-oxfordshire-district-council/>

### **The Local Plan process**

Local Plan preparation must follow a process as set out by Government and new policies must be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework. Plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area and the framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities, being based on robust evidence.

Alongside the Joint Local Plan, we have prepared a 'Sustainability Appraisal' (SA) and a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' (HRA). These documents make sure the Joint Local Plan considers the relevant environmental, social, and economic issues and minimises any potential negative impacts. The progress on these documents and our evidence base can be found at:

### **Joint Local Plan websites:**

South Oxfordshire: [www.southoxon.gov.uk/jointlocalplan](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/jointlocalplan)

Vale of White Horse: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/jointlocalplan](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/jointlocalplan)

While evidence gathering takes place, it is important we understand people's views now on our policy options, to help shape our approach before we finalise a draft plan. We hope to share our final draft plan with you in 2024.

We will consider your feedback on this consultation and finalise our plan content, and will then give you the opportunity to comment on the final draft.

An independent planning inspector will then consider your final comments and assess the final draft version of the Joint Local Plan to ensure it meets legal requirements and by using the 'four tests of soundness' - whether it has been positively prepared, is justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy.

Here are some useful resources with more information about Local Plan processes:

- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG): [www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance)
- PAS Guidance on Local Plans: [www.local.gov.uk/pas/welcome-plan-making-support](http://www.local.gov.uk/pas/welcome-plan-making-support)
- PINS Local Plan Examination Guidance: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/examining-local-plans-procedural-practice](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examining-local-plans-procedural-practice)
- National Planning Policy Framework: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2)

## Appendix 1. Glossary

### **Active Travel**

A mode of travel that is physically active; for example walking, wheeling (all types of mobility aids and wheelchairs), and non-motorised cycling and scooting.

### **Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)**

Defined geographical areas where air pollution levels are, or are likely to, exceed national air quality objectives at relevant locations (where the public may be exposed to harmful air pollution over a period of time e.g. residential homes, schools etc.).

### **Albedo**

The ability of surfaces to reflect sunlight (heat from the sun). The lower the albedo, the more energy from the sun is absorbed, which can contribute to localised warming. Dark surfaces, such as tarmac pavements, have a lower albedo which leads to higher uptake of energy, and therefore warming. Light surfaces have a higher albedo, meaning they reflect more light back into space and therefore tend to stay cooler.

### **Amenities or Local Amenities**

Facilities that serve the day-to-day needs of people living in an area. This could be for example a supermarket, pharmacy or a post office.

### **Amenity**

In planning terms, amenity is often used to refer to the quality or character of an area and elements that contribute to the overall enjoyment of an area.

### **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**

On 22 November 2023 all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales were renamed National Landscapes. Accordingly, the Joint Local Plan refers to The Chilterns National Landscape (formerly The Chilterns AONB) and North Wessex Downs National Landscape (formerly North Wessex Downs AONB).

### **Backland development**

Development to the rear of existing buildings, usually with no street frontage of its own.

### **Biodiversity net gain**

An approach to development, and/or land management, that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand.

### **BREEAM**

BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) is a sustainability assessment method that sets standards for the environmental performance of buildings.

## **Building Regulations Part L**

Building regulations section that sets basic legal requirements for the energy performance of new and existing buildings.

## **Building Regulations Part O**

Building regulations section that sets standards for reducing overheating risk in new residential buildings. See also CIBSE TM59/TM52.

## **Built-up area**

The existing built-up area of a settlement is defined as a group of existing, permanent buildings, including their immediate surroundings (e.g. gardens) and open space fully surrounded by built-up areas. In Abingdon, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage the built-up area is defined by a settlement boundary on the Adopted Policies map. Some Neighbourhood Plans have also defined their built-up area within a settlement boundary.

## **C1 hotels**

Class C1, as defined by the Use Class Order 1987 (as amended), refers to hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant element of care is provided.

## **C2 residential institutions**

Class C2, as defined by the Use Class Order 1987 (as amended), refers to institutional residential accommodation including:

- A hospital or nursing home

- A residential school, college, or training centre (such as student accommodation)

There is a subset of Use Class C2; C2A, which covers secure residential institutions such as prisons, young offenders institutes, detention centres, secure hospitals, and military barracks.

## **C3 dwellinghouses**

Class C3 dwelling, as defined by the Use Class Order 1987 (as amended), is the standard residential accommodation that makes up most of our housing stock. It includes houses, flats, and other types of buildings where they are occupied by:

- A single household (made up of a single person or group of people)
- Not more than 6 residents living together as a single household when care is provided for residents, or
- Not more than 6 residents living together as a single household where no care is provided to residents (other than a use as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO, Use Class C4))

## **Car Club**

An arrangement where members can access a car on a short-term rental basis. They are normally charged by the hour or day. Car club vehicles typically have a dedicated on-street parking bay for which only the car club vehicle can park.

## **Car Sharing**

Also known as lift-sharing, ride-sharing and car-pooling, this refers to when two or more people share a car journey. The key benefits of car sharing are to reduce fuel costs, vehicle emissions and destination parking demand.

## **Carbon budget**

A carbon budget places a restriction on the total amount of greenhouse gases a place or organisation can emit over a certain time period.

## **Carbon Emissions**

Short for 'carbon dioxide emissions' but can also include several other gases with a climate changing effect that are emitted into the atmosphere from human activities.

## **Carbon neutral**

Balancing of the carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere with the amount absorbed or removed from the atmosphere.

## **Carbon sequestration**

Removal and storage of carbon dioxide (or other greenhouse gases) so that it cannot perform its harmful climate-changing role in the atmosphere, e.g., through trees, plants, soil, and the ocean, but it may be achieved by technologies in future.

## **Carbon sinks**

A carbon sink is a living system that absorbs more carbon from the atmosphere than it releases – for example, trees, other plants, the ocean and soil.

## **CIBSE TM59/TM52**

Design methodology for the assessment of overheating risk in buildings. TM59 specifically targets overheating in homes, whilst TM52 can be applied to any type of building. See also Building Regulations Part O.

## **Circular economy**

In a circular economy, every item or material is useful and valuable to another part of the economy. There are two main ways to create a circular economy. Firstly, design products for maximum value/life. Secondly, set up systems to deal with products in a way which retain maximum value, preventing products from being disposed of or downcycled.

## **Clean technologies**

Technology which avoids environmental damage at the source through use of materials, processes, or practices to eliminate or reduce the creation of pollutants or wastes.

## **Cohousing**

A type of residential accommodation where residents share facilities and living spaces (such as kitchens, utility rooms, living rooms, or guest accommodation).

### **Community facilities**

Social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that the community needs such as schools, local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

### **Community-led housing**

Projects led by community groups to help ensure that new homes are built and empty homes and buildings can be brought back into use to meet local housing needs. Projects are usually developed by or in partnership with a community organisation. The resulting developments are expected to provide a benefit to the community, which is clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity.

### **Conservation Area**

An area designated by the Local Planning Authority under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

### **Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

A document which identifies the special architectural or historic interest of a Conservation Area.

### **Cooling Hierarchy**

An established method of ensuring developments are cooled in the most sustainable and energy efficient manner possible.

### **Cultural heritage**

Ways of living or traditions developed in an area and passed on from generation to generation, and also the books, poems, music and art made in or about a local area.

### **Decide and Provide (also Vision and Validate)**

The new approach to Transport Planning (see Predict and Provide for previous approach) where high levels of walking, cycling, and public transport use are “decided” upon by the district and county council and relevant stakeholders, and the associated infrastructure is then “provided” to support that level of travel.

### **Demand-side response (DSR)**

Increasing or reducing electricity demand for a period of time in response to a signal from the electrical grid (e.g. energy price change, grid availability).

### **Density**

The number of dwellings per hectare.

### **Development Plan**

A document setting out the local planning authority’s policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the area. This includes adopted Local Plans, neighbourhood plans, and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### **Ducting**

In the context of broadband, ducting refers to the pipes through which underground cables are usually run.

### **Eco-tourism**

Refers to forms of tourism in which the main motivation is the observation, learning and appreciation of nature. Eco-tourism seeks to minimise negative impacts upon the natural and socio-cultural environment, and support maintenance of natural areas by generating economic benefits and employment opportunities for local communities.

### **Electric vehicle charging points**

Connect an electric vehicle (EV) to a source of electricity, to recharge electric cars and plug-in hybrids.

### **Embodied carbon**

Carbon that was emitted during the production, transport and assembly of a building, infrastructure, vehicle or other product, before the product is in use. As opposed to 'operational carbon' which is emitted due to energy use when operating the building/infrastructure/vehicle/other product.

### **Enabling development**

Development that is not in compliance with local and/or national planning policies, so would not normally be given planning permission, but it is permitted on the grounds that it would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset.

### **Energy offsetting**

Requires the developer to offset any shortfall in on-site renewable energy capacity needed to achieve an on-site zero energy balance.

### **Energy Storage**

The capture of energy produced at one time for use at a later time. Energy storage involves converting energy from forms that are difficult to store to more conveniently or economically storable forms. A device that stores energy is generally called an accumulator or battery.

### **Energy Use Intensity (EUI)**

A measure of how much energy a building uses per square metre of floor space, including both unregulated and regulated energy. Expressed in kilowatt-hours per square metre of floor space per year.

### **Fabric efficiency**

The measure of efficiency and performance of the components and materials that make up a building's fabric.

### **Fabric First approach**

An approach to building design that involves maximising the energy efficiency and performance of components and materials that make up the building fabric itself, before considering the use of mechanical or electrical building services systems. This can help reduce capital and



operational costs, improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

### **Flood risk areas**

Flood Risk Areas identify locations where there is a significant flood risk.

#### **Flood Zone 1**

Land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding. This is the zone at the lowest risk of flooding.

#### **Flood Zone 2**

Land having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding; or land having between a 1 in 200 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of sea flooding.

#### **Flood Zone 3**

Flood zone 3 is divided into two sections: 3a and 3b, but is shown as one zone on flood zone maps. This is the zone at the highest flood risk. Flood zone 3a is: Land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding; or Land having a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of sea flooding. Flood zone 3b refers to land which either stores water from rivers or the sea during flooding, or which allows such water to flow through in periods of flood, and is also called the functional floodplain.

### **Fossil Fuels**

A term used to refer to non-renewable energy sources such as coal, coal products, natural gas, derived gas, crude oil,

petroleum products and non-renewable wastes. These fuels originate from plants and animals that existed in the geological past. They can also be made by industrial processes from other fossil fuels.

### **Fusion energy power**

A form of power generation using heat from nuclear fusion reactions to make electricity.

### **Garden Communities**

A holistically planned new or regenerated settlement which enhances the natural environment, tackles climate change and provides high quality affordable housing and locally accessible jobs in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities.

### **Green Belt**

Designated land around a town or city where land is kept permanently open and where development is comprehensively restricted to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

### **Greenfield land**

Land that has not been previously developed.

### **Greenhouse gas emissions**

Greenhouse gas emissions from human activities strengthen the greenhouse effect, causing climate change. The most well-known greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide, which comes from burning fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas. Other

greenhouse gases include methane, nitrogen dioxide, and fluorinated refrigerant gases. Often collectively referred to as 'carbon'.

### **Health Impact Assessment (HIA)**

A tool used to identify the health impacts of a plan or project and to develop recommendations to maximise the positive impacts and minimise the negative impacts, while maintaining a focus on addressing health inequalities.

### **Health infrastructure provision**

A collective term for primary care (GP practices, plus community pharmacists, dentists and opticians), community healthcare, acute provision and specialist provision.

### **Heritage asset**

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance worthy of consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest.

### **Heritage at Risk**

The Heritage at Risk (HAR) programme identifies those designated heritage sites that are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. The Heritage at Risk Register includes buildings, places of worship, monuments, parks and gardens, conservation areas, battlefields and wreck sites that are listed and have been assessed and found to be at risk:  
[www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/).

### **Highway Authority**

The (Local) Highway Authority in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse is Oxfordshire County Council. The County Council is responsible for managing all adopted roads in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, other than two (A34 and M40) that are managed by National Highways (the National Highway Authority).

### **House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)**

Shared houses occupied by unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom. 'Small HMO's are occupied by between three and six people and fall under use class C4. Large HMO's are occupied by 7 or more people and are classed as Sui Generis.

### **Infill**

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

### **Intensive indoor livestock**

Intensive animal farming or industrial livestock production, an approach to animal husbandry designed to maximise production, while minimising costs.

### **Irreplaceable habitat**

Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once

destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen.

### **Landscape character**

The distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the visible features of an area of land.

### **Listed Buildings**

Buildings and structures which are listed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as being of special architectural and historic interest and whose protection and maintenance are the subject of special legislation. Listed building consent is required before any works are carried out on a listed building. The National Heritage List for England (NHLE) is the official register of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites in England - listed buildings, scheduled monuments, protected wrecks, registered parks and gardens, and battlefields:

[www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/)

### **Local Green Spaces**

Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

### **Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)**

Areas of land that are especially important for their wildlife. Local Wildlife Sites are identified and selected locally using scientifically-determined criteria and surveys.

### **Low Carbon Energy**

The electricity generated from energy sources that emit significantly less greenhouse gas emissions than conventional fossil fuels.

### **Mitigation Measures**

These are things that are put in place to reduce, avoid or offset anticipated or potential adverse impact. This could be to provide a new playing field when new residential development creates a greater demand on playing fields in an area.

### **Mixture of housing tenures**

Developments which combine a range of tenure options like owner-occupier housing, shared ownership housing and rental properties (social, intermediate and private).

### **Mobility Hubs**

These are locations where people exchange between vehicles and/or between transport modes. A mobility hub could be as simple as a secure cycle locking facility next to a bus stop, allowing people to change between cycling and bus travel. Mobility hubs can also be multi-modal, with facilities for Park and Ride (exchange between car and bus), rail, and cycle parking all in one location.

### **National Highways**

Formally Highways England, National Highways is the executive non-departmental public body responsible for managing motorways and major roads in England.

### **National Landscape (formerly AONB)**

A national designation to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape. The National Landscapes in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse are the North Wessex Downs and the Chilterns.

### **Nature recovery networks**

A joined-up network of wildlife-rich places to increase and restore nature.

### **Net Zero**

The balance between the amount of greenhouse gas produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere. We reach net zero when the amount we add is no more than the amount taken away.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

### **Open Space**

The National Planning Policy Framework defines Open Space as: 'All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.' Open space can include formal sports pitches, open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks. Access to a

network of high-quality open spaces is important for health and well-being and can also deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.

### **Operational Carbon**

The emissions caused by the running of a building, mostly due to energy use.

### **Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal**

In March 2017 the Government committed to the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal to support ambitious plans to deliver 100,000 homes by 2031, supported by £215 million of funding to help deliver more affordable housing and infrastructure improvements to support development across the county.

### **Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP)**

A tool to accurately calculate a building's energy use. It is used to design buildings that seek Passivhaus certification, but can also be used without pursuing certification.

### **Performance gap**

The difference between the amount of energy a building is predicted to use during design, versus the actual amount of energy it uses. The gap can be due to poor prediction methodologies, errors in construction, and unexpected building user behaviour.

## **Predict and Provide**

An historical approach to Transport Planning (See Decide and Provide for the new approach) where existing transport characteristics for an area would be used to estimate the travel demands for a new development. This tends to result in a car-centric assessment, with increases to highway capacity for more cars being given priority, without considering the economies of scale that support travel by public transport, while travel by walking, wheeling, and cycling can also be overlooked.

## **Photovoltaics (PV)**

Solar panels that generate electricity.

## **Quietways**

Walking and cycling routes that have been identified where traffic is generally quieter.

## **Registered Battlefields**

Historic England's Register of Historic Battlefields identifies 47 important English battlefields. Its purpose is to offer them protection through the planning system, and to promote a better understanding of their significance and public enjoyment. There is one Registered Battlefield in South Oxfordshire, the site of the Battle of Chalgrove.

## **Registered Parks and Gardens**

Historic England is enabled by government to compile the 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in

England' to identify those sites which are of particular historic significance. Registration means that planning authorities must consider the impact of any proposed development on the landscapes' special character.

## **Regulated Energy or Carbon**

Carbon emissions associated with energy uses that are 'regulated' by Building Regulations Part L. This covers permanent energy uses in the building, (space heating, space cooling hot water, fixed lighting, ventilation, fans and pumps).

## **Regulation 18, 19, 22, 24 and 26**

Formal stages of Local Plan preparation, examination and adoption identified by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

## **Renewable Energy**

The energy that is collected from resources which are naturally replenished on a human timescale, such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides, waves, and geothermal heat.

## **Replacement Dwellings**

The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

## **Safeguard**

A measure taken in a local plan to protect land from development so that it is available for a future project. See also 'Transport Safeguarding'.

## **Scheduled Monuments**

Scheduling is the selection of nationally important archaeological sites. Scheduled monuments are not always ancient, or visible above ground.

## **Self and custom build housing**

Housing built by groups or individuals for their own use. Those groups or individuals must have primary input into the homes final design and layout.

- Self-build is where a person directly organises the design and construction process of their own home, which can include building the home themselves or employing someone to build the home for them
- A custom-build home is where a person is working with a developer, who takes on more responsibility e.g. finding land to build on, constructing the home and arranging finance

## **Sequestration**

Removal and storage of carbon dioxide (or other greenhouse gases) so that it cannot perform its harmful climate-changing role in the atmosphere. Currently achieved by trees, plants and soil for example, but may be achieved by technologies in future.

## **Site allocation**

A site that is earmarked in a local plan for a particular type of development or use, such as housing, employment and leisure.

## **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

Protected areas of nature conservation and scientific value identified by Natural England as being of national (and sometimes international) importance.

## **Smart Energy Systems**

Systems with some form of intelligent controls which allow a system operation to be altered to provide improved operation in variable grid supply conditions. For example, a building energy management system can be used to charge a hot water cylinder when the grid wholesale electricity price is low, as grid prices vary in half hour intervals.

## **Smart Street Furniture**

Street furniture refers to a variety of objects or features that are present in public spaces, for example benches, information boards and bins. Smart street furniture is a term used for these objects when they have additional digital functionality and/or connectivity.

## **Space Heat Demand**

The amount of energy needed to heat a building to a comfortable temperature. Expressed in kilowatt-hours per square metre of floor space per year.

### **Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**

An area designated to protect the habitats of those threatened species of wildlife that are considered to be most in need of conservation at a European level. Relevant UK legislation is the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

### **Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP)**

The national calculation method for residential buildings' energy usage and carbon emissions, used to satisfy building regulations Part L.

### **Subdivision**

The subdivision of an existing residential building.

### **Sustainable resource**

A resource that can be continuously replenished, or there is an endless amount of it that can be captured or harnessed without decreasing the supply.

### **Sustainable Tourism**

Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

### **Sustainable Travel**

A mode of travel that is sensitive to the climate emergency and natural environment. Travel sustainability can range between; choosing to walk, instead of driving your car alone,

to car sharing, where you could pick up a colleague on the way to work to prevent an additional car trip. When mentioned in the context of Active Travel, we are referring to all types of shared transport such as buses and trains, as well as car sharing.

### **Transport Infrastructure**

Footpaths, footways, bridges and crossings, cycle paths, cycleways, bus stops and bus shelters, railway stations and railway lines, waterways and locks, roads and road junctions are all structures and physical components that allow travel by various modes (walking, wheeling, cycling etc).

### **Transport Safeguarding**

Safeguarding of land for transport is a statutory mechanism used in planning to prevent development from hindering the provision of future infrastructure projects. Safeguarding for transport infrastructure relates to the identification and 'saving' of land required to deliver transport infrastructure that may be required now or in the future.

### **Transport User Hierarchy**

A prioritisation hierarchy which helps plan makers choose which transport infrastructure to prioritise when there is not enough resource to facilitate all travel modes. For example, where there is a new development that has limited combined road and pavement space between buildings; priority for space will initially be given to walking and wheeling, then cycling and riding, then public transport, then motorcyclists, then shared vehicles, and finally other motorised modes.

**Travel Modes**

All the different ways one could travel. For example, walking is a travel mode, as is travelling by train.

**Unregulated energy or carbon**

Carbon associated with energy use in a building or development, but which is not covered by Building Regulations Part L. This includes plug-in appliances, lifts, escalators, external lighting, and any other use not covered by Part L.

**Vision Zero**

An aspiration to have zero road fatalities or life-changing injuries on the transport system.

**Wastewater**

Water that has been used, for example in homes or by businesses, as well as rain that falls on roofs, roads and pavements and is discharged into the sewage system.

**Waterbodies**

All bodies of water, including; surface waters (such as rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, canals and reservoirs) and groundwater (water stored underground).

**Wheeling**

Trips made by wheelchair, with pushchairs and those by scooter, rollerblades and similar forms of wheeled mobility.

**Whole Life Carbon Emissions (WLC)**

The carbon emissions resulting from the materials, construction, and the use of a building over its entire life, including its demolition and disposal.

**Zero-emission and low carbon transport**

Ways to get around which involve low or zero greenhouse gas emissions, for example walking and cycling, or vehicles which use alternative fuels.



## Appendix 2. Status of Joint Local Plan policies

### Strategic and non-strategic policies

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>66</sup> (paragraph 20) states that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places (to ensure outcomes support beauty and placemaking), and make sufficient provision for, inter alia, housing, employment, retail, leisure, infrastructure, community facilities and preservation of the natural, built and historic environment. The NPPF (Glossary) goes on to define strategic policies as policies and site allocations which address strategic priorities in line with the requirements of Section 19 (1B-E)<sup>67</sup> of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This legislation proceeds to set out that each local planning authority must identify their strategic priorities and have policies to address these in their development plan documents (taken as a whole).

The NPPF (paragraph 28) states that non-strategic policies should be used by local planning authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving, and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out other development management policies.

The Joint Local Plan comprises a combination of strategic policies (which address the priorities for the area) and non-strategic policies (which deal with more detailed matters). National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)<sup>68</sup> sets out that where a local plan contains both strategic and non-strategic policies, the non-strategic policies should be clearly distinguished from the strategic policies (please see the NPPG for further information).

Accordingly, this table sets out current policies in the Joint Local Plan and identifies whether they have strategic or non-strategic status. The strategic or non-strategic status of policies is of relevance for neighbourhood plans. Legislation requires that neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the adopted local plan for the area, and any other strategic policies that form part of the statutory development plan where relevant (please see the NPPG for further information). Furthermore, a neighbourhood plan should support the delivery of strategic policies set out in the local plan or spatial development

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<sup>66</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65829e99fc07f3000d8d4529/NPPF\\_December\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65829e99fc07f3000d8d4529/NPPF_December_2023.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/19>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making>

strategy and should shape and direct development that is outside of those strategic policies (as outlined in paragraph 13 of the NPPF).

The Neighbourhood Planning Guidance<sup>69</sup> suggests considerations for reaching a review on whether a policy is strategic:

1. whether the policy sets out an overarching direction or objective
2. whether the policy seeks to shape the broad characteristics of development
3. the scale at which the policy is intended to operate
4. whether the policy sets a framework for decisions on how competing priorities should be balanced
5. whether the policy sets a standard or other requirement that is essential to achieving the wider vision and aspirations in the local plan or spatial development strategy
6. in the case of site allocations, whether bringing the site forward is central to achieving the vision and aspirations of the local plan or spatial development strategy
7. whether the local plan or spatial development strategy identifies the policy as being strategic

These considerations have been used to assign strategic or non-strategic status to the JLP policies. If a policy meets one or more of the considerations listed above then it is considered a strategic policy in the JLP.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

No policies

## **Chapter 2: About the districts**

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<sup>69</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#:~:text=A%20neighbourhood%20plan%20should%20support,revise%20National%20Planning%20Policy%20Framework>).

No policies

### Chapter 3: Vision and objectives

No policies

### Chapter 4: Climate change and improving environmental quality

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Strategic or Non-strategic</b>
CE1	Sustainable design and construction	Strategic
CE2	Net zero carbon buildings	Strategic
CE3	Reducing embodied carbon	Strategic
CE4	Sustainable retrofitting	Strategic
CE5	Renewable energy	Strategic
CE6	Flood risk and drainage	Strategic
CE7	Water efficiency	Strategic
CE8	Water quality and wastewater infrastructure	Strategic
CE9	Air quality	Strategic
CE10	Pollution sources and receptors	Strategic
CE11	Light pollution and dark skies	Strategic

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Strategic or Non-strategic</b>
CE12	Soils and contaminated land	Strategic
CE13	Minerals safeguarding areas	Strategic

### **Chapter 5: Spatial strategy and settlements**

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Strategic or Non-strategic</b>
SP1	Spatial strategy	Strategic
SP2	Settlement hierarchy	Strategic
SP3	The strategy for Didcot Garden Town	Strategic
SP4	A strategy for Abingdon-on-Thames	Strategic
SP5	A strategy for Faringdon	Strategic
SP6	A strategy for Henley-on-Thames	Strategic
SP7	A strategy for Thame	Strategic
SP8	A strategy for Wallingford	Strategic
SP9	A strategy for Wantage	Strategic

### **Chapter 6: Housing**

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Strategic or Non-strategic</b>
HOU1	Housing requirement	Strategic
HOU2	Sources of housing supply	Strategic
HOU3	Affordable housing	Strategic
HOU4	Housing mix and size	Strategic
HOU5	Housing for older people	Strategic
HOU6	Self-build and custom-build housing	Strategic
HOU7	Affordable self and custom-build housing	Strategic
HOU8	Replacement dwellings in the countryside	Strategic
HOU9	Sub-division of houses	Strategic
HOU10	Meeting the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show-people	Strategic
HOU11	Proposals for/affecting Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show-people's Sites	Strategic
HOU12	Rural and First Homes exception sites	Strategic
HOU13	Community-led housing development	Strategic
HOU14	Build to Rent proposals	Strategic
HOU15	Houses in Multiple Occupation	Strategic
HOU16	Residential extensions and annexes	Strategic
HOU17	Rural workers' dwellings	Strategic

## Chapter 7: Jobs and tourism

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Strategic or Non-strategic</b>
JT1	Meeting employment needs	Strategic
JT2	Protecting our employment sites	Strategic
JT3	Affordable workspace	Strategic
JT4	Community Employment Plans	Strategic
JT5	Supporting the rural economy	Strategic
JT6	Supporting sustainable tourism and the visitor economy	Strategic
JT7	Overnight visitor accommodation	Strategic

## Chapter 8: Site allocations and Garden Villages

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Strategic or Non-strategic</b>
LS1	Proposals for Large Scale Major Development	Strategic
AS1	Land at Berinsfield Garden Village	Strategic
AS2	Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre	Strategic
AS3	Land South of Grenoble Road, Edge of Oxford	Strategic
AS4	Land at Northfield, Edge of Oxford	Strategic
AS5	Land at Bayswater Brook, Edge of Oxford	Strategic
AS6	Rich's Sidings and Broadway, Didcot	Strategic
AS7	Didcot Gateway, Didcot	Strategic
AS8	North West of Grove, Grove	Strategic
AS9	North West of Valley Park, Didcot	Strategic
AS10	Land at Dalton Barracks Garden Village, Shippon	Strategic
AS11	Culham Science Centre	Strategic
AS12	Harwell Campus	Strategic
AS13	Berinsfield Garden Village	Strategic
AS14	Dalton Barracks Garden Village	Strategic
AS15	Harcourt Hill Campus	Strategic

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Strategic or Non-strategic</b>
AS16	Land at Crowmarsh Gifford, Benson Lane – Site of former district council offices	Strategic

### **Chapter 9: Town centres and retail**

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Strategic or Non-strategic</b>
TCR1	Centre hierarchy	Strategic
TCR2	Strategy for town and local service centres	Strategic
TCR3	Retail floorspace provision (convenience and comparison goods)	Strategic
TCR4	Retail and service provision in villages and local centres	Strategic

### **Chapter 10: Well-designed places for our communities**

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Strategic or Non-strategic</b>
DE1	High quality design	Strategic
DE2	Local character and identity	Strategic
DE3	Delivering well-designed new development	Strategic
DE4	Optimising densities	Strategic
DE5	Neighbouring amenity	Strategic



<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Strategic or Non-strategic</b>
DE6	Outdoor amenity space	Strategic
DE7	Waste collection and recycling	Strategic

### Chapter 11: Healthy places

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Strategic or Non-strategic</b>
HP1	Healthy place shaping	Strategic
HP2	Community facilities and services	Strategic
HP3	Health care provision	Strategic
HP4	Existing open space, sport and recreation facilities	Strategic
HP5	New facilities for sport, physical activity and recreation	Strategic
HP6	Green infrastructure on new developments	Strategic
HP7	Open space on new developments	Strategic
HP8	Provision for children's play and spaces for young people	Strategic
HP9	Allotments and community food growing	Non-strategic
HP10	Watercourses	Strategic

## Chapter 12: Nature recovery, heritage and landscape

<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Strategic or Non-strategic</b>
NH1	Nature Recovery	Strategic
NH2	Biodiversity designations	Strategic
NH3	Trees & hedgerows in the landscape	Strategic
NH4	Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes	Strategic
NH5	Landscape	Strategic
NH6	Valued landscapes	Non-strategic
NH7	Tranquillity and tranquil areas	Non-strategic
NH8	The historic environment	Strategic
NH9	Listed Buildings	Strategic
NH10	Conservation Areas	Strategic
NH11	Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments	Strategic
NH12	Historic Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Landscapes	Strategic
NH13	Historic environment and climate change	Strategic

### Chapter 13: Infrastructure, transport, connectivity and communications

Policy Number	Policy Title	Strategic or Non-strategic
IN1	Infrastructure and service provision	Strategic
IN2	Sustainable transport and accessibility	Strategic
IN3	Transport infrastructure and safeguarding	Strategic
IN4	Wilts and Berks Canal safeguarding	Strategic
IN5	Parking standards	Strategic
IN6	Deliveries and freight	Strategic
IN7	South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) safeguarding	Strategic
IN8	Digital connectivity	Strategic

### Chapter 14: Get involved and next steps

No policies

### Chapter 15: Local Plan explainer

No policies

### Appendix 3. List of Adopted Policies

This appendix shows which policies from the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and Vale of White Horse 2031 (Parts 1 and 2) are proposed to be saved, deleted or replaced by policies in the Joint Local Plan.

#### Saved, replaced and deleted policies from the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035

<b>Adopted policy in South Oxfordshire District Plan 2035</b>	<b>Saved, replaced, or deleted</b>	<b>Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy</b>
STRAT1: The Overall Strategy	Replaced	SP1 - Spatial strategy
STRAT2: South Oxfordshire Housing and Employment Requirements	Replaced	HOU1 - Housing requirement JT1 - Meeting employment needs
STRAT3: Didcot Garden Town	Replaced	SP3 – The strategy for Didcot Garden Town
STRAT4: Strategic Development	Replaced	LS1 - Proposals for large scale major development
STRAT5: Residential Densities	Replaced	DE4 - Optimising densities
STRAT6: Green Belt	Replaced	SP1 - Spatial strategy
STRAT7: Land at Chalgrove Airfield	Deleted	Our review of existing allocated sites has demonstrated that this site is no longer appropriate for allocation.
STRAT8: Culham Science Centre	Replaced	AS11 - Culham Science Centre
STRAT9: Land Adjacent to Culham Science Centre	Replaced	AS2 - Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre
STRAT10: Berinsfield Garden Village	Replaced	AS13 - Berinsfield Garden Village
STRAT10i: Land at Berinsfield Garden Village	Replaced	AS1 - Land at Berinsfield Garden Village
STRAT10ii: Berinsfield Local Green Space	Replaced	AS13 - Berinsfield Garden Village

<b>Adopted policy in South Oxfordshire District Plan 2035</b>	<b>Saved, replaced, or deleted</b>	<b>Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy</b>
STRAT11: Land South of Grenoble Road	Replaced	AS3 - Land south of Grenoble Road, Edge of Oxford
STRAT12: Land at Northfield	Replaced	AS4 - Land at Northfield, Edge of Oxford
STRAT13: Land North of Bayswater Brook	Replaced	AS5 - Land at Bayswater Brook, Edge of Oxford
STRAT14: Land at Wheatley Campus, Oxford Brookes University	Saved	HOU2 – Sources of housing supply saves this allocation
HEN1: The Strategy for Henley-on-Thames	Replaced	SP6 - A strategy for Henley-on-Thames
TH1: The Strategy for Thame	Replaced	SP7 - A strategy for Thame
WAL1: The Strategy for Wallingford	Replaced	SP8 - A strategy for Wallingford
H1: Delivering New Homes	Replaced	SP1 - Spatial strategy and SP2 - Settlement hierarchy
H2: New Housing in Didcot	Saved/Replaced	<p>HOU2 – Sources of housing supply saves the following allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lagygrove East</li> <li>• Didcot North East</li> <li>• Vauxhall Barracks</li> </ul> <p>Other aspects of this policy have been replaced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HOU2 – Sources of housing supply</li> <li>• AS6 – Rich’s Sidings and Broadway, Didcot</li> <li>• AS7 – Didcot Gateway, Didcot</li> </ul>
H3: Housing in the towns of Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford	Saved/Replaced	<p>HOU2 – Sources of housing supply saves the allocation of Land West of Wallingford</p> <p>Other aspects of this policy have been replaced by HOU2 - Sources of housing supply</p>

<b>Adopted policy in South Oxfordshire District Plan 2035</b>	<b>Saved, replaced, or deleted</b>	<b>Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy</b>
H4: Housing in the Larger Villages	Replaced	SP1 - Spatial strategy SP2 - Settlement hierarchy
H5: Land to the West of Priest Close, Nettlebed	Deleted	Our review of existing allocated sites has demonstrated that this site is no longer appropriate for allocation.
H6: Joyce Grove, Nettlebed	Saved	HOU2 – Sources of housing supply saves this allocation
H7: Land to the South and West of Nettlebed Service Station	Deleted	Our review of existing allocated sites has demonstrated that this site is no longer appropriate for allocation.
H8: Housing in the Smaller Villages	Replaced	SP1 - Spatial strategy SP2 - Settlement hierarchy
H9: Affordable Housing	Replaced	HOU3 - Affordable housing
H10: Exception Sites and Entry Level Housing Schemes	Replaced	HOU12 - Rural and First Homes Exception Sites
H11: Housing Mix	Replaced	HOU4 - Housing Mix and Size
H12: Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing	Replaced	HOU6 - Self and Custom Build Housing HOU7 - Affordable Self and Custom Build Housing
H13: Specialist Housing for Older People	Replaced	HOU5 - Housing for Older People
H14: Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	Replaced	HOU10 - Meeting the needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople
H15: Safeguarding Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites	Replaced	HOU11 - Proposals relating to/affecting existing Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople sites
H16: Backland and Infill Development and Redevelopment	Replaced	SP1 - Spatial strategy SP2 - Settlement hierarchy

<b>Adopted policy in South Oxfordshire District Plan 2035</b>	<b>Saved, replaced, or deleted</b>	<b>Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy</b>
H17: Sub-division and Conversion to Multiple Occupation	Replaced	HOU9 - Sub-division of homes HOU15 - Houses in Multiple Occupation
H18: Replacement Dwellings	Replaced	HOU8 - Replacement dwellings in the countryside
H19: Rural Workers Dwellings	Replaced	HOU17 - Rural workers' dwellings
H20: Extensions to Dwellings	Replaced	HOU16 - Residential extensions and annexes
H21: Loss of Existing Residential Accommodation in Town Centres	Deleted	This policy is not used so there is no need to retain it.
EMP1: The Amount and Distribution of New Employment Land	Replaced	JT1 - Meeting employment needs
EMP2: Range, Size and Mix of Employment Premises	Replaced	JT1 - Meeting employment needs
EMP3: Retention of Employment Land	Replaced	JT2 - Protecting our employment sites
EMP4: Employment Land in Didcot	Replaced	JT1 - Meeting employment needs
EMP5: New Employment Land in Henley-on-Thames	Replaced	JT1 - Meeting employment needs
EMP6: New Employment Land at Thame	Replaced	JT1 - Meeting employment needs
EMP7: New Employment Land at Wallingford	Saved/Replaced	JT1 - Meeting employment needs saves the allocation of Land at Hithercroft Road and Lupton Road  Other aspects of this policy have been replaced by JT1 – Meeting employment needs
EMP8: New Employment Land at Crowmarsh Gifford	Replaced	JT1 - Meeting employment needs

<b>Adopted policy in South Oxfordshire District Plan 2035</b>	<b>Saved, replaced, or deleted</b>	<b>Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy</b>
EMP9: New Employment Land at Chalgrove	Saved	JT1 - Meeting employment needs saves the allocation of Land at Monument Business Park
EMP10: Development in Rural Areas	Replaced	JT3 - Supporting the rural economy JT6 - Supporting sustainable tourism and the visitor economy
EMP11: Tourism	Replaced	JT6 - Supporting sustainable tourism and the visitor economy
EMP12: Caravan and Camping Sites	Replaced	JT7 - Overnight visitor accommodation
EMP13: Retention of Visitor Accommodation	Replaced	JT7 - Overnight visitor accommodation
INF1: Infrastructure Provision	Replaced	IN1 - Infrastructure Provision
TRANS1a: Supporting Strategic Transport Investment Across the Oxford to Cambridge Arc	Replaced	IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
TRANS1b: Supporting Strategic Transport Investment	Replaced	IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
TRANS2: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility	Replaced	IN2 - Sustainable transport and accessibility
TRANS3: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes	Replaced	IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
TRANS4: Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans	Replaced	IN2 - Sustainable transport and accessibility
TRANS5: Consideration of Development Proposals	Replaced	IN2 - Sustainable transport and accessibility IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
TRANS6: Rail	Replaced	IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
TRANS7: Development Generating New Lorry Movements	Replaced	IN6 - Deliveries and freight
INF2: Electronic Communications	Replaced	IN8 - Digital connectivity



<b>Adopted policy in South Oxfordshire District Plan 2035</b>	<b>Saved, replaced, or deleted</b>	<b>Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy</b>
INF3: Telecommunications	Replaced	IN8 - Digital connectivity
INF4: Water Resources	Replaced	CE7 - Water efficiency CE8 - Water quality and wastewater infrastructure
ENV1: Landscape and Countryside	Replaced	NH5 - Landscape NH4 - Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes
ENV2: Biodiversity - Designated Sites, Priority Habitats and Species	Replaced	NH2 - Biodiversity designations
ENV3: Biodiversity	Replaced	NH1 - Nature recovery
ENV4: Watercourses	Replaced	HP10 - Watercourses
ENV5: Green Infrastructure in New Developments	Replaced	HP6 - Green infrastructure on new developments
ENV6: Historic Environment	Replaced	NH8 - The historic environment
ENV7: Listed Buildings	Replaced	NH9 - Listed Buildings
ENV8: Conservation Areas	Replaced	NH10 - Conservation Areas
ENV9: Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments	Replaced	NH11 - Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments
ENV10: Historic Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Landscapes	Replaced	NH12 - Historic Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Landscapes
ENV11: Pollution - Impact From Existing and/or Previous Land Uses on New Development and the Natural Environment (Potential Receptors of Pollution)	Replaced	CE10 - Pollution sources and receptors
ENV12: Pollution - Impact of Development on Human Health, the	Replaced	CE10 - Pollution sources and receptors

<b>Adopted policy in South Oxfordshire District Plan 2035</b>	<b>Saved, replaced, or deleted</b>	<b>Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy</b>
Natural Environment and/or Local Amenity (Potential Sources of Pollution)		
EP1: Air Quality	Replaced	CE9 - Air quality
EP2: Hazardous Substances	Replaced	CE10 - Pollution sources and receptors
EP3: Waste Collection and Recycling	Replaced	DE7 - Waste collection and recycling
EP4: Flood Risk	Replaced	CE6 - Flood risk and drainage
EP5: Minerals Safeguarding Areas	Replaced	CE13 - Minerals safeguarding areas
DES1: Delivering High Quality Development	Replaced	DE1 - High quality design
DES2: Enhancing Local Character	Replaced	DE2 - Local character and identity
DES3: Design and Access Statements	Replaced	DE3 - Delivering well-designed new development
DES4: Masterplans for Allocated Sites and Major Development	Replaced	DE3 - Delivering well-designed new development
DES5: Outdoor Amenity Space	Replaced	DE6 - Outdoor amenity space
DES6: Residential Amenity	Replaced	DE5 - Neighbouring amenity
DES7: Efficient Use of Resources	Replaced	CE3 - Reducing embodied carbon CE4 - Sustainable retrofitting
DES8: Promoting Sustainable Design	Replaced	CE1 - Sustainable design and construction
DES9: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	Replaced	CE5 - Renewable energy
DES10: Carbon Reduction	Replaced	CE2 - Net Zero Carbon Buildings
TC1: Retail and Services Growth	Replaced	TCR3 - Retail floorspace requirement (convenience and comparison goods)

<b>Adopted policy in South Oxfordshire District Plan 2035</b>	<b>Saved, replaced, or deleted</b>	<b>Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy</b>
TC2: Retail Hierarchy	Replaced	TCR1 - Centre hierarchy
TC3: Comparison Goods Floorspace Requirements	Replaced	TCR3 - Retail floorspace requirement (convenience and comparison goods)
TC4: Convenience Floorspace Provision in the Market Towns	Replaced	TCR3 - Retail floorspace requirement (convenience and comparison goods)
TC5: Primary Shopping Areas	Replaced	TCR2 - Strategy for town and local service centres
CF1: Safeguarding Community Facilities	Replaced	HP2 - Community services and facilities
CF2: Provision of Community Facilities and Services	Replaced	HP2 - Community services and facilities
CF3: New Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities	Replaced	HP5 - New facilities for sport, physical activity and recreation
CF4: Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities	Replaced	HP4 - Existing open space, sport and recreation facilities
CF5: Open Space, Sport and Recreation in New Residential Development	Replaced	HP5 - New facilities for sport, physical activity and recreation HP6 - Green infrastructure on new developments HP7 - Open space in new developments HP8 - Play provision for children and young people HP9 - Allotments and community good growing

**Saved, replaced and deleted policies from the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1**

<b>Adopted policy in Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1</b>	<b>Saved, replaced, or deleted</b>	<b>Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy</b>
CP1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development	Replaced	SP1 - Spatial strategy
CP2: Cooperation on Unmet Housing Need for Oxfordshire	Replaced	HOU1 - Housing requirement
CP3: Settlement Hierarchy	Replaced	SP2 - Settlement hierarchy
CP4: Meeting Our Housing Needs	Saved/Replaced	<p>HOU2 – Sources of housing supply saves the following allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South-West of Faringdon</li> <li>• Milton Heights</li> <li>• North-West of Radley</li> <li>• South of Kennington</li> <li>• West of Stanford-in-the-Vale</li> <li>• Land South of Park Road, Faringdon</li> <li>• North of Abingdon-on-Thames</li> <li>• South of Faringdon</li> <li>• Monks Farm (North Grove)</li> <li>• Grove Airfield</li> <li>• Valley Park</li> <li>• East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor</li> <li>• Crab Hill (North East Wantage and South East Grove)</li> <li>• North-West of Abingdon-on-Thames</li> </ul> <p>Other aspects of this policy have been replaced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HOU2 – Sources of housing supply</li> <li>• HOU1 - Housing requirement</li> </ul>

Adopted policy in Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1	Saved, replaced, or deleted	Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy
CP5: Housing Supply Ring-Fence	Deleted	A ring-fence is no longer required under the new spatial strategy.
CP6: Meeting Business and Employment Needs	Saved/Replaced	<p>JT1 – Meeting employment needs saves the following allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Didcot A</li> <li>• Abingdon Science Park</li> <li>• South of Park Road, Faringdon</li> </ul> <p>Other aspects of this policy have been replaced by JT1 - Meeting employment needs</p>
CP7: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services	Replaced	IN1 - Infrastructure Provision
CP8: Spatial Strategy for Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area	Saved/Replaced	<p>HOU2 – Sources of housing supply saves the following allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South of Kennington</li> <li>• North of Abingdon-on-Thames</li> <li>• North-West of Abingdon-on-Thames</li> </ul> <p>Other aspects of this policy have been replaced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HOU2 – Sources of housing supply</li> <li>• SP1 - Spatial strategy</li> </ul>
CP9: Harcourt Hill Campus	Replaced	AS15 - Harcourt Hill Campus
CP10: Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter, Abingdon-on-Thames	Deleted	Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter are already partly developed. Implementing retail-led development on the remaining part of the site would not be consistent with the strategy for town centres in the Joint Local Plan, which supports a broader mix of land uses.

Adopted policy in Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1	Saved, replaced, or deleted	Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy
CP11: Botley Central Area	Deleted	The redevelopment is complete.
CP12: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Highway Improvements within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area	Replaced	IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
CP13: The Oxford Green Belt	Replaced	SP1 - Spatial strategy
CP14: Strategic Water Storage Reservoirs	Replaced	IN7 - South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) Safeguarding
CP15: Spatial Strategy for South East Vale Sub-Area	Saved/Replaced	<p>HOU2 – Sources of housing supply saves the following allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milton Heights</li> <li>• Monks Farm (North Grove)</li> <li>• Grove Airfield</li> <li>• Valley Park</li> <li>• Crab Hill (North East Wantage and South East Grove)</li> </ul> <p>Other aspects of this policy have been replaced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HOU2 – Sources of housing supply</li> <li>• SP1 – Spatial strategy</li> </ul>
CP16: Didcot A Power Station	Saved	JT1 – Meeting employment needs saves this allocation.
CP17: Delivery of Strategic Highway Improvements within the South-East Vale Sub-Area	Replaced	IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
CP18: Safeguarding of Land for Transport Schemes in the South-East Vale Sub-Area	Replaced	IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
CP19: Re-opening of Grove Railway Station	Replaced	IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding

Adopted policy in Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1	Saved, replaced, or deleted	Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy
CP20: Spatial Strategy for Western Vale Sub-Area	Saved/Replaced	<p>HOU2 – Sources of housing supply saves the following allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South-West of Faringdon</li> <li>• Land South of Park Road, Faringdon</li> <li>• South of Faringdon</li> </ul> <p>Other aspects of this policy have been replaced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HOU2 – Sources of housing supply</li> <li>• SP1 – Spatial Strategy</li> </ul>
CP21: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Highway Improvements within the Western Vale Sub-Area	Replaced	IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
CP22: Housing Mix	Replaced	HOU4 - Housing Mix and Size
CP23: Housing Density	Replaced	DE4 - Optimising densities
CP24: Affordable Housing	Replaced	HOU3 - Affordable housing
CP25: Rural Exception Sites	Replaced	HOU12 - Rural and First Homes Exception Sites
CP26: Accommodating Current and Future Needs of the Ageing Population	Replaced	HOU5 - Housing for Older People
CP27: Meeting the housing needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People	Replaced	HOU10 - Meeting the needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople
CP28: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites	Replaced	JT1 - Meeting employment needs
CP29: Change of Use of Existing Employment Land and Premises	Replaced	JT2 - Protecting our employment sites
CP30: Further and Higher Education	Deleted	Sufficiently covered by the National Planning Policy Framework.

<b>Adopted policy in Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1</b>	<b>Saved, replaced, or deleted</b>	<b>Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy</b>
CP31: Development to Support the Visitor Economy	Replaced	JT6 - Supporting sustainable tourism and the visitor economy JT7 - Overnight visitor accommodation
CP32: Retail Development and other Main Town Centre Uses	Replaced	TCR1 - Centre hierarchy TCR2 - Strategy for town and local service centres TCR3 - Retail floorspace requirement (convenience and comparison goods)
CP33: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility	Replaced	IN2 - Sustainable transport and accessibility
CP34: A34 Strategy	Replaced	IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
CP35: Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking	Replaced	IN2 - Sustainable transport and accessibility IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
CP36: Electronic Communications	Replaced	IN8 - Digital connectivity
CP37: Design and Local Distinctiveness	Replaced	DE1 - High quality design DE2 - Local character and identity
CP38: Design Strategies for Strategic and Major Development Sites	Replaced	DE3 - Delivering well-designed new development
CP39: The Historic Environment	Replaced	NH8 - The historic environment
CP40: Sustainable Design and Construction	Replaced	CE1 - Sustainable design and construction
CP41: Renewable Energy	Replaced	CE5 - Renewable energy
CP42: Flood Risk	Replaced	CE6 - Flood risk and drainage
CP43: Natural Resources	Replaced	CE7 - Water efficiency
CP44: Landscape	Replaced	NH4 - Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes NH5 - Landscape



<b>Adopted policy in Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1</b>	<b>Saved, replaced, or deleted</b>	<b>Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy</b>
CP45: Green Infrastructure	Replaced	HP6 - Green infrastructure on new developments
CP46: Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity	Replaced	NH1 - Nature recovery NH2 - Biodiversity designations
CP47: Delivery and Contingency	Deleted	Sufficiently covered by the National Planning Policy Framework.

## Saved, replaced and deleted policies from the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2

Adopted policy in Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2	Saved, replaced, or deleted	Relevant policy or policies in the Joint Local Plan, or reasoning for the proposed deletion of the adopted policy
CP4a: Meeting our Housing Needs	Saved/Replaced	<p>HOU2 – Sources of housing supply saves the following allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North-East of East Hanney</li> <li>• South-East of Marcham</li> <li>• North of East Hanney</li> </ul> <p>Other aspects of this policy have been replaced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HOU2 – Sources of housing supply</li> <li>• HOU1 - Housing requirement</li> </ul>
CP8a: Additional Site Allocations for Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area	Saved/Replaced	<p>HOU2 – Sources of housing supply saves the following allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North-East of East Hanney</li> <li>• South-East of Marcham</li> <li>• North of East Hanney</li> </ul> <p>Other aspects of this policy have been replaced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HOU2 – Sources of housing supply</li> <li>• HOU1 - Housing requirement</li> <li>• SP1 – Spatial strategy</li> </ul>
CP8b: Dalton Barracks Strategic Allocation	Replaced	AS10 - Land at Dalton Barracks Garden Village, Shippon
CP12a: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Highway Improvements within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area	Replaced	IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
CP13a: Oxford Green Belt	Replaced	SP1 - Spatial strategy

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CP14a: Upper Thames Strategic Storage Reservoir	Replaced	IN7 - South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) Safeguarding
CP15a: Additional Site Allocations for South-East Vale Sub-Area	Replaced	SP1 - Spatial strategy HOU1 - Housing requirement
CP15c: Grove Comprehensive Development Framework	Deleted	A Supplementary Planning Document is no longer required as a framework for Grove has been progressed through the development management process for planning applications in the settlement.
CP15b: Harwell Campus Comprehensive Development Framework	Replaced	AS12 - Harwell Campus
CP16b: Didcot Garden Town	Replaced	SP3 - Strategy for Didcot Garden Town
CP18a: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Highway Improvements within the South-East Vale Sub-Area	Replaced	IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
CP19a: Re-opening of Grove Railway Station	Replaced	IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
CP20a: Housing Supply for Western Vale Sub-Area	Replaced	SP1 - Spatial strategy HOU1 - Housing requirement
CP47a: Delivery and Contingency	Deleted	Sufficiently covered by the National Planning Policy Framework.
DP1: Self and Custom-Build	Replaced	HOU6 - Self and Custom Build Housing HOU7 - Affordable Self and Custom Build Housing
DP2: Space Standards	Replaced	HOU4 - Housing Mix and Size
DP3: Sub-Division of Dwellings	Replaced	HOU9 - Sub-division of homes
DP4: Residential Annexes	Replaced	HOU16 - Residential extensions and annexes
DP5: Replacement Dwellings in the Open Countryside	Replaced	HOU8 - Replacement dwellings in the countryside

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DP6: Rural Workers' Dwellings	Replaced	HOU17 - Rural workers' dwellings
DP7: Re-use, Conversion and Extension of Buildings for Dwellings in the Open Countryside	Deleted	Sufficiently covered by permitted development rights.
DP8: Community Services and Facilities	Replaced	HP2 - Community services and facilities
DP9: Public Houses	Replaced	HP2 - Community services and facilities
DP10: Ancillary Uses on Employment Land	Replaced	JT2 - Protecting our employment sites
DP11: Community Employment Plans	Replaced	JT5 - Community Employment Plans
DP12: Rural Diversification and Equestrian Development	Replaced	JT3 - Supporting the rural economy JT6 - Supporting sustainable tourism and the visitor economy and
DP13a: Primary Shopping Frontages	Deleted	Superseded by changes to the Use Classes Order.
DP13b: Secondary Shopping Frontages	Deleted	Superseded by changes to the Use Classes Order.
DP13c: Other Town Centre Uses	Replaced	TCR2 - Strategy for town and local service centres
DP13d: Faringdon Town Centre	Replaced	TCR2 - Strategy for town and local service centres
DP13e: Local Shopping Centres	Replaced	TCR2 - Strategy for town and local service centres
DP14: Village and Local Shops	Replaced	TCR2 - Strategy for town and local service centres TCR4 - Retail and service provision in villages and local centres
DP15: Retail Parks	Replaced	TCR2 - Strategy for town and local service centres
DP16: Access	Replaced	IN2 - Sustainable transport and accessibility IN5 - Parking Standards
DP17: Transport Assessments and Travel Plans	Replaced	IN2 - Sustainable transport and accessibility

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DP18: Public Car Parking in Settlements	Replaced	IN5 - Parking standards
DP19: Lorries and Roadside Services	Replaced	IN6 - Deliveries and freight
DP20: Public Art	Replaced	DE1 - High quality design
DP21: External Lighting	Replaced	CE11 - Light pollution and dark skies
DP22: Advertisements	Replaced	DE1 - High quality design
DP23: Impact of Development on Amenity	Replaced	DE5 - Neighbouring amenity
DP24: Effect of Neighbouring or Previous Uses on New Developments	Replaced	CE10 - Pollution sources and receptors
DP25: Noise Pollution	Replaced	CE10 - Pollution sources and receptors
DP26: Air Quality	Replaced	CE9 - Air quality
DP27: Land Affected by Contamination	Replaced	CE12 - Soils and contaminated land
DP28: Waste Collection and Recycling	Replaced	DE7 - Waste collection and recycling
DP29: Settlement Character and Gaps	Replaced	NH5 - Landscape
DP30: Watercourses	Replaced	HP10 - Watercourses
DP31: Protection of Public Rights of Way, National Trails and Open Access Areas	Replaced	IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
DP32: The Wilts and Berks Canal	Replaced	IN4 - Wilts and Berks Canal Safeguarding
DP33: Open Space	Replaced	HP5 - New facilities for sport, physical activity and recreation HP6 - Green infrastructure on new developments HP7 - Open space in new developments HP8 - Play provision for children and young people

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		HP9 - Allotments and community food growing
DP34: Leisure and Sports Facilities	Replaced	HP4 - Existing open space, sport and recreation facilities HP5 - New facilities for sport, physical activity and recreation
DP35: New Countryside Recreation Facilities	Replaced	Policy HP5 - New facilities for sport, physical activity and recreation
DP36: Heritage Assets	Replaced	NH8 - The historic environment
DP37: Conservation Areas	Replaced	NH10 - Conservation Areas
DP38 Listed Buildings	Replaced	NH9 - Listed Buildings
DP39: Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments	Replaced	NH11 - Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

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**Joint Local Plan 2041**



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