

EXHIBITION BOARDS

Joint Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation (Regulation 18 Part 2)



South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041

What is a Local Plan & how can I get involved?

A Local Plan looks ahead fifteen years and plans how much development is needed in an area, like new homes, jobs, roads and schools, and where they should go. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are working together to produce a new Joint Local Plan.

This plan will be different from the last Local Plans for our area, in particular it doesn't need to plan for the same scale of growth as last time. Our focus will be to continue to build out most of the sites already planned, consider development on new brownfield sites, and make sure the new policies are stronger on zero carbon development, nature recovery, protecting the countryside and providing facilities for communities.

There are two ways to have your say:

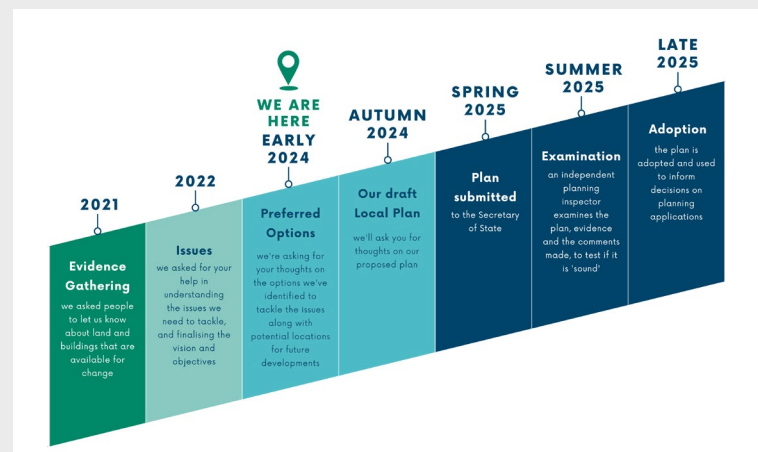
Joint Local Plan in a Nutshell

Get the facts fast

Comment on draft policies

Delve into the details

Joint Local Plan preparation timeline



We have previously consulted on the main issues facing our districts and how we could use the Joint Local Plan to address them. We would now like your views on our "Preferred Options" for the new plan, and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal.

As part of the councils' work to develop the Joint Local Plan 2041, this consultation asks for community and stakeholder views on our preferred options and draft policies to help address local challenges and unlock future opportunities across the two districts.

What is our vision for the Joint Local Plan?

- 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.

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Net zero carbon development



We'd like to raise standards of development so that future new buildings use less energy, are more climate-change friendly and cheaper to run. This is likely to mean that new buildings are built to be highly energy-efficient and include renewable energy technology like solar panels and heat pumps.



We want to go further than our current plans and deliver new development that is truly net zero across both districts*. A net zero carbon building is one where 100% of its energy demand is met by on-site renewable energy.



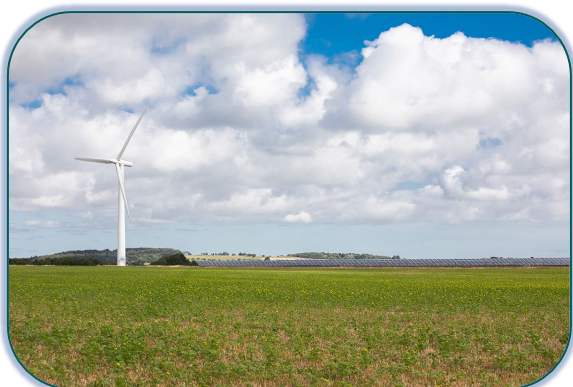
Reducing carbon emissions against those set out in Building Regulations has its flaws, because Building Regulations only count regulated energy (fixed building services, such as heating), which only accounts for 50% of the carbon emissions of a building.



Unregulated energy (energy from plug-in appliances) is not covered by the current Building Regulations, nor is the carbon associated with the processes and materials used to construct those buildings, known as embodied carbon. As our current policy approach doesn't cover unregulated energy or embodied carbon, it won't achieve truly net zero carbon buildings.



Therefore, we want to introduce a policy that deals with all of the carbon associated with new buildings, setting the highest standards possible to deliver true net zero carbon buildings, while not making it too expensive for development to go ahead.



Question:

Do you think the Joint Local Plan should be raising standards to achieve net zero carbon development across South and Vale?

* We will review our approach in the light of the Written Ministerial Statement entitled 'Planning - Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update' dated 13 December 2023'

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Where will development go?

Our spatial strategy is an important policy at the heart of the Joint Local Plan. It sets out clearly where new development like housing and employment will be supported and where it will be limited so that it meets the objectives of the plan, like encouraging sustainable travel and protecting our communities and the environment.



In this plan we propose to deliver development planned in Science Vale, at our Garden Communities (Didcot Garden Town, Berinsfield Garden Village and Dalton Barracks Garden Village) and at settlements with the best and biggest range of facilities.

In practice this means simply delivering the growth already planned in the adopted local plans and neighbourhood plans, we don't need to add more greenfield development beyond that at our towns and villages in order to meet housing targets.

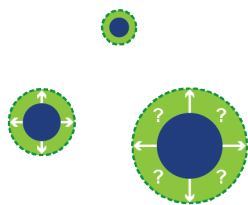
However we will support new development on two new potential brownfield site allocations at Dalton Barracks and Crowmarsh Gifford.



What kind of spatial strategy do you think we should adopt from the following?



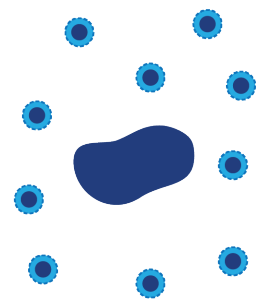
Existing planned and new brownfield development at Science Vale, Garden Communities and Tiers 1, 2 and 3 of the settlement hierarchy (our preferred approach)



Greenfield expansion at the towns and larger villages



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



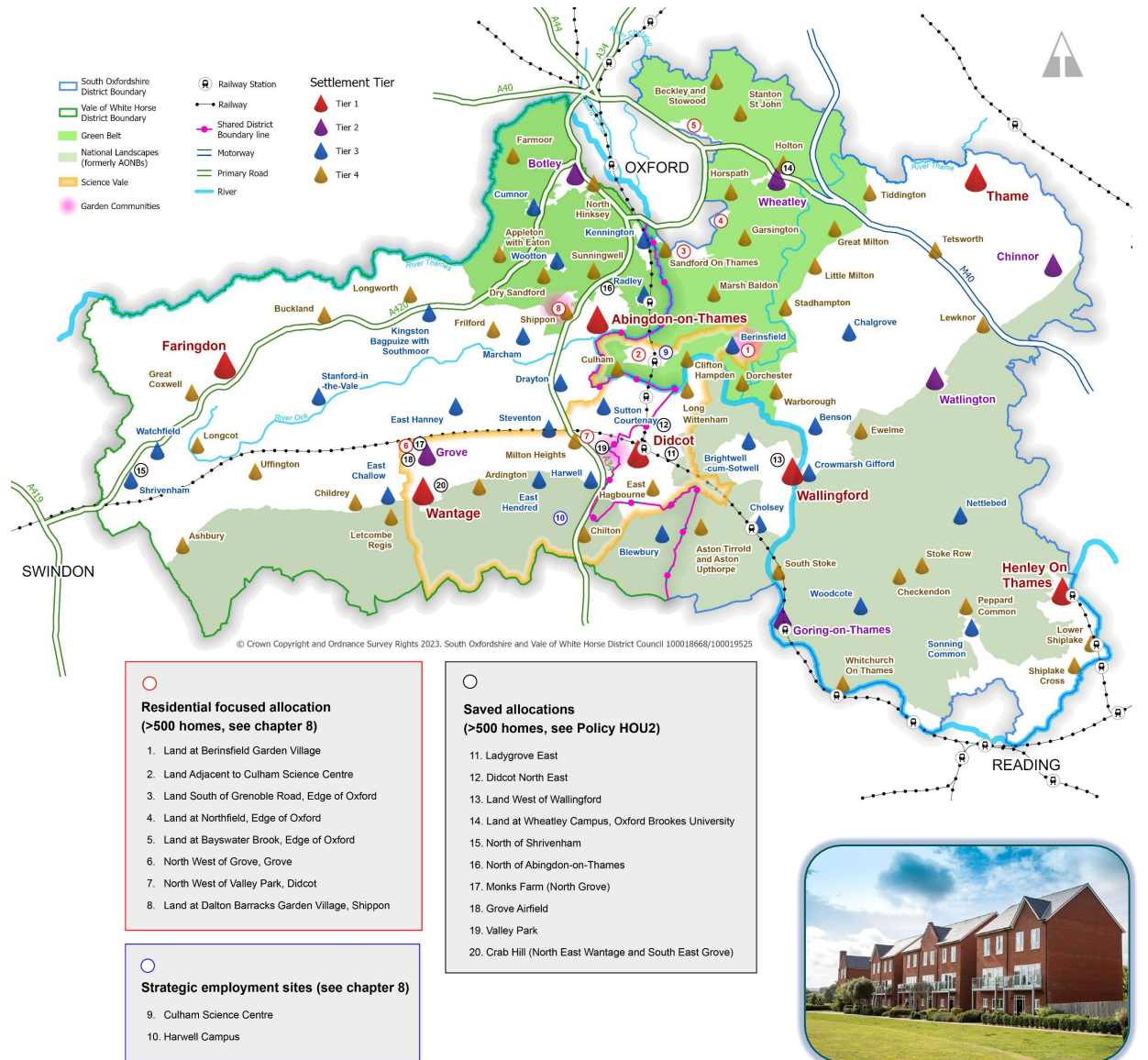
A dispersed pattern of development including more at smaller villages

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How many new homes?

The existing Local Plans for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse contain historically high housing targets for the districts because of:

- The **Housing Growth Deal** which granted councils in Oxfordshire extra funding for infrastructure and affordable housing provided they planned to build the 100,000 homes that a growth needs assessment had identified were needed.
- All district councils agreeing to cover unmet housing need from Oxford City, which led to a higher level of house building in their areas.



Because of the large amount of housing already planned, there is a lot in the pipeline still to be built as the infographic shows here:



In this Local Plan we propose a lower annual level of new housing for our need, which is calculated by using the standard formula set out in the Government's planning guidance.

Question:

Do you think we should reduce the housing target in our new Joint Local Plan?

This means that the Joint Local Plan won't need to identify a lot of land for housing.

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Affordable Homes

We know that house prices are higher than the national average across our districts, especially in some hotspots. This makes it difficult for many people to get onto the housing ladder or to find accommodation they can afford locally.



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

The main way planning can help with this is to require developers to provide a proportion of 'affordable homes' when they build homes for sale. These affordable homes are homes that cost less than normal to rent, buy or part-buy (known as shared ownership). People can qualify for these new affordable homes if they are on the Council's housing register or are first time buyers, for example.

Current policy for South Oxfordshire is that **40% of homes** on larger sites should be affordable (or 50% on sites at the edge of Oxford), and in Vale of White Horse **this is 35%**.

In the Joint Local Plan we plan to raise this to **50% everywhere**. This is so we can help more people who need an affordable home, without increasing the total number of homes being built. This policy, along with all the other policies, will need testing to ensure development can still happen, this is called a viability assessment.

Based on a development with 100 homes...



Question:

Do you agree that we should be raising the percentage of affordable housing that makes up new developments?

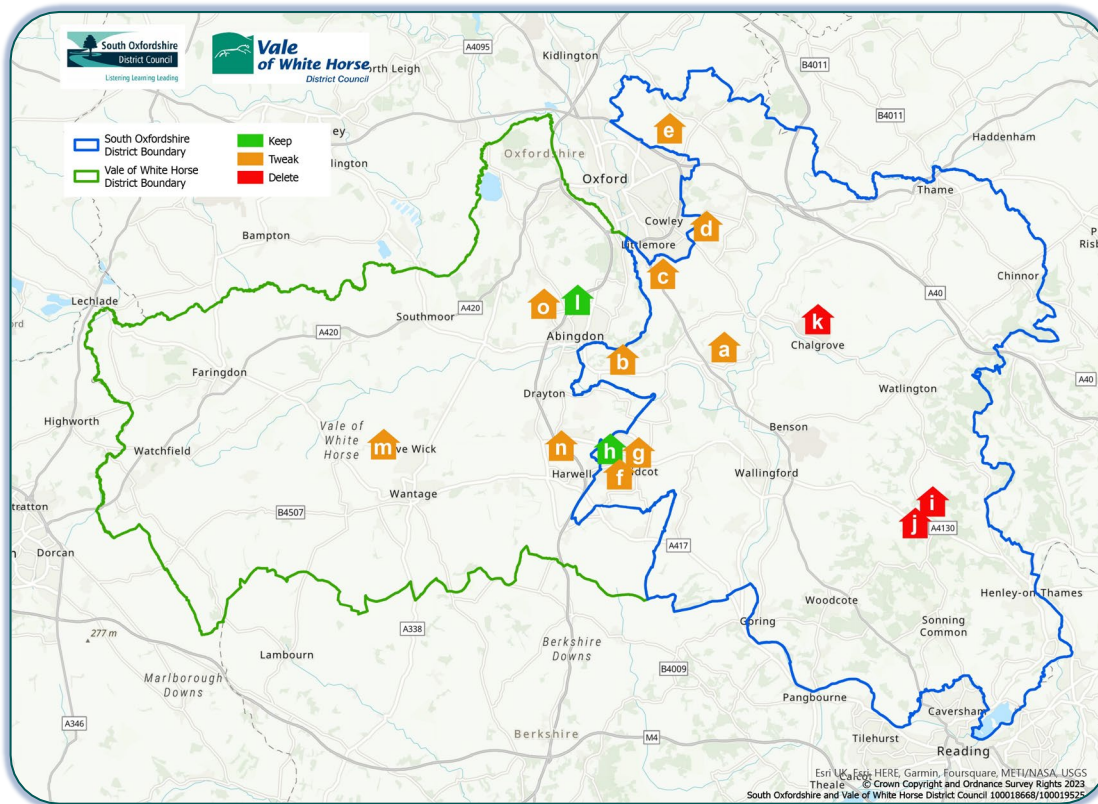
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Homes already planned in existing local plans

The existing local plans approved in 2016, 2019 and 2020 identified a large number of sites for housebuilding. Some of these allocated sites have now been developed, others have planning permission, but there are significant numbers that are still to gain planning permission and be built. This provides an important pipeline of new homes and jobs for the 2020s and 2030s.

What we can do now in the Joint Local Plan is review the existing allocated sites which do not yet have planning permission, to see if there's a need to update or refresh the policy wording. In simple terms we have looked at whether to keep, tweak or delete these allocations. The types of tweaks we have suggested include increasing or decreasing the number of homes, varying the layout or updating what's needed to go with the development.

From this review we are proposing the following – do you agree?



South Oxfordshire

Existing allocated site name	Number of homes planned for Joint Local Plan	Outcome of our review
a. Land at Berinsfield Garden Village	1700	Tweak – minor changes
b. Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre	3500	Tweak – minor changes
c. Land south of Grenoble Road	3000	Tweak – minor changes
d. Land at Northfield	1800	Tweak – minor changes
e. Land north of Bayswater Brook	1100	Tweak, keep main site, but delete the parcel of land at Sandhills
f. Orchard Centre Phase 2	100	Tweak, reduce the site area to exclude the Orchard Centre, rename to “Rich’s Sidings and Broadway”, and fewer homes
g. Didcot Gateway	200	Tweak, fewer homes
h. Vauxhall Barracks	300	Keep
i. West of Priests Close, Nettlebed	0	Delete the allocation
j. Land south of Nettlebed Service Station	0	Delete the allocation
k. Land at Chalgrove Airfield	0	Delete the allocation

Vale of White Horse

Existing allocated site name	Number of homes planned for Joint Local Plan	Outcome of our review
l. North West of Abingdon-on-Thames	200	Keep, as part of the site does not have planning permission
m. North West of Grove	600	Tweak, higher number of homes to cover the new plan period, but no extra overall
n. North-West Valley Park	800	Tweak – minor changes
o. Dalton Barracks	2750	Tweak, extend the site area and increase number of homes

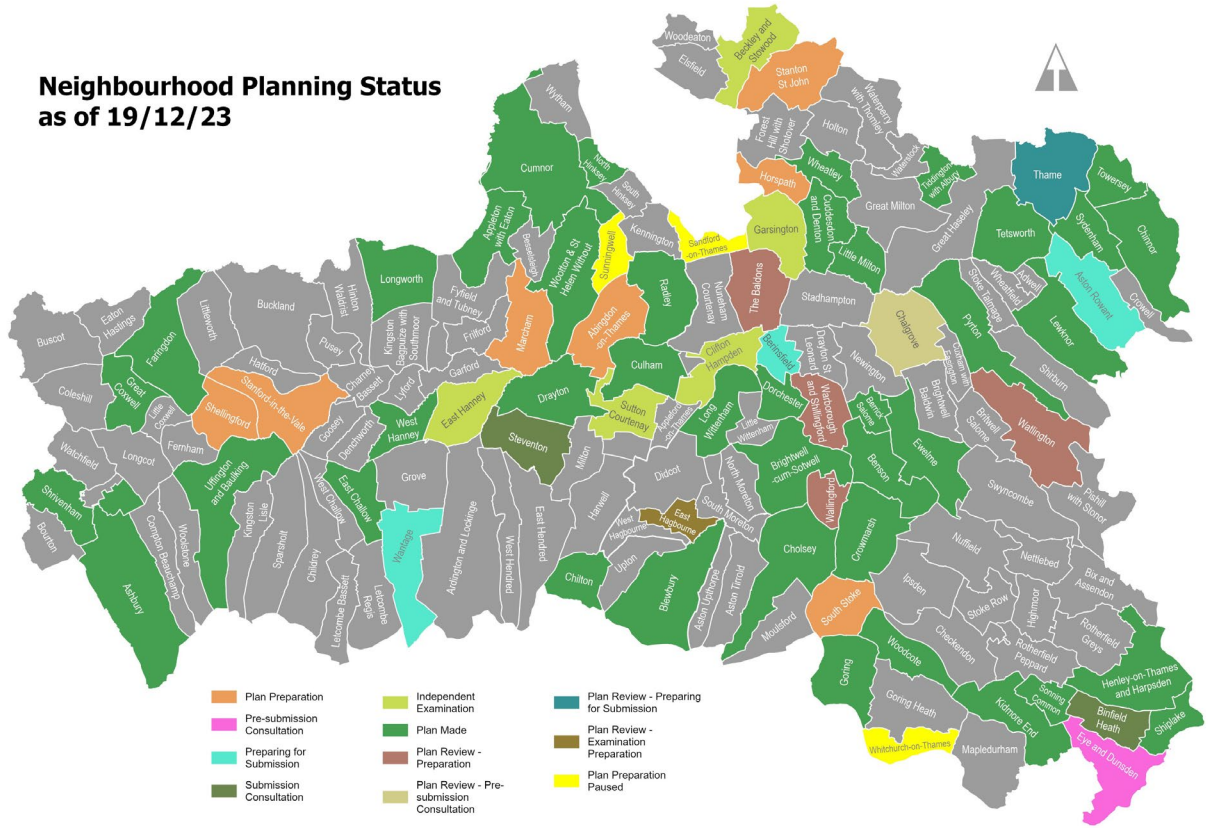
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Neighbourhood Plans

Our Councils are big proponents of neighbourhood planning. We have over fifty completed neighbourhood plans and many more on the way, this is higher coverage than in most areas of the country.

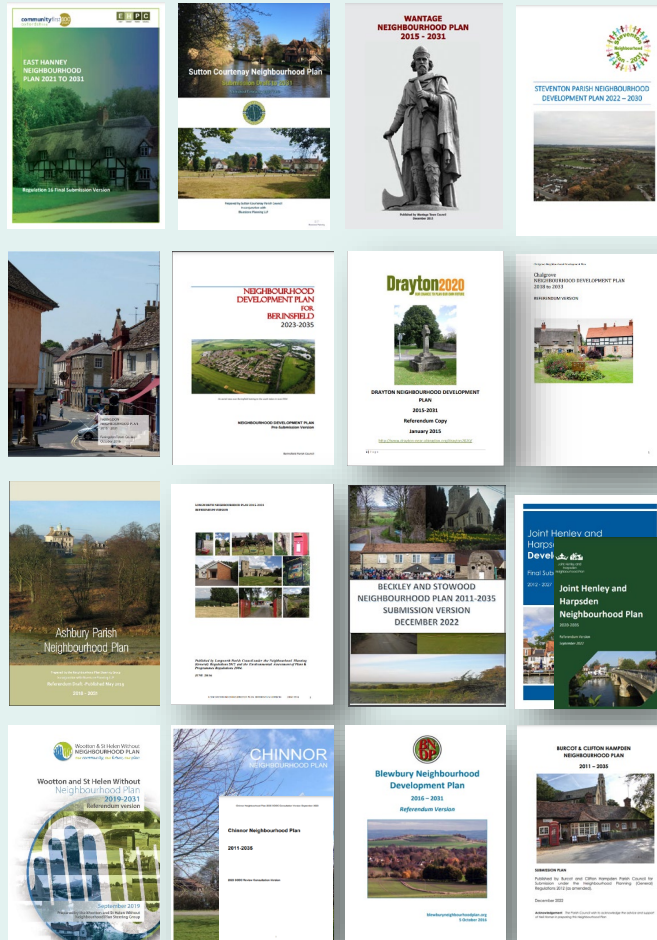


Neighbourhood Planning Status as of 19/12/23



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South Oxfordshire District Council 100018668 and Vale of White Horse District Council 100019525

In the last South Oxfordshire Local Plan, we gave neighbourhood plans a housing target to work to and invited communities to make decisions locally on which sites should be developed for housing and other uses like employment. Many communities took up this challenge and have used neighbourhood planning to take control of their destinies, and also protect land by, for example, designating Local Green Space, which gives the same level of protection as Green Belt.



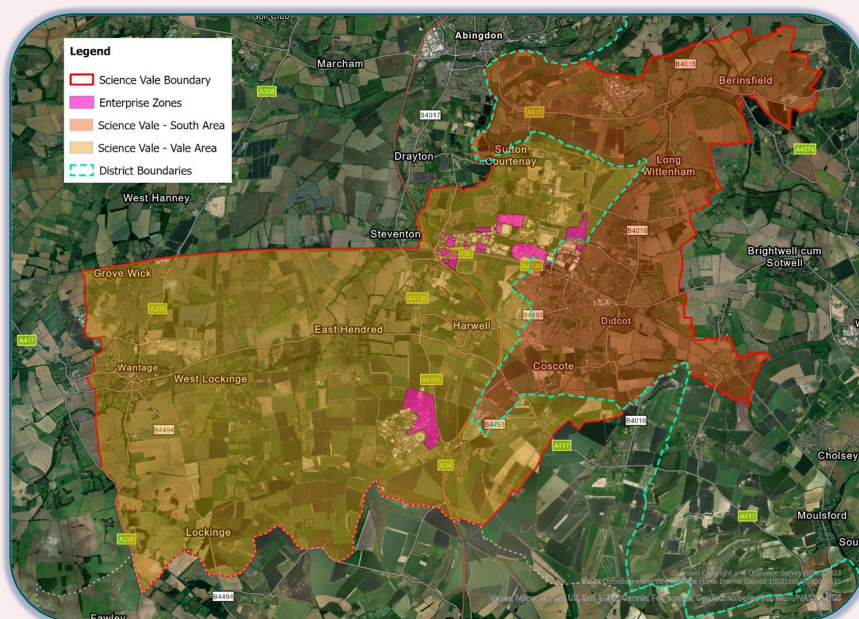
This time we don't have housing requirements to delegate to neighbourhood plans in South Oxfordshire or Vale of White Horse. But we want to support the preparation of new Neighbourhood Plans, and encourage ambitious projects if Parish or Town Councils want to deliver more.

Question:
If a Town or Parish Council wanted to deliver more homes as part of their neighbourhood plan, do you think the Joint Local Plan should include a strategy to allow for this?

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Jobs, Town Centres and Community Facilities

Jobs and Town Centres



- Our districts have strong local economies, from small and medium sized businesses up to regionally, nationally and globally important ones including those at Culham Science Centre, Milton Park and Harwell Campus. The area in our districts where these significant employment parks are located is known as ‘Science Vale’.

- We have enough available land on our existing employment sites, and on land coming forward through approved planning applications, to meet our employment needs up to 2041, so we don’t need to find any new employment sites in the Joint Local Plan. Our preference is therefore to support sites already identified for employment, plus support jobs on our existing employment sites and on brownfield sites within settlements.

- We’re also planning for the long-term vitality and viability of our town and local service centres, giving them the flexibility to evolve and diversify in a way that responds to prevailing economic circumstances and changing demographics. Within our defined centres, we plan to support a range of uses (including shops, restaurants, cinemas, offices, theatres, museums, art galleries, hotels and, where appropriate, residential). Encouraging the re-use of vacant town centre premises/sites will help ensure that our centres retain their role as economic and community hubs, both during the day and into the evening.



Community Facilities

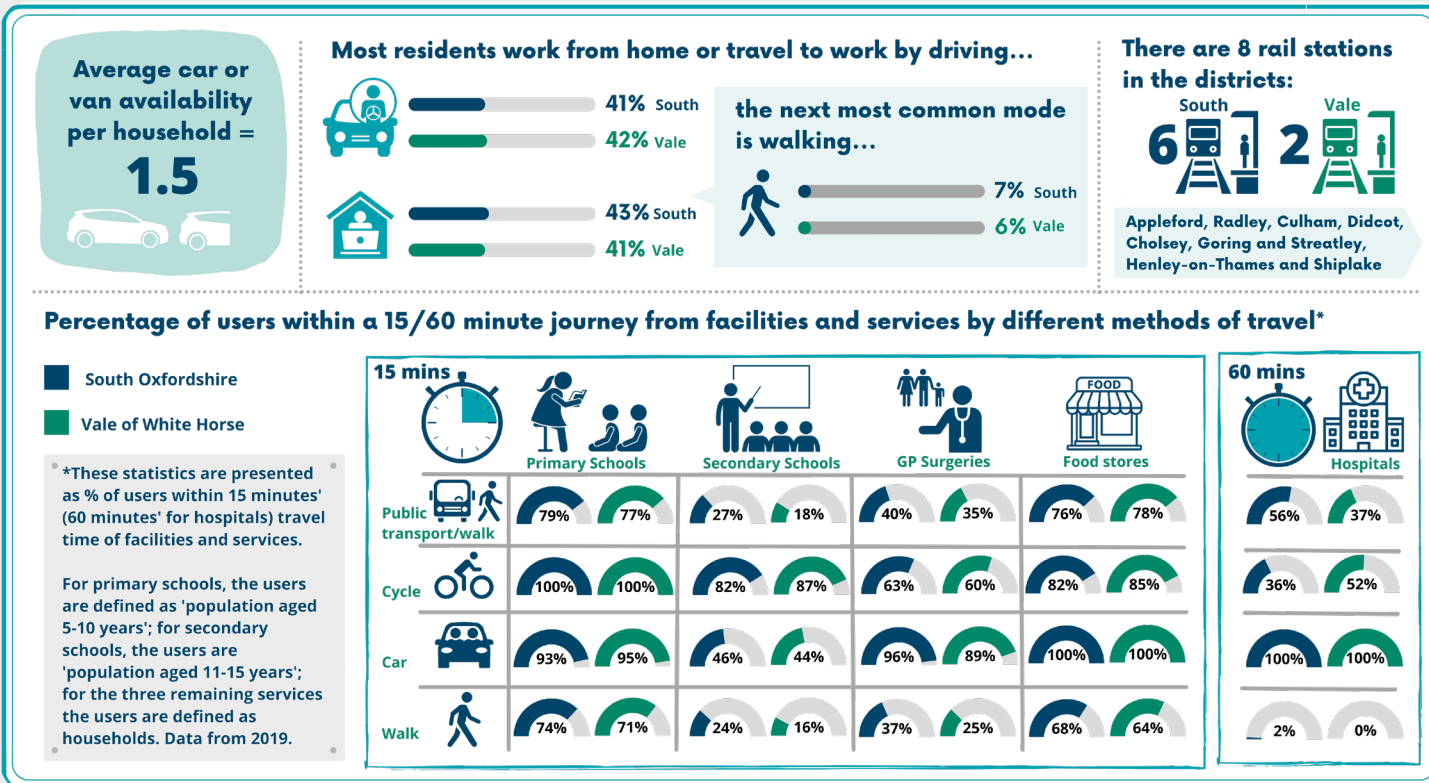
- We’ll need new and improved community infrastructure like schools, community halls, sport and leisure facilities, health care facilities and green spaces to go with the new homes and jobs already planned (and in some cases already delivered).
- These improvements are likely to be in or near areas where new development is planned, rather than where there’s less development
- In a refresh of our Infrastructure Delivery Plan, we will identify what’s needed where to support planned development, and we’d value your views on this. The Joint Local Plan will include policies to ensure that developers contribute a fair share of the cost of new infrastructure.

Question:

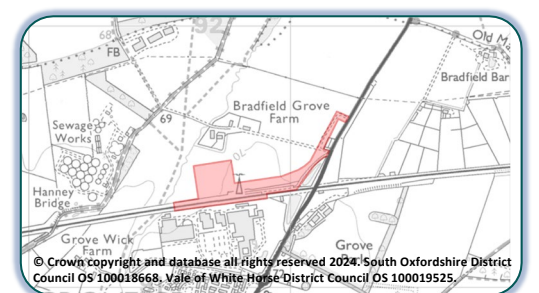
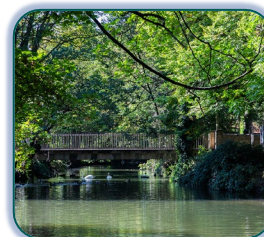
Do you support our approach to jobs, town centres and community facilities?

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Transport and Travel



We're aiming for a plan that moves us towards a more sustainable transport system, where people don't need to drive everywhere by private car and can choose sustainable transport options like walking and cycling, public and shared transport for more of their journeys, we well as less polluting, electric and alternative fuel cars.



We're planning for enhanced public transport including protecting land for a new Wantage and Grove train station.

To do this we're making sure appropriate locations are chosen for development so that residents can access their daily needs without driving, and that travel infrastructure like cycle lanes and electric vehicle charge points are put in place to support sustainable travel, cleaner air and healthy living.



Question:

Do you think the Joint Local Plan should encourage walking, cycling, and the use of buses and trains when planning for future travel?

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Nature Recovery and Landscape



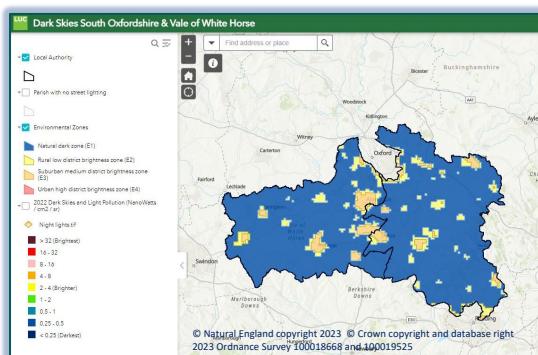
Nature Recovery

Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was before. Under the Environment Act 2021, when developers build, there must be a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain.

In the Joint Local Plan, alongside protecting ecological networks and incorporating features to support wildlife, we propose setting a higher level of biodiversity net gain between 11-25%, as long as the level doesn't make development too expensive to go ahead.

Landscape

In the first consultation we ran on the Joint Local Plan last summer, people told us that protecting our countryside was their number one issue. We have always had planning policies to protect the landscape, but this time we are incorporating some extra policies.



We've also commissioned a map showing the tranquillity of all parts of the districts, and a map showing light pollution and where our darkest skies are. We're proposing new policies we've not had before to go with the maps so that we can protect valued landscapes, tranquil places and dark skies better.

As well as recognising nationally protected landscapes like our two National Landscapes (previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), we've also commissioned research on valued landscapes, so that we recognise and protect areas that may not be nationally designated but are nevertheless special and locally important to communities.



Question:

Do you think we should add these additional policies to protect nature and landscape in the Joint Local Plan?

Key policies to find out more: Policy NH1 – Nature Recovery, Policy NH5 – Landscape, Policy NH6 – Valued Landscapes, Policy NH7 - Tranquillity and tranquil areas, Policy NH2 - Biodiversity designations Policy NH4 - Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes Policy CE11 - Light pollution and dark skies

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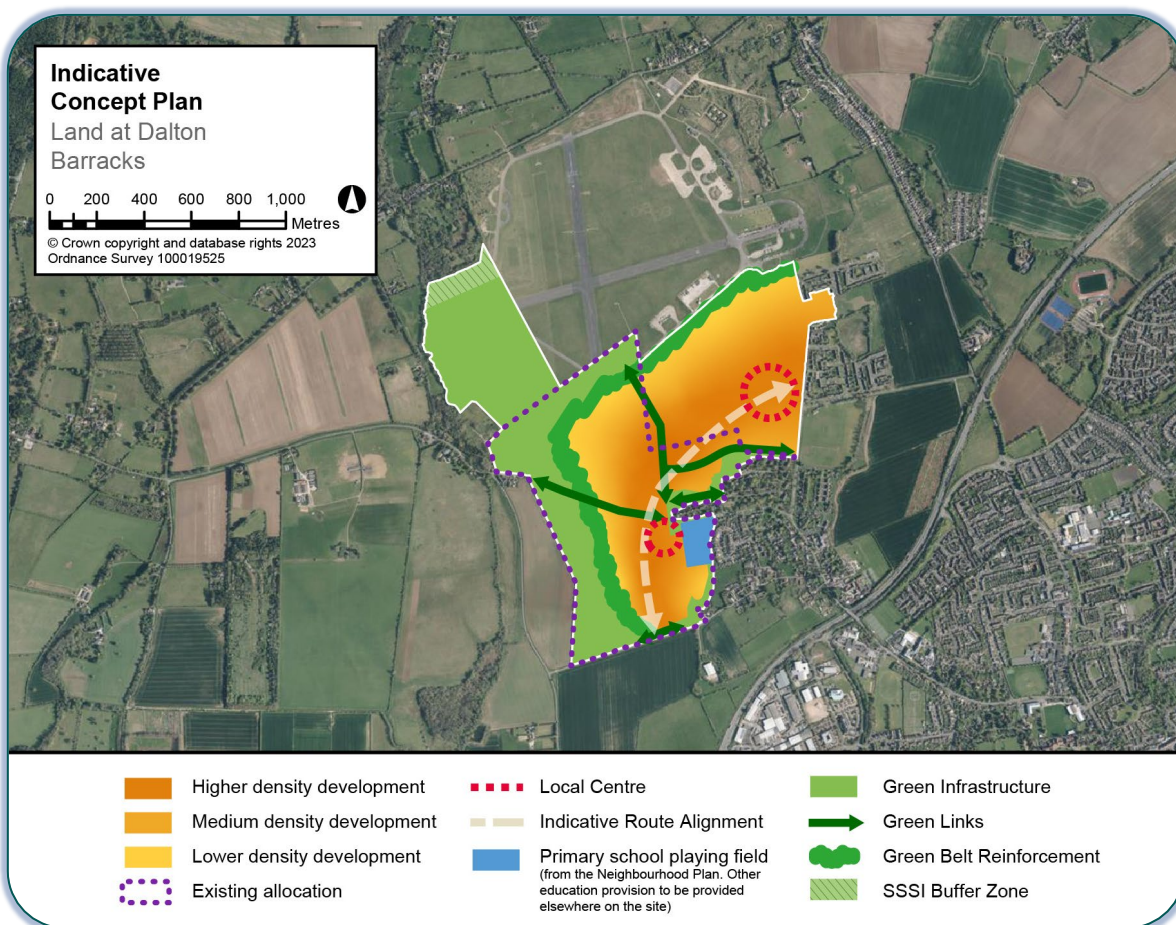
Planning for brownfield sites

Although the Councils do not need to make any new housing allocations to meet the housing numbers, and do not plan to make any new greenfield allocations in this local plan, where there are brownfield sites in sustainable locations which could be regenerated or re-used, we propose to allocate these to help them find a new future.

So far we have identified two brownfield sites we propose to allocate: the barracks area at Dalton Barracks (in Vale of White Horse), and the site where the former Council offices stood at Crowmarsh Gifford (in South Oxfordshire).



Site Allocation - Dalton Barracks



Location:

Shippon, to the north of Abingdon on Thames

Site area:

Around 145 hectares
(currently: 77 hectares)

Current use:

Currently a Ministry of Defence site, vacating 2029

Proposed number of new homes: Approximately 2,750

Supporting services and facilities:

Parkland, healthcare and education provision, leisure and recreational facilities, local centres, and opportunities for employment.

- The site is currently a Ministry of Defence site located adjacent to the village of Shippon to the north of Abingdon-on-Thames. Part of this site is already allocated in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031, Part 2 (Core Policy 8a), for 1,200 homes.
- Through the Joint Local Plan we propose to continue and extend the allocation at Dalton Barracks, for the delivery of an exemplar mixed-use development, comprising approximately 2,750 new homes, alongside supporting services and facilities, following Garden Village Principles. These homes will be delivered mainly within the plan period. up until 2041, but also beyond it.

- **Key policies to find out more:** Policy AS10 - Land at Dalton Barracks Garden Village, Shippon
Policy AS14 - Dalton Barracks Garden Village

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Site Allocation - Site of the former Council Offices, Crowmarsh Gifford

What do we want to achieve on this site

- This site 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 close to the settlement of Wallingford, it is appropriate for us to consider what use or uses it should have in the future through this plan.
- 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.

Location: Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford

Site area: Just over 2.5 hectares

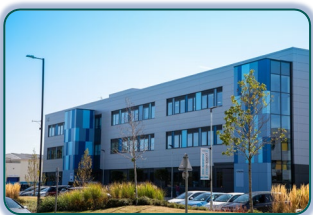
Current use: Vacant employment site



What do you think is the best use of the site?

Option A

Employment use



Allocate the site for employment use - 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



Allocate the site for housing - We are expecting the site to have capacity for approximately 100 homes, which will need further work to determine.

Option C

Specialist housing



Allocate the site to address the housing needs of a specific group or groups, solely or alongside other uses, for example:

- Specialised housing for older people
- Plots for self and/or custom housebuilders

Option D

Other uses



- Community facilities?
- Environmental use/renewable energy?
- Leisure and recreational uses?

- **Key policy to find out more:** Policy AS16 - Land at Crowmarsh Gifford, Benson Lane - Site of former district council offices

Alternative formats of this publication, a summary of its contents or specific sections, are available on request.

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