

South Oxfordshire LOCAL PLAN 2011-2035



ADOPTED
DECEMBER
2020

www.southoxon.gov.uk/localplan

3 OUR SPATIAL STRATEGY

Introduction

- 3.1 Our spatial strategy sets out how we will deliver the vision and objectives set out in Chapter 2. It identifies the roles that Science Vale, including Didcot Garden Town and Culham, the market towns, the villages and the countryside, including areas adjacent to Oxford City allocated for strategic development in this Plan will play in the future. It shows where new homes will be built, where opportunities to provide new jobs will be created, and where infrastructure and services will be required. It shows how we will work in partnership to deliver the strategy with those responsible for key services, including healthcare, education, transport, water supply and community safety and with others such as affordable housing providers.
- 3.2 Local planning authorities have a responsibility to plan positively and work collaboratively. We cannot plan in isolation, and South Oxfordshire has been working with, and continues to work with the other Oxfordshire authorities, supported by the Oxfordshire Growth Board, Local Enterprise Partnership, key stakeholders, our parish and town councils and infrastructure providers and with government. We have signed up to the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal which commits the Oxfordshire authorities to delivering growth.
- 3.3 The Plan seeks to meet needs identified for South Oxfordshire as well as all the needs apportioned to the district arising from our neighbour Oxford City. A joint work programme with the other Oxfordshire authorities² identified the scale of Oxford City's unmet needs and how they can best be met.
- 3.4 All allocations made in the Core Strategy are retained and the Local Plan makes provision for housing to meet additional housing requirements identified in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2014. The strategy has been updated to help address the key challenges facing the district now and to make best use of available opportunities.
- 3.5 Our strategy delivers sustainable development, supporting the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in national policy.

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

The Strategy

3.6 Historically, growth in South Oxfordshire has been largely focused upon Didcot and the market towns of Thame, Wallingford and Henley-on-Thames. Other than Wallingford, these towns are located towards the boundary of our district and the historic focus of development to the periphery of the district has led to a reduction in development to support the investment in services and infrastructure in other areas.

3.7 The issues and options version of the Local Plan presented a series of potential options for the distribution of development within the district.

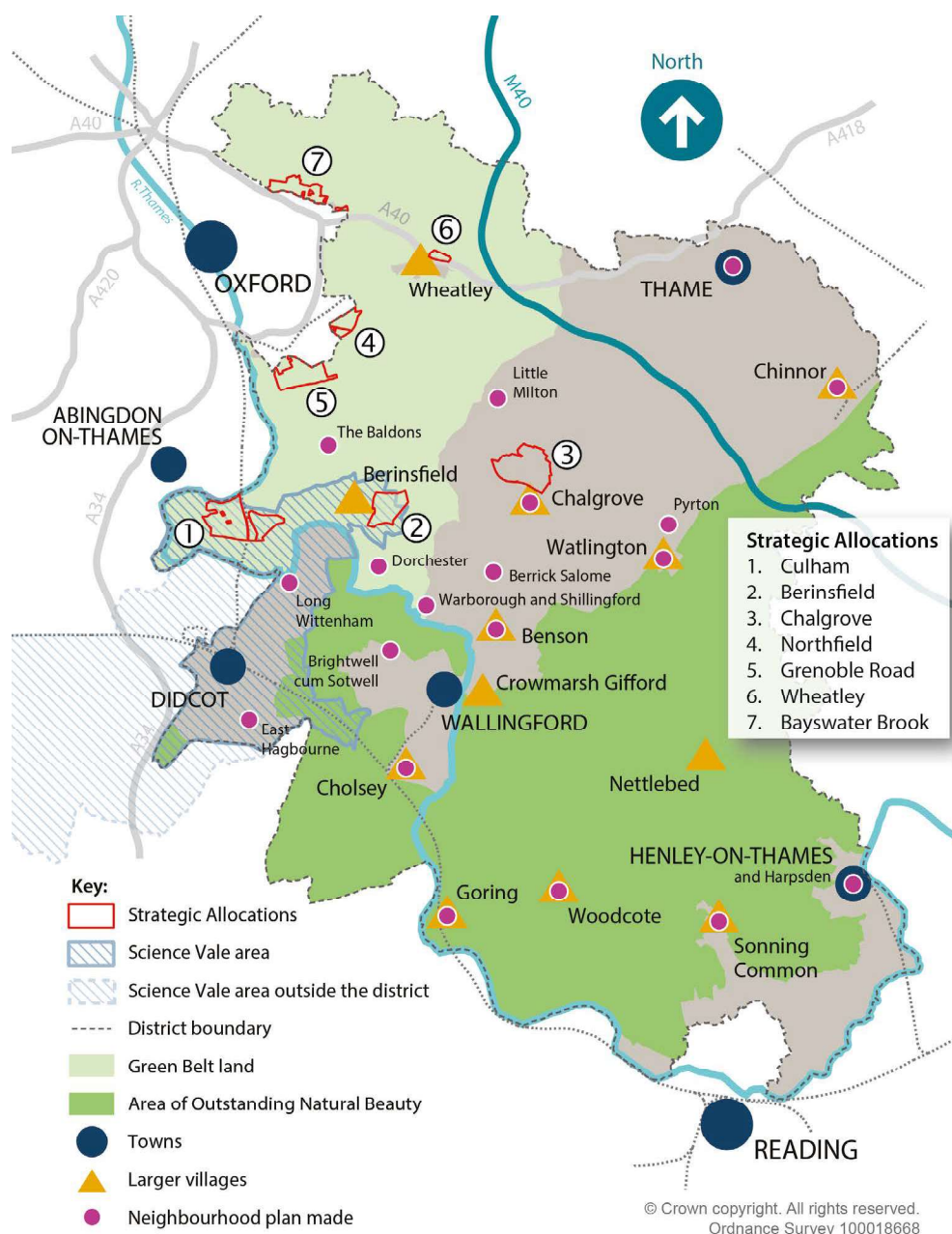
- a) Core Strategy approach
- b) Science Vale and 'sustainable settlements'
- c) All in Science Vale
- d) All in single new settlement
- e) Dispersal
- f) Next to neighbouring major urban areas (Reading/Oxford)
- g) Raising densities (from 25dph)
- h) Locating development in settlements where it could help fund projects.

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

3.8 Each of these options was consulted upon and tested through the Sustainability Appraisal. The final strategy is to principally focus development at Science Vale and sustainable settlements (which include Towns and Larger Villages), where over 70% of housing will be located and to deliver elements of some of these options rather than favouring any one scenario in isolation. The strategy draws together the Core Strategy approach with development at Science Vale and next to the neighbouring major urban area of Oxford. It is also complemented by the location of development to fund regeneration and by the Local Plan raising densities. Drawing on a combined approach to the distribution of new housing development enables a series of benefits to be delivered through the Local Plan and this ensures that the housing needs of the district can be accommodated.

3.9 Our strategy supports the delivery of new housing and economic growth and translates our vision and objectives under inter-related spatial themes to:

- Support a strong network of vibrant settlements including the regeneration of town centres, making the whole district more sustainable, recognising the rural nature of South Oxfordshire and the effects generated by nearby major centres;
- Contribute to tackling climate change;



- Support a movement strategy that strengthens connections to key places, allows a choice of transport modes and manages traffic to improve environmental quality;
- Create a thriving economy in urban and rural areas with a range of work opportunities including more high value jobs and enable the up-skilling of our workforce to support existing and new businesses;
- Deliver sufficient new homes to meet the needs of the communities and economy supported by appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities;
- Maintain and enhance the built, historic and natural environment and ensure good quality developments and design.

- 3.10 The Local Plan seeks to build upon the existing settlement hierarchy and actively create a sustainable pattern of development throughout the district. It identifies strategic allocations at seven locations at Chalgrove, Culham, Berinsfield, Grenoble Road, Northfield, North of Bayswater Brook and Wheatley.
- 3.11 The spatial strategy supports growth in locations that help reduce the need to travel such as the focus at Science Vale, Towns and Larger Villages as well as allocations adjacent to the City of Oxford. Appendix 16 of the Local Plan highlights all elements of the Local Plan where the Plan helps to minimise carbon emissions, lower energy use and help to reduce the need to travel.

Policy STRAT1: The Overall Strategy

1. **Proposals for development in South Oxfordshire will be assessed using national policy and guidance and the whole of the Development Plan* and should be consistent with the overall strategy of:**
 - i) **focusing major new development in Science Vale including sustainable growth at Didcot Garden Town and Culham so that this area can play an enhanced role in providing homes, jobs and services with improved transport connectivity;**
 - ii) **providing strategic allocations at Chalgrove, Culham, Berinsfield, Grenoble Road, Northfield, North of Bayswater Brook and Wheatley including necessary infrastructure and community facilities;**
 - iii) **close working with partner agencies, neighbouring local authorities, communities and other stakeholders to ensure the timely delivery of our strategy, which will deliver a significant amount of growth beyond the end of the plan period;**
 - iv) **supporting and enhancing the economic and social dependencies between our towns and villages;**
 - v) **supporting the roles of Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford by maintaining and improving the attractiveness of their town centres through measures that include environmental improvements and mixed-use developments and by providing new homes, jobs, services and infrastructure;**
 - vi) **meeting unmet housing needs of Oxford City on strategic allocations adjacent to the boundary of Oxford near to where that need arises;**
 - vii) **supporting and enhancing the roles of the Larger Villages of Benson, Berinsfield, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Goring-on-Thames, Nettlebed, Sonning Common,**

- Watlington, Wheatley and Woodcote as local service centres;**
- viii) supporting Smaller and Other Villages by allowing for limited amounts of housing and employment to help secure the provision and retention of services;**
 - ix) protecting and enhancing the countryside and particularly those areas within the two AONBs and Oxford Green Belt by ensuring that outside of the towns and villages any change relates to very specific needs such as those of the agricultural industry or enhancement of the environment;**
 - x) supporting and enhancing our historic environment; and**
 - xi) contributing to tackling climate change.**

*The Development Plan is outlined in paragraph 1.12

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

- 3.12 Understanding the nature of our towns and villages and how they inter-relate and link with places outside the district is a vital part of our strategy. Movement patterns are complex and vary with the purpose of the journey. Some key services such as main hospitals and regional shopping centres will continue to be provided outside the district, particularly in Oxford and Reading.
- 3.13 The strategy can influence how services and employment are accessed and where new development is located within the district. It can support and influence where and how service providers deliver their services and encourage different and improved ways of delivery.
- 3.14 South Oxfordshire has around 140 settlements, although some are just isolated groups of houses with no community facilities. These vary considerably in size and character reflecting their natural setting and historical development. The settlements in the district have been categorised by the services and facilities they offer and a hierarchy of policies has been established on this basis. We looked at these against a range of criteria on employment opportunities, schools, health services, recreation and leisure opportunities and access to shops and public transport provision to prepare a settlement assessment and hierarchy³. Villages have been categorised as being either "Larger Villages", with a wide range of services and facilities in sustainable locations, or "Smaller Villages" that have a more limited range of services. There is a clear distinction between the villages in the settlement hierarchy but we will be promoting development through this Plan to the most sustainable locations. We are directing development to the Larger Villages to complement the spatial strategy and will support those Neighbourhood Development Plan groups who

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³ Settlement Assessment
Background Paper, South
Oxfordshire December 2018

wish to promote development in the Smaller Villages. In addition, there are “Other Villages” which lie at the bottom of the settlement hierarchy, being hamlets or very small settlements with very limited or no services. Our Local Plan reflects the status of settlements in this assessment.

- 3.15 Our vision and objectives for South Oxfordshire recognise the rural nature of our district and the importance of our rural settlements in contributing to what makes South Oxfordshire such a beautiful and prosperous place to live. Our strategy for the Local Plan is to continue to ensure that all our communities thrive and that everyone has access to services within a short distance. This is achieved through our network of settlements and the settlement hierarchy, which ensures development takes place within the more sustainable locations of the district.

Meeting our Housing and Employment Needs

- 3.16 National Planning Policy is clear that local planning authorities should, as a minimum, provide for the objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in their area. They should also provide for any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas where this has been agreed through a statement of common ground.

- 3.17 The NPPF⁴ and Planning Practice Guidance⁵ expects local planning authorities to use the “standard method” to establish the minimum local housing need figure. For South Oxfordshire this results in an annual housing need of 627 homes a year. This figure represents the minimum annual housing need for South Oxfordshire. It does not automatically translate into the housing requirement for the Local Plan, which has taken into account other factors when determining the homes to plan for.

- 3.18 The Planning Practice Guidance⁶ explains that the standard method for working out housing need is just the starting point for working out how many homes to plan for. It does not attempt to predict the impact that future government policies, changing economic circumstances or other factors, might have on demographic behaviour. The Guidance states that Councils should consider uplifting the housing requirement for the Local Plan above the results of the standard method. It gives the examples of where a housing or growth deal is in place, where strategic infrastructure improvements are planned to support new homes, where an authority has agreed to take on unmet need from a neighbour (based on that authority’s standard method results), and where a recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) suggests higher levels of need.

⁴ Paragraph 60

^{5, 6} See Planning Practice
Guidance - Housing Needs
Assessment

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- 3.19 South Oxfordshire is a partner of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. Along with the other District and County Councils in Oxfordshire, we have collectively committed to plan for 100,000 new homes between 2011 and 2031. In return for this commitment to deliver higher than our local housing needs, government has granted some flexibilities with regard to our housing land supply in the short term, as well as committing to £150m worth of infrastructure funding for the first five years of the deal.
- 3.20 The Growth Deal itself is not however an assessment of housing need. It does not seek to model the growth in population, address affordability or identify the effects of changes in government policy or economic circumstances might have on housing needs. Consequently, the Growth Deal does not identify housing requirement for each district, nor does it attempt to apportion any housing needs from one authority to another.
- 3.21 The Deal derives its aspirational housing target from the Oxfordshire SHMA. The SHMA was published in April 2014 and is therefore close to the five-year lifespan that planning documents have before the NPPF directs they must be reviewed. Furthermore, the SHMA is based on 2011 “interim” household projections, and so the base data on which it is grounded is now quite dated. The SHMA is also based on a methodology for working out housing needs that was set out in the first NPPF (March 2012) and original Planning Practice Guidance.
- 3.22 However, the SHMA is the only document that provides an evidenced approach to the 100,000 homes identified in the Oxfordshire Growth Deal. It is also the only document that seeks to split the 100,000 home target between each of the constituent authorities. The SHMA looked at both the expected growth in population, the anticipated economic growth between 2011 and 2031 and the need to support affordable housing provision.
- 3.23 The SHMA is based on economic forecasts and considers a number of possible economic growth scenarios. In South Oxfordshire, the evidence considers that the provision of 750 dwellings a year would support economic growth. It represents the committed economic growth scenario forecast in the SHMA and takes forward planned growth set out in the Strategic Economic Plan. This is primarily to meet the needs of our existing businesses wishing to expand and to allow for new business formation at similar rates to the past. A proportion of this provision would also meet the need for affordable housing in the district.
- 3.24 Based on these assessments, the SHMA made recommendations in terms of the housing range that the Local Plan should be planning for which recognised that the affordable housing evidence provided a basis for considering higher housing

In South Oxfordshire, the evidence considers that the provision of 750 dwellings a year would support economic growth

provision. This was presented in the form of a range which identifies a total need for between 14,500 and 16,500 homes for South Oxfordshire over the twenty-year period 2011-2031. This would equate to an annual provision of between 725-825 new homes. The 100,000 home target of the Growth Deal is based on the midpoint of this range (775 homes a year).

3.25 The Growth Deal commitments and the Oxfordshire SHMA are a sound justification for uplifting South Oxfordshire's housing requirement above the 627 homes per year from the standard method. Taken together, the evidence sets a housing requirement for South Oxfordshire of 775 homes a year between 2011 and 2035, or a total plan requirement of 18,600 homes. This is explained further in Section 5 of this Plan and the Housing Topic Paper.

Oxford City Council has identified that it will have difficulty in meeting its own identified housing commitments of the Growth Deal

3.26 Oxford City Council has identified that it will have difficulty in meeting its own identified housing commitments of the Growth Deal, and has asked the other Oxfordshire authorities to assist in the provision of housing. South Oxfordshire District Council has engaged constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with all the authorities and relevant prescribed bodies in Oxfordshire under the Duty to Cooperate to identify the scale of unmet need and how Oxford City's housing requirement should be distributed across the county.

3.27 In September 2016 the Oxfordshire Growth Board considered a Memorandum of Cooperation between each of its five members on how to accommodate the levels of unmet need arising from Oxford City. This was based on the housing need set out in the 2014 SHMA and consequently the Oxfordshire Growth Deal. It sets out an amount of housing for each authority to plan for, based on an assumed unmet need of 15,000 homes from Oxford City. It also included an agreement that the delivery of these homes would be monitored as part of housing land supply calculations from 1 April 2021 to allow local plans to come forward to address this need.

3.28 The Council considers that it can meet the full 4,950 homes apportioned to South Oxfordshire through this agreement, and proposes to monitor this between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2035.

3.29 The Oxford City Council Local Plan identifies a housing target of 1,400 homes a year based on the Oxfordshire SHMA, the Oxfordshire Growth Deal, and a 2018 SHMA "roll forward". This Council has agreed to support Oxford City in meeting their housing needs to 2036. The Local Plan does so through providing a total of 4,950 homes between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2035.

3.30 To ensure that we meet the needs requested by Oxford City, the Local Plan has



identified strategic sites on the edge of the City. These sites will also provide an increased level of affordable housing in line with those levels required by Oxford City as set out in Policy H9 (Affordable Housing).

- 3.31 Along with the other authorities in Oxfordshire, the Council will continue to monitor the housing needs of Oxford City. The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 will be the appropriate plan for addressing any needs that arise for Oxford City beyond 2036.
- 3.32 There is an uncertainty as to how the emerging Oxford to Cambridge corridor might impact on South Oxfordshire and the other districts of Oxfordshire. A Ministerial Statement has been published⁷ endorsing the recommendations of the NIC⁸ to establish a new corridor between the two cities, but uncertainty remains as to how the corridor is to actually be created and how the growth plans adopted by Councils across the corridor might be aligned. South Oxfordshire will be undertaking a review of its Local Plan once both Oxford City and South Oxfordshire have adopted their plans and the implications of the Oxford to Cambridge corridor, including the route of a proposed Expressway between the two cities, are clearer. This is the most appropriate and responsible manner in which to plan for additional homes until the full extent is known.
- 3.33 The housing requirement for South Oxfordshire is set out in Policy STRAT2.
- 3.34 National Planning Policy requires that planning policies should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. It is clear that local planning authorities should set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth.
- 3.35 The 2014 SHMA forecasts anticipated economic growth across Oxfordshire and the district between 2011 and 2031. The SHMA forecasts a total increase in

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cambridge-milton-keynes-oxford-arc-study-government-response>

⁸ <https://www.nic.org.uk/publications/partnering-prosperity-new-deal-cambridge-milton-keynes-oxford-arc/>

employment of around 88,000 people for Oxfordshire with an increase of 11,455 jobs in South Oxfordshire from 2011 to 2031. The 2017 'South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review Addendum' (SOELRA) examines the forecasts of the 2014 SHMA. Based on the SHMA, the SOELRA projects an increase of 12,403 jobs from 2011 to 2033.

- 3.36 To plan for the economic growth forecast in the 2014 SHMA, the SOELRA forecasts that 35.9 hectares of additional employment land is required in the district over the period 2011 to 2033. As this employment forecast ends at 2033, to account for the additional years in the plan period, a further 3.2 hectares is required. This results in a minimum requirement of 39.1 hectares of employment land in the district over the period 2011 to 2035.
- 3.37 In order encourage sustainable economic growth and meet this requirement, the Local Plan identifies locations and allocations for employment throughout the district, dispersed between the Plan's strategic allocations and the sustainable locations. This approach reflects the Local Plan's spatial strategy.
- 3.38 Our locations for employment are as follows, as set out further in Policy EMP1:
- Within Science Vale:
- Culham Science Centre and the adjacent strategic site;
 - Didcot, albeit with some in the Vale of White Horse;
 - the strategic sites in Berinsfield.
- At sustainable locations:
- The strategic sites in Chalgrove and Grenoble Road; the towns of Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford with sites to be identified in Neighbourhood Development Plans; and
 - at Crowmarsh Gifford with sites to be identified in Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Policy STRAT2: South Oxfordshire Housing and Employment Requirements

- During the plan period, provision will be made to meet the following requirements:**
- Housing requirements**
 - **South Oxfordshire Minimum Housing Requirement - 18,600 between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2035;**
 - **4,950 homes addressing Oxford's unmet housing need (between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2035).**
 - **Total housing requirement for the plan period 23,550 homes.**

The annual requirement is as follows:

- 2011/12 to 2025/26 - 900 homes per annum;
- 2026/27 to 2031/32 - 1,120 homes per annum;
- 2032/33 to 2034/35 - 1,110 homes per annum.

3. Employment land requirements

- **South Oxfordshire Minimum Employment Land Requirement 39.1 hectares between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2035.**
4. **These requirements are to be delivered in accordance with the spatial strategy set out in STRAT1.**
 5. **The locations and trajectory for housing development is identified in Policy H1.**
 6. **The appropriate level of new housing and employment will be monitored and a review undertaken within five years following the adoption of the Local Plan, taking into account the most up-to-date evidence available at that time.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 2 & 3.

Didcot and Science Vale

3.39 Science Vale is already an international location for science and technology.

From this strong starting point, we need to capitalise on Science Vale's opportunity to provide an even better environment for business to flourish. Science Vale is one of the most successful science clusters in the UK. This activity is concentrated around the three centres for science at Harwell Campus, Culham Science Centre and Milton Park, but is supported by a number of important settlements. Didcot is at the heart of Science Vale. It makes the first and leaves the last impression on anyone travelling to Science Vale from elsewhere in the UK or from across the globe and it provides the ideal opportunity to act both as a gateway and a hub.

3.40 The Local Plan's vision for Science Vale in 2035 is grounded in continuing this story of economic success and channelling this prosperity into improved social and environmental wellbeing: the area will consist of thriving communities that have benefited from sustainable growth and the successful delivery of major infrastructure.

From this strong starting point, we need to capitalise on Science Vale's opportunity to provide an even better environment for business to flourish

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.

Implementing the Spatial Strategy

Policy STRAT4: Strategic Development

1. **New development will be provided within strategic allocations in order to deliver the scale and distribution of development set out in Policies STRAT1 and STRAT2 in this chapter.**
2. **Development proposals should enable a comprehensive scheme to be delivered within each strategic allocation. Developers must ensure that the sites provide an appropriate scale and mix of uses, in suitable locations, to create sustainable developments that support and complement the role of existing settlements and communities.**
3. **Proposals must be accompanied by a comprehensive masterplan for the entire strategic allocation. This should demonstrate how new development will integrate with and complement its surroundings in an appropriate manner.**
4. **Proposals must ensure that necessary supporting infrastructure is provided. Developers must engage with relevant infrastructure providers to ensure the implementation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.**
5. **Proposals to deliver strategic development need to be supported by:**
 - i) **a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;**
 - ii) **a Health Impact Assessment;**
 - iii) **a Transport Assessment;**

- iv) an Air Quality Assessment;
- v) an Arboricultural Survey;
- vi) an Ecological Impact Assessment;
- vii) a site specific flood risk assessment which takes into consideration the findings and recommendations of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
- viii) a Heritage Impact Assessment;
- ix) an archaeological desk based assessment to provide an assessment of archaeological significance; and
- x) a statement of how it is intended to achieve low carbon emissions and facilitate renewable energy generation.

6. Each development will be expected to provide:

- i) a scheme of an appropriate scale, layout and form which respects the surrounding character and setting;
- ii) high quality public transport facilities and connections within and adjacent to the site;
- iii) appropriate vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access including safe and attractive connections with nearby communities and employment areas;
- iv) investigation and mitigation by the developer of any former land uses on the site which may give rise to contamination;
- v) a Noise Assessment including noise during construction and noise insulation of development;
- vi) a Landscape Management Plan to provide appropriate landscaping and an integrated network of Green Infrastructure;
- vii) an Ecological and Landscape Management Plan to be provided to manage habitats onsite;
- viii) an integrated water management plan to include proposed foul and surface water drainage strategies;
- ix) leisure facilities and playing pitches as outlined in the Council's current Leisure Study; and
- x) low carbon development and renewable energy.

7. This policy will also be used to determine planning applications for large scale major development.

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

Green Belt

3.55 In 1992 the Central Oxfordshire Local Plan defined the boundaries of the Green Belt within South Oxfordshire.

3.56 The five purposes of the Green Belt are to:

- check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
- prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- preserve the setting and special character of historic towns (such as Oxford);
- assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

3.57 The Plan has made alterations to the Green Belt to accommodate our strategic allocations at Culham, Berinsfield, Grenoble Road, Northfield, Land North of Bayswater Brook and Wheatley. These alterations are shown at Appendix 4. The individual sections within the Plan which are relevant to each of these strategic allocations, provide specific detail on the approach for its release and mitigation. The policy requires compensatory measures to be delivered to remediate for the removal of land from the Green Belt. This is required by the National Planning Policy Framework at paragraph 138. Each relevant strategic allocation policy where Green Belt has been altered sets out requirements for the site and some of these measures could be considered as compensatory measures. Evidence on landscape, biodiversity or recreational needs with site specific recommendations and opportunities will also provide recommendations for enhancements that would deliver compensatory improvements on remaining Green Belt. The compensatory gain would be expected to be demonstrated through the individual site masterplans and secured through developer contributions if these enhancements are outside of the red line boundary of a planning application.

3.58 The Local Plan gives substantial weight to protecting the Green Belt when considering any planning application. Only appropriate development will be permitted in the Green Belt in accordance with national planning policy; inappropriate development will only be permitted in very special circumstances.

The Local Plan gives substantial weight to protecting the Green Belt when considering any planning application

Policy STRAT6: Green Belt

1. To ensure the Green Belt continues to serve its key functions, it will be protected from harmful development. Within its boundaries, development will be restricted to those limited types of development which are deemed appropriate by the NPPF, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
2. The Green Belt boundary has been altered to accommodate strategic allocations at STRAT8, STRAT9, STRAT10i, STRAT11, STRAT12, STRAT13 and STRAT14, where the development should deliver compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land, with measures supported by evidence of landscape, biodiversity or recreational needs and opportunities. The boundaries of the reviewed Green Belt are identified on the changes to the Green Belt boundary maps (see Appendix 4).
3. Detailed amendments to the Green Belt made by the Wheatley Neighbourhood Development Plan must be in compliance with the requirements of the NPPF and the need identified within the Local Plan.
4. Where land has been removed from the Green Belt, new development should be carefully designed to minimise visual impact.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 6 and 7.

Land at Chalgrove Airfield

- 3.59 Chalgrove Airfield is a former Second World War airfield located directly north of the village of Chalgrove, north east of the B480, approximately 11 miles to the east of central Oxford and approximately 5 miles south of junction 7 of the M40 motorway.
- 3.60 The airfield opened in 1943 and was closed in July 1946 when it was leased to the Martin-Baker company for development and testing of aircraft ejection seats. Martin-Baker Aircraft Company Limited ("Martin-Baker") undertake the

Land at Culham Science Centre

3.67 Culham Science Centre (CSC) is owned by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) and is located within 'Science Vale'. The site hosts the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy which includes the Joint European Torus (JET) project. It is the leading UK centre for fusion research and technology and is of international importance. The site also hosts a number of related businesses. The UKAEA aims to redevelop the CSC buildings within the next five years as the current stock is outdated. The Government is committed to this world renowned technology innovation enclave with high levels of investment planned. CSC cannot expand without necessary infrastructure, including the Didcot to Culham River Crossing and Clifton Hampden Bypass.

3.68 The Council recognises the key role of the CSC site and supports and encourages its redevelopment. This site has been inset from the Green Belt as a result of this Plan. A masterplan should be prepared and agreed with the Local Planning Authority that will consider the future of the whole site. This approach to Culham is consistent with the objective to increase the number of high quality jobs in the district.

The Local Plan proposes development here that will have access to employment opportunities as well as public transport at the railway station

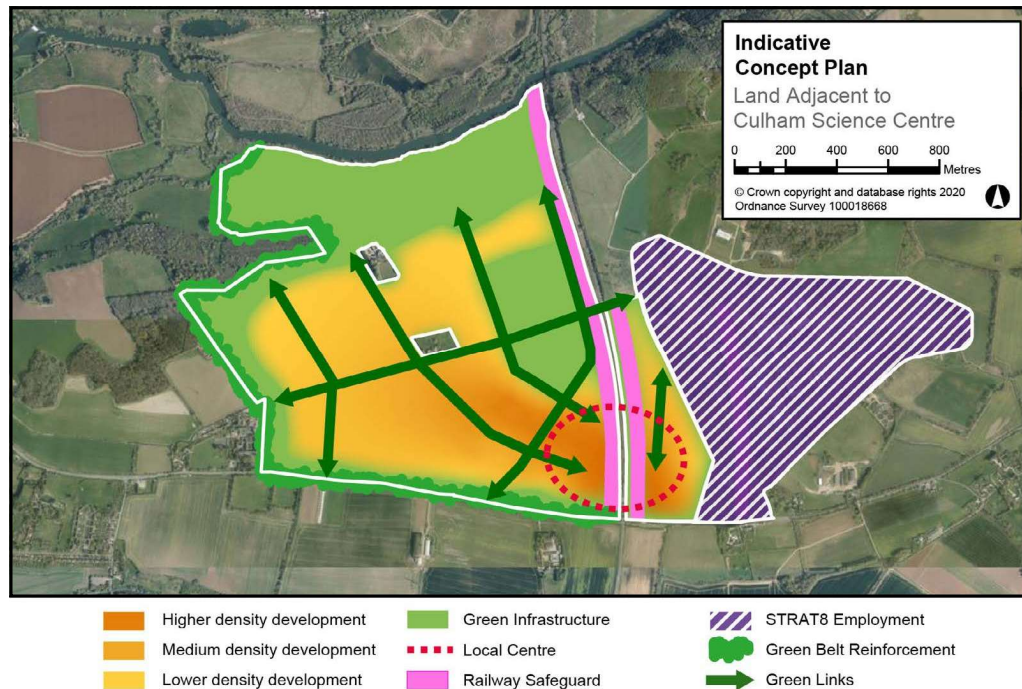
3.69 The Council will continue to support the redevelopment and intensification of the Culham Science Centre for research and science based business. At the adjacent 'No. 1 site' and land west of the railway the Council expects a mixed use development to be brought forward including the retention of employment land, but with improved premises, comprehensively across the allocated site and Culham Science Centre. This provides an opportunity to provide significant development in a sustainable location. The Local Plan proposes development here that will have access to employment opportunities as well as public transport at the 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. This development will include a variety of services and facilities to support a new community including schools, health care and retail. Development in this location will also help enable much needed road infrastructure in the area through part-funding. The road infrastructure is being forward funded from government in anticipation that there will be contributions from the developers benefitting from the infrastructure.

3.70 This Local Plan has inset Culham Science Centre and land adjacent to it from the Green Belt. The site is at the outer edge of the Green Belt. This location is also at a distance from the special historic setting of the City of Oxford and

does not make a significant contribution towards the purposes of including land in the Green Belt to check the unrestricted sprawl of Oxford City. The exceptional circumstances justifying a release of the Green Belt through the Local Plan in this area are:

- To enable the Culham Science Centre to realise its full potential as a science campus where publicly funded science research and commercial technology growth can flourish.
- The additional land provides an opportunity to deliver housing adjacent to one of the major employers in southern Oxfordshire.
- Development in this location is at the heart of Science Vale and supports the delivery of much needed significant strategic infrastructure.

- 3.71 The Council supports delivery of a new Thames crossing between Didcot and Culham as well as the Clifton Hampden Bypass, as identified in Policy TRANS1b. This crossing has strategic transport benefits and is required to support development allocated in this Local Plan, as well as development allocated in the Vale Local Plan Part 1 and Part 2. It is also part of a package of transport infrastructure in this area as identified in the Science Vale Area Transport Strategy in the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 4.
- 3.72 The delivery of the following infrastructure is expected to be complete in 2024, as it is to be forward funded by the Government's 'Housing and Infrastructure Fund' and other existing funding:
- the Didcot to Culham River Crossing; and
 - the Clifton Hampden Bypass.
- 3.73 The Culham Brake Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located to the north west of the STRAT9 site allocation. The Culham Brake SSSI is protected due to its national importance as one of the largest populations of the summer snowflake *Leucojum aestivum*. High level assessments suggest that strategic development at Culham is unlikely to have any negative hydrological effect on the Culham Brake SSSI, as the SSSI is watered directly by the Swift Ditch. Appropriate consideration should be given to the SSSI in developing detailed proposals for this site which should be in compliance with the indicative concept plan below.
- 3.74 STRAT9 covers part of a minerals safeguarding area as identified in Oxfordshire County Council's Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and the Policies Map identifies the location of other minerals safeguarding in the vicinity.



Policy STRAT8: Culham Science Centre

Site area: 77 hectares

1. Proposals for the redevelopment and intensification of the Culham Science Centre will be supported where this does not have an unacceptable visual impact, particularly on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and the Registered Parkland associated with Nuneham House.
2. In combination with the adjacent strategic allocation (Policy STRAT9) this site will deliver at least a net increase in employment land of 7.3 hectares (with the existing 10 hectares of the No.1 site retained but redistributed across the two strategic allocations). The exact siting and phasing of the employment development must be agreed through the master planning and subsequent planning application process including addressing any heritage assets and their settings in accordance with Policy ENV6 and the NPPF.
3. Proposals for development on the site should seek to achieve a net gain in biodiversity. Any residual biodiversity loss should be offset through a recognised offsetting scheme.

4. Opportunities that support job growth and appropriate diversification or enterprise “clustering” will be supported to complement the wider development proposed in the area. Working proactively with the UK Atomic Energy Authority and development partners a masterplan for the site that facilitates this growth must be prepared and agreed with the Local Planning Authority.
5. Proposals will be expected to deliver low carbon development and renewable energy in accordance with STRAT4.
6. The Culham Science Centre is removed from the Green Belt and inset as shown on Land inset from the Green Belt Boundary (Appendix 4) to enable this development to be brought forward.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 3 & 8.

Policy STRAT9: Land Adjacent to Culham Science Centre

Site Area : 217 hectares

1. Land within the strategic allocation adjacent to Culham Science Centre will be developed to deliver approximately 3,500 new homes, with approximately 2,100 homes within the plan period, a net increase of at least 7.3 hectares of employment land in combination with the adjacent Science Centre, 3 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and supporting services and facilities.
2. Proposals to develop Culham will be expected to deliver:
 - i) in combination with the adjacent Science Centre a net increase of employment land of at least 7.3 hectares (with the existing 10 hectares of the No.1 site retained but redistributed across the two strategic allocations). The exact siting and phasing of the employment development will be agreed through the planning application process;
 - ii) affordable housing provision and mix in accordance with Policy H9;
 - iii) sufficient additional education capacity, likely to be a total of two new 2 form entry primary schools and one new 8 form entry secondary school with sixth form on site and appropriate

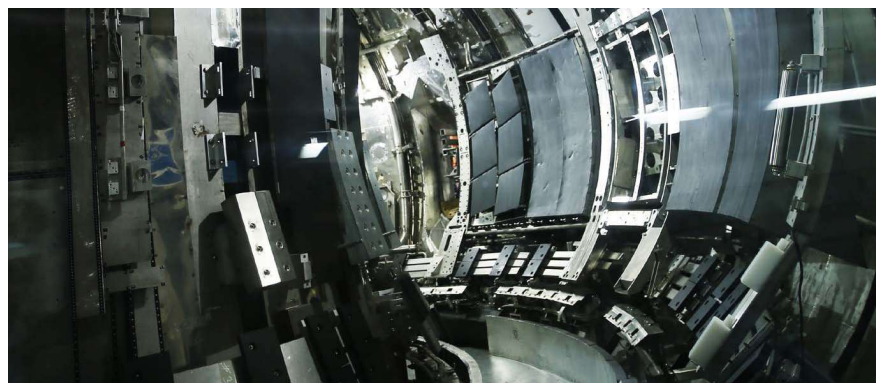
- contributions towards Special Education Needs (SEN);
 - iv) sufficient health care capacity, likely to be a total of one new GP surgery on site to serve existing and future demand in this area in accordance with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
 - v) provision of convenience floorspace that meets the day-to-day needs of the local community only without impacting on the vitality and viability of existing centres in accordance with Policy TC2 – Retail Hierarchy;
 - vi) all necessary infrastructure, referring to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which is likely to include:
 - a. 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;
 - b. provision for excellent sustainable transport facilities including, but not limited to, new and improvements to existing cycle and footpaths including contributions towards a 'Cycle Premium Route' that is proposed between Didcot and Culham; provision of a new cycle bridge and associated connectivity and paths across the River Thames to connect appropriately with Abingdon on Thames to the north of the site; bus improvements including provision of a scheduled bus service, with a minimum of two buses per hour between Berinsfield, Culham and Abingdon, with options to extend or vary services to locations such as Cowley, Chalgrove and Didcot;
 - c. contributions to Culham station improvements including longer platforms, public realm, new station building, and potentially car parking.
 - vii) the provision of appropriate communal parks and gardens and amenity greenspace allotments, children's playspace and open space in accordance with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and
 - viii) low carbon development and renewable energy in accordance with STRAT4.
3. The proposed development at Culham will deliver a scheme in accordance with an agreed comprehensive masterplan taking into consideration the indicative concept plan. The masterplan must be prepared in collaboration and agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council. The proposals will be expected to deliver a masterplan that demonstrates:
- i) 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 Science Centre;
- ii) 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;
 - iii) a layout that recognises the overhead power lines on the site and avoids the built form beneath these where possible;
 - iv) appropriate landscaping and an integrated network of Green Infrastructure throughout the site and in particular along the boundaries of the strategic allocation, 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;
 - v) 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 and "Schola Europaea") and the Registered Park and Garden associated with Nuneham House;
 - vi) 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;
 - vii) 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;
 - viii) high quality walking and cycling routes within the site;
 - ix) provision of infrastructure to support public transport through the site; and
 - x) 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. Any residual biodiversity loss should be offset through a recognised biodiversity offsetting scheme.

4. Archaeological evaluation will need to be undertaken ahead of the determination of any planning application in order to assess the significance of deposits in line with the NPPF. A scheme of appropriate mitigation will be required following this evaluation including the physical preservation of significant archaeological features and their setting where appropriate.
5. Proposals will need to take account of Policy EP5: Minerals Safeguarding Areas. This policy encourages developers to extract minerals prior to non-mineral development taking place, where this is practical and environmentally feasible.
6. The number and phasing of homes to be permitted and the timing of housing delivery linked to the planned infrastructure needs to be informed by further evidence as per the requirements of other policies in the Plan including Policy TRANS4. This will be agreed, (and potentially conditioned) through the planning application process, in consultation with the relevant statutory authority.
7. Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre is removed from the Green Belt and inset as shown on Land inset from the Green Belt Boundary (Appendix 4) to enable this development to be brought forward.

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



these are sustainable locations where additional housing delivery will take place over the plan period.

Policy EMP1: The Amount and Distribution of New Employment Land

- 1. To facilitate the provision of additional office, manufacturing and distribution jobs between 2011 and 2035 a minimum requirement of 39.1 hectares of employment land will be provided. Employment land will be provided at the following locations:**

Location	Site	Net amount of employment supply (hectares)
Didcot	Southmead Industrial Estate (Carried forward from Core Strategy)	2.92
	Milton Park (Within Vale of White Horse District) (Carried forward from Core Strategy)	6.5
Henley-on-Thames	Sites to be identified in the NDP	1.0
Thame	Sites to be identified in the NDP	3.5
Wallingford	Sites to be identified in the NDP	3.1
	Hithercroft Industrial Estate (Carried forward from Core Strategy)	1.09
Crowmarsh	Sites to be identified in the NDP	
Gifford	(Likely to be at Howbery Park)	0.28
Culham	Redevelopment and intensification of Culham Science Centre and Culham No.1 site with strategic allocation west of Culham Science Centre. 10 hectares of existing employment land at Culham No.1 to be retained within the comprehensive development.	7.3
Chalgrove	To be allocated in accordance with STRAT7	5.0
	To be allocated in accordance with EMP9	2.25
Berinsfield	To be allocated in accordance with the regeneration strategy	5.0
Grenoble Road	Extension to Oxford Science Park, to be allocated in accordance with STRAT11	10.0
Total		47.94

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

Types of Employment Premises

5.21 In order to meet the diverse need for employment across South Oxfordshire the policy below requires a range of premises within any proposals for employment development.

Policy EMP2: Range, Size and Mix of Employment Premises

- 1. Proposals for employment use will provide a range of sizes and types of premises, including flexible business space to meet current and future requirements. The Council will support proposals for premises suitable for small and medium sized businesses, including start-up/ incubator businesses (up to 150sqm) and grow-on space (up to 500sqm). Proposals for employment uses will be considered against this criteria and the overall employment distribution strategy at EMP1.**

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

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

5.23 To promote a balanced local economy, the Plan needs to ensure that a range of size and types of premises is available. The Council will seek to widen the variety of premises to include more modern and flexible business space. Enough space is needed for small and medium sized businesses, including start-up/incubator businesses (up to 150sqm) and grow-on space (up to 500sqm), and opportunities to provide this will be sought. Whether units are suitable for start-up/incubator businesses will depend partly on management arrangements and lease terms that are beyond our control; however the Council will do all it can to assist in this regard.

Development in Rural Areas

Policy EMP10: Development in Rural Areas

- 1. Proposals for sustainable economic growth in rural areas will be supported. The Council will:**
 - i) support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas through conversion of existing buildings;**
 - ii) promote the sustainable development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;**
 - iii) support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses, communities and visitors in rural areas and which respect the character of the countryside. This will include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and**
 - iv) promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.**

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

- 5.28 The re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of the rural areas for commercial and industrial development, as well as for tourism, sport and recreation. The re-use of rural buildings can reduce demands for new building in the countryside, avoid leaving an existing building vacant, boost the economy and provide jobs. In recent years, the re-use of rural buildings has provided a substantial stock of buildings for employment use. This policy applies to buildings which are outside the built-up areas of the towns and villages of the district.
- 5.29 Buildings to be re-used should be permanent and substantial, and not require reconstruction. To meet this requirement, buildings should normally be enclosed on all sides and the whole of the structure covered by a roof and it should be in a sound structural condition. The Council may request applicants

6 INFRASTRUCTURE

Introduction

- 6.1 Good connections and high quality infrastructure are essential to our quality of life. We need to travel to work, school, shops, leisure and health facilities. A thriving economy needs good connections to operate efficiently. These can range from the strategic road and rail network, to our ability to access the internet with the benefits that it can offer to work from home and provide services. Improving accessibility to services and employment is fundamental to sustainable development and to meeting the objectives of this Plan. The challenge is to do this in a way that minimises the impact of the transport system on the environment whilst encouraging development that actively supports walking, cycling and public transport to minimise the need to travel, and provides for necessary improvements in a cost-effective way.
- 6.2 Successful and sustainable communities depend upon physical, green, social and community infrastructure to meet the needs of residents and businesses. Infrastructure encompasses a very wide range of provision including transport, public utilities and waste management, flood management measures, social and community infrastructure such as affordable housing, health care facilities, emergency services provision and sports provision, Green Infrastructure, culture, faith and spiritual facilities, education, leisure and tourism, and other community facilities ranging from community meeting halls to children's play areas.
- 6.3 It is important to appreciate that whilst there is a considerable degree of funding from governmental and other public sources, a significant amount of the money for provision of new or the enhancement of existing infrastructure comes in the form of financial contributions from developers or in the form of payment in kind through direct provision of facilities or services.
- 6.4 To better understand the suitability of existing infrastructure provision and identify the infrastructure required to support the level of development proposed through the Local Plan, South Oxfordshire District Council has developed an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The IDP is an important element of the evidence for the Local Plan and helps inform and underpin strategic policies for growth and development. The IDP outlines in more detail the infrastructure requirements to support proposed development growth, particularly for strategic sites, as well as planned delivery and funding arrangements. It will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis during the plan period.

The challenge is to do this in a way that minimises the impact of the transport system on the environment and provides for necessary improvements in a cost-effective way

Improving travel choice in rural areas is to be encouraged, while accepting that there is unlikely to be a single model for delivering the flexible and responsive transport services

- 6.5 The location of all forms of development can be a key factor in influencing where and how we travel and reducing the need to travel and enabling sustainable travel options. These principles have a key influence on the other elements of the Plan. For example, accessibility to services and facilities and the availability of high quality, frequent and reliable public transport are key features for a strong network of settlements and the overall distribution of new housing and employment land.
- 6.6 The policies within this section contribute towards our vision and objectives which seek to build on opportunities for sustainable travel. They have been informed by relevant evidence, including our Evaluation of Transport Impacts work. However, we recognise that the rural nature of the district means that many residents will still be dependent on car travel for some or all of their journeys, and this is reflected in the policies below. This section of the Plan has also been informed by, and is consistent with, Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4²¹, which sets the transport policies and provides transport strategies for the county to 2031. Improving travel choice in rural areas is to be encouraged, while accepting that there is unlikely to be a single model for delivering the flexible and responsive transport services required to meet the diverse needs of rural communities.

Infrastructure Provision

- 6.7 Successful and sustainable communities and new developments depend on suitable physical and social infrastructure being in place to meet the needs of their residents. These needs include transport, utilities and waste, social infrastructure, environmental and Green Infrastructure, cultural, education, 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.
- 6.8 It is also recognised that new development may 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 on in the planning process with the organisations responsible for these distribution networks, currently either National Grid or Scottish and Southern Power Networks, to see how these can best be accommodated within new development. Urban design considerations will be important in determining how these networks can be taken into account, and agreements will need to be made with these organisations on any proposed modification, taking into account relevant guidance (<https://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/planning-and-development>). It

²¹ www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire

may be appropriate for any changes to be agreed at the planning application stage, for example, through appropriate conditions.

- 6.9 The need for, and importance of, providing adequate, appropriate and timely infrastructure is a strong message that comes from local residents during consultations, who are often concerned that the necessary infrastructure is not provided, or not provided quickly enough.
- 6.10 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. We will continue to work closely with a wide range of infrastructure providers and stakeholders. Key organisations include Oxfordshire County Council, Highways England, the NHS and Clinical Commissioning Groups, Town and Parish Councils, Thames Water and the Environment Agency. An example of this partnership work is the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy work being undertaken for the Oxfordshire Growth Board, which has helped to evidence and map strategic infrastructure requirements for Oxfordshire over the next 15-20 years. This work has assisted in informing our Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which gives more detail on the infrastructure required to support the development proposed in the Plan.
- 6.11 Where funding is secured for infrastructure, there will be an expectation that funding will be recovered and recycled and obtained from developer contributions retrospectively. Where forward funding is secured it will not circumvent the need for a development to contribute towards the cost of such infrastructure if such infrastructure is relevant to the development of the site. Infrastructure and services required as a consequence of development, and provision for their maintenance, will be sought from developers, and secured through developer contributions.

Policy INF1: Infrastructure Provision

- 1. New development must be served and supported by appropriate 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. Infrastructure includes the requirements set out in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Leisure Study,**

Green Infrastructure Strategy, any relevant made Neighbourhood Development Plans, and/or infrastructure 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) 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 infrastructure, such as sewerage 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.

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

Transport

Strategic Transport Infrastructure

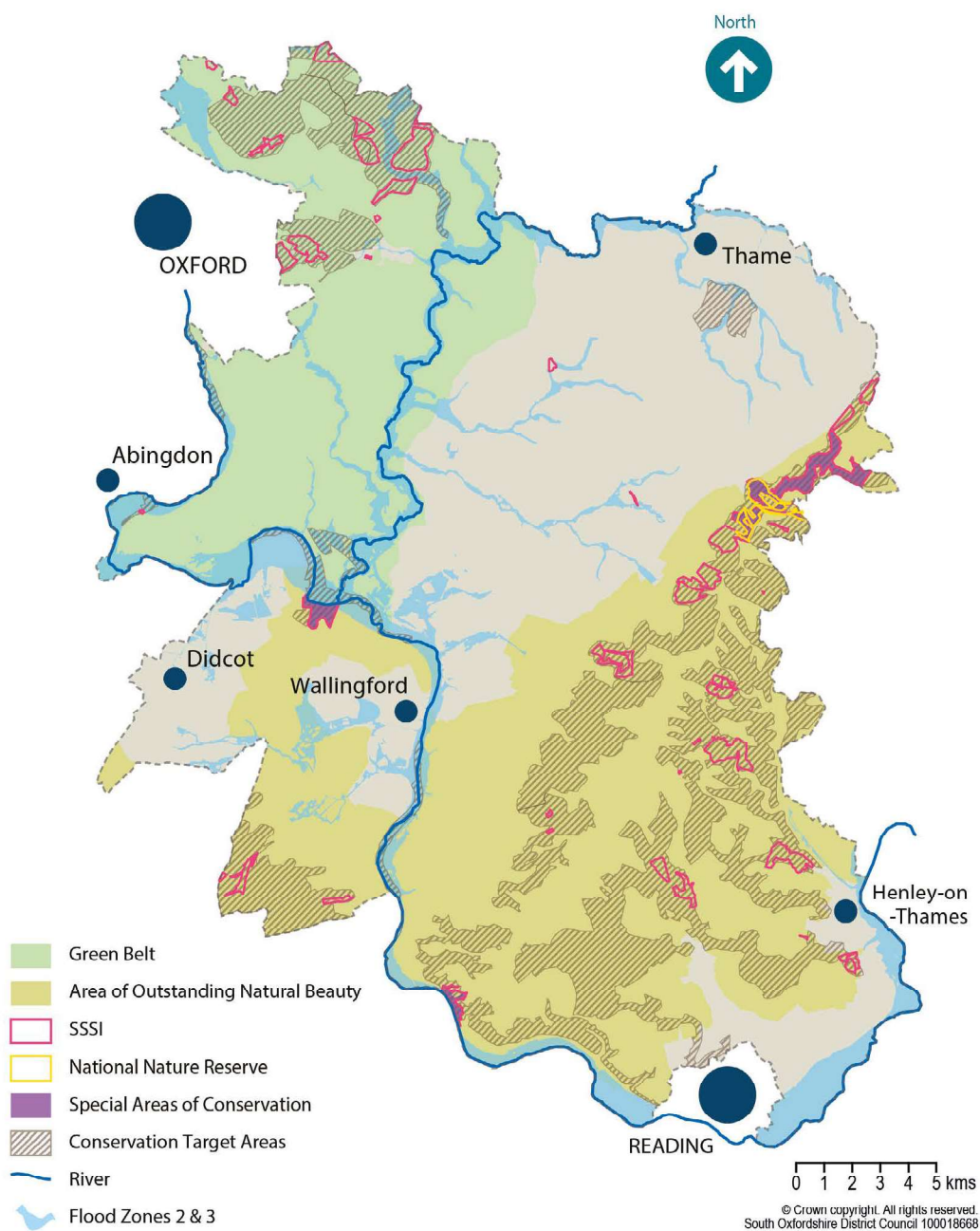
- 6.12 As the highway authority, Oxfordshire County Council manages and maintains the local road network and prepares a countywide Local Transport Plan which sets out policies and strategies for developing the transport system across the county. Highways England is the government company charged with operating, maintaining and improving England's motorways and major A roads, including the M40 and A34. Network Rail owns the railway network, with train operating companies, mainly Great Western Railway, providing services. In association with the bus companies, this provides a network of public transport services providing sustainable transport choices across the district.
- 6.13 The Council works with our partners including neighbouring authorities, Highways England and the National Infrastructure Commission to reflect,

7 NATURAL AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

- 7.1 South Oxfordshire has a beautiful natural and built environment, which makes the district an attractive place to live and work. This environment also attracts visitors who contribute to the local economy.
- 7.2 The landscape of the district includes rolling downland, wooded hills, ancient woodlands, historic parkland, low-lying farmland, riverside meadows and strategic environmental assets including the North Wessex Downs and the Chilterns AONB, the Green Belt and the River Thames and its tributaries. We encourage effective management of the AONB and the Green Belt.
- 7.3 The whole district is rich in biodiversity, including international, national and locally protected sites and habitats and forms a part of a wider ecological network across the County. Maintaining sustainable agricultural land and practices is important in preserving the district's rural character and landscape.
- 7.4 The valley and tributaries of the River Thames are highly attractive features of the landscape and its special visual and environmental qualities are for the most part unspoilt. The Thames Valley is noted for its peace, tranquillity, biodiversity and cultural heritage, which is essential to preserve. The long-distance Thames Path and the river itself provide a focus for recreation and leisure activities.
- 7.5 We will seek to ensure that the planning and design of development not only protects water supply and quality, but also protects and, where appropriate restores, natural river form and function, whilst maximising resistance and resilience to flood risk.
- 7.6 The district has a rich cultural history that has provided South Oxfordshire with over 3,500 listed buildings, 52 Scheduled Monuments, 13 Registered Parks and Gardens, a Registered Battlefield, and 72 Conservation Areas. Sadly in 2020 there are 14 sites on the Heritage at Risk Register. Parts of the district's natural environment and many historic assets are of national significance. These heritage assets³¹ help establish the distinctive character of South Oxfordshire. We seek to ensure the conservation, enhancement, enjoyment and understanding of all our heritage assets as they make a positive contribution to sustainable communities, including their economic vitality.

³¹ Further information on nationally protected historic buildings is available on the Historic England website (www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/). Further information on Heritage at Risk is also available (www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/) The lists are updated periodically.



Landscape and Countryside

Policy ENV1: Landscape and Countryside

1. The highest level of protection will be given to the landscape and scenic beauty of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs):
 - Development in an AONB or affecting the setting of an AONB will only be permitted where it conserves, and where possible, enhances the character and natural beauty of the AONB;
 - Development in an AONB will only be permitted where it is appropriate to the economic and environmental wellbeing of the area or promotes understanding or enjoyment of the AONB;
 - Major development in an AONB will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest; and
 - Development proposals that could affect the special qualities of an AONB (including the setting of an AONB) either individually or in combination with other developments, should be accompanied by a proportionate Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

AONB Management Plans will be a material consideration in decision making.
2. South Oxfordshire's landscape, countryside and rural areas will be protected against harmful development. Development will only be permitted where it protects and, where possible enhances, features that contribute to the nature and quality of South Oxfordshire's landscapes, in particular:
 - i) trees (including individual trees, groups of trees and woodlands), hedgerows and field boundaries;
 - ii) irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland;
 - iii) the landscapes, waterscapes, cultural heritage and user enjoyment of the River Thames, its tributaries and flood plains;
 - iv) other watercourse and water bodies;
 - v) the landscape setting of settlements or the special character and landscape setting of Oxford;
 - vi) topographical features;
 - vii) areas or features of cultural and historic value;
 - viii) important views and visually sensitive skylines; and

ix) aesthetic and perceptual factors such as tranquility, wildness, intactness, rarity and enclosure.

3. Development which supports economic growth in rural areas will be supported provided it conserves and enhances the landscape, countryside and rural areas.

4. The Council will seek the retention of important hedgerows. Where retention is not possible and a proposal seeks the removal of a hedgerow, the Council will require compensatory planting with a mixture of native hedgerow species.

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

7.7 South Oxfordshire is a mainly rural district. Mid-year population estimates for 2014 from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) rank the district as 249th out of 326 districts in terms of population density, with an average of 202 people per square kilometre (the national average for England is 417 people per square kilometre).

7.8 The countryside and its relationship with our settlements contributes significantly to the district's character and is highly valued. Development should conserve and where possible, enhance the landscape setting of settlements. The Council will use its evidence base on the district's landscape which currently includes the Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Capacity Assessments and the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project, to assess and determine development proposals.

Significant weight is also given to protecting non-designated landscapes, the countryside and Green Infrastructure assets from harm

7.9 Whilst supporting suitably located and designed development necessary to facilitate the economic and social well-being of local communities, great weight is given to conserving and enhancing the intrinsic character and beauty of our Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection. Significant weight is also given to protecting non-designated landscapes, the countryside and Green Infrastructure assets from harm.

Trees and Hedgerows in the Landscape

7.10 Trees and hedgerows, individually and collectively, can make an important contribution to biodiversity and the landscape. They also absorb atmospheric pollution and have a beneficial influence on the climate. 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.

- 7.11 The Council 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.

Biodiversity

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

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. **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 mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects resulting from development.**
3. **Development likely to result, either directly or indirectly to the loss, deterioration or harm to:**
 - **Local Wildlife Sites**
 - **Local Nature Reserves**
 - **Priority Habitats and Species**

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.

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3. **Development likely to result, either directly or indirectly to the loss, deterioration or harm to:**
 - **Local Wildlife Sites**
 - **Local Nature Reserves**
 - **Priority Habitats and Species**

- Legally Protected Species
- Local Geological Sites
- Ecological Networks (Conservation Target Areas)
- Important or ancient hedges or hedgerows
- Ancient woodland and veteran trees

will only be permitted if:

- i) the need for, and benefits of the development in the proposed location outweigh the adverse effect on the interests;
 - ii) it can be demonstrated that it could not reasonably be located on an alternative site that would result in less or no harm to the interests; and
 - iii) measures 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.
4. 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.
 5. Where development has the potential to affect a proposed wildlife site the developer must undertake surveys and assessments to determine whether the site meets the criteria for Local Wildlife Site status.

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

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

Policy ENV3: Biodiversity

1. Development that will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in the district will be supported. All development should provide a net gain in biodiversity where possible. As a minimum, there should be no net loss of biodiversity. All proposals should be supported by evidence to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain using a recognised biodiversity accounting metric.

2. **Development proposals which would result in a net loss of biodiversity will only be considered if it can be demonstrated that alternatives which avoid impacts on biodiversity have been fully explored in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy*. In the absence of alternative sites or layouts, development proposals must include adequate mitigation measures to achieve a net gain of biodiversity. Where harm cannot be prevented or adequately mitigated, appropriate compensation measures will be sought, as a last resort, through planning conditions or planning obligations (depending on the circumstances of each application) to offset the loss by contributing to appropriate biodiversity projects to achieve an overall net gain for biodiversity.**

3. **Planning permission will only be granted if impacts on biodiversity can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated fully.**

*For more information please refer to section 5.2 of BS 42020:2013

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

- 7.13 Adequate information must be provided, prior to planning decisions being made, to assess the impact on biodiversity where reasonably likely to occur. The use of conditions to require the submission of ecological information, after the grant of planning permission, will only be considered in wholly exceptional circumstances where the need for such surveys could not have reasonably been foreseen by the applicant or the Council.

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

Table 8a: Natural habitats and species

International	4 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
National	38 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
Local	150 confirmed or proposed Local Wildlife Sites ³³ 4 Local Nature Reserves 5 Local Geological Sites

- 7.15 In addition, there are numerous other important natural habitats, which are priority habitats of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity (under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act)³⁴.
- 7.16 In Oxfordshire a series of Conservation Target Areas (CTA)³⁵ have been identified

³³ A current list of Local Wildlife Sites is available on the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre website (www.tverc.org/cms/). The list is updated periodically so should be referred to for the most up to date list of conservation sites

³⁴ Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, available at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents

³⁵ www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversity/conservation-target-areas/

which form the Ecological Network for the County. The CTA provide the best opportunities for targeted conservation action. They connect and buffer important habitats and species assemblages and have been designed to provide resilience to future climate change. Development proposals that would affect the integrity of these networks will be resisted or discouraged.

- 7.17 Development should contribute to the conservation of ecological networks, protected sites and priority habitats. All development should consider how it can improve biodiversity, and loss can only be permitted when there are unavoidable impacts that cannot be mitigated and compensation is provided to achieve a net gain. We will apply a form of Biodiversity Accounting to help understand if development proposals will achieve no net loss.

Biodiversity: Watercourses

Policy ENV4: Watercourses

- 1. Development of land that contains or is adjacent to 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**

- ii) they are often protected by screens, which usually makes the culvert impenetrable to animals such as otters, water voles, fish and invertebrates. This can prevent the movement of species along the river corridor and lead to animals being forced onto roads causing animal deaths and road traffic incidents;
- iii) they can significantly increase the risk of flooding due to the risk of blockage and changed channel dynamics; and
- iv) maintenance is complicated due to restricted access.

Green Infrastructure

Policy ENV5: Green Infrastructure in New Developments

- 1. Development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of additional Green Infrastructure and protect or enhance existing Green Infrastructure.**
- 2. Proposals should:**
 - i) protect, conserve or enhance the district's Green Infrastructure;
 - ii) provide an appropriate level of Green Infrastructure with regard to requirements set out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, AONB Management Plan or the Habitats Regulations Assessment;
 - iii) avoid the loss, fragmentation, severance or other negative impact on the function of Green Infrastructure;
 - iv) provide appropriate mitigation where there would be an adverse impact on Green Infrastructure; and
 - v) provide an appropriate replacement where it is necessary for development to take place on areas of Green Infrastructure.
- 3. All Green Infrastructure provision should be designed with regard to the quality standards set out within the Green Infrastructure Strategy, or where relevant the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan. Consideration should also be given to inclusive access and contributing to gains in biodiversity, particularly through the use of appropriate planting which takes account of changing weather patterns. Where new Green Infrastructure is provided, applicants should ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure its ongoing management and maintenance.**

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

7.27 Green Infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green space in both urban and rural areas, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Such networks can also include “blue” infrastructure features such as ponds, lakes, reservoirs, streams and rivers. When assessing planning applications, we will take into account the findings of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) to define new Green Infrastructure requirements and how they should be delivered. Where new Green Infrastructure is identified as a mitigation requirement within the HRA this must be delivered by the applicant to meet requirements. Green Infrastructure can have an important role to play in enhancing biodiversity, acting as a carbon store, and enhancing the quality of life for residents. Applicants should refer to guides such as the Fieldfare Trust ‘Countryside for All – A Good Practice Guide to Disabled People’s Access in the Countryside’ and the South Oxfordshire Design Guide to ensure that the positive contributions of Green Infrastructure are maximised.

Historic Environment and Heritage Assets

Policy ENV6: 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 local historic and architectural interest of the district’s historic environment, and also includes those heritage assets listed by the Oxfordshire Historic Environmental Record.**
2. **Proposals for new development should be sensitively designed and should not cause harm to the historic environment. Proposals that have an impact on heritage assets (designated and non-designated) will be supported particularly where they:**
 - i) **conserve or enhance the significance of the heritage asset and settings. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the**

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 - i) **conserve or enhance the significance of the heritage asset and settings. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the**

- weight that will be given to its conservation;
 - ii) 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);
 - iii) make a positive contribution towards wider public benefits;
 - iv) provide a viable future use for a heritage asset that is consistent with the conservation of its significance; and/or
 - v) protect a heritage asset that is currently at risk.
3. 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.
4. 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. In some circumstances further survey, analysis and/or recording will be made a condition of consent.
5. Particular encouragement will be given to schemes that will help secure the long term conservation of vacant and under-used buildings and bring them back into appropriate use.
6. Alterations to historic buildings, for example to improve energy efficiency, should respect the integrity of the historic environment and the character and significance of the building.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5, 6 & 7

7.28 Heritage assets may be classified as either 'designated' or 'non-designated' and both can be important to consider through the planning process. Heritage assets can include Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, archaeological sites and other assets.

- 7.29 Development proposals at an early stage should refer to sources of information on the historic environment such as the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project, The Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record, The National Heritage List for England, the South Oxfordshire Heritage Impact Assessment, and, where relevant, Conservation Area Character Appraisals to ensure that proposals are based on an understanding of the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected. Development proposals should also take into account the principles set out in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and other relevant guidance.
- 7.30 In some circumstances, further surveys and analysis may be required prior to any application being determined. Heritage Statements, Statements of Significance, and Impact Assessments should be produced in line with current best practice and relevant national guidance.
- 7.31 The Council will monitor buildings or other heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, proactively seeking solutions for assets at risk through discussions with owners and willingness to consider positively development schemes that would ensure the repair and maintenance of the asset, and, as a last resort, using its statutory powers. The Council will work with relevant stakeholders to encourage better understanding of the heritage assets on the Historic England “Heritage at Risk” Register. Where appropriate the Council will encourage Heritage Partnership Agreements, particularly for Listed Buildings on any ‘at risk’ register.
- 7.32 The Council will support Neighbourhood Development Plans where they seek to assess their heritage assets and add to the evidence base.

Listed Buildings

Policy ENV7: 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:**
 - i) **conserve, enhance or better reveal those elements which contribute to the heritage significance and/or its setting;**
 - ii) **respect any features of special architectural or historic interest, including, where relevant, the historic curtilage or context, such as burgage plots, or its value within a group and/or its setting,**

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 - ii) respect any features of special architectural or historic interest, including, where relevant, the historic curtilage or context, such as burgage plots, or its value within a group and/or its setting,**

- such as the importance of a street frontage or traditional shopfronts; and
- iii) 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 South Oxfordshire Design Guide.
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:
- i) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
 - ii) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
 - iii) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
 - iv) 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:
- i) minimise harm and avoid adverse impacts, and provide justification for any adverse impacts, harm or loss of significance;
 - ii) identify any demonstrable public benefits or exceptional circumstances in relation to the development proposed; and
 - iii) 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 without any adverse effect on the significance of the building and its setting.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 7.



- 7.33 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 List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.
- 7.34 When a building is listed, it is listed in its entirety, which means that both the exterior and the interior are protected which includes interior features and fabric such as staircases, panelling, roof structures, floors, walls, fireplaces, doors etc. In addition, any object or structure fixed to the building, and any object or structure within the curtilage of the building, which although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1 July 1948, are treated as being part of the listed building.
- 7.35 Many listed buildings, due to their age and construction, have features which could support roosting bats. To ensure compliance with relevant legislation, species survey information will be required, and ecological conditions applied to consents granted, in instances where proposed works to listed buildings would be reasonably likely to impact roosting bats.

Conservation Areas

Policy ENV8: 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. Development will be expected to:
 - i) 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;
 - ii) take into account important views within, into or out of the Conservation Area and show that these would be retained and unharmed;
 - iii) 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 South Oxfordshire Design Guide and any relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisal;
 - iv) be sympathetic to the original curtilage of buildings and pattern of development that forms part of the historic interest of the Conservation Area;
 - v) 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;
 - vi) ensure the wider social and environmental effects generated by the development are compatible with the existing character and appearance of the Conservation Area; and/or
 - vii) 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 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.

3. **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.**
4. **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.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 7.

- 7.36 Conservation Areas are described in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Inevitably, these areas will vary greatly. Pleasant groups of buildings, open spaces, trees, an historic settlement pattern, a village green, or features of archaeological interest, may all contribute to the special character of an area, and it is that character, rather than individual buildings, which Conservation Area legislation seeks to preserve and enhance.
- 7.37 A feature of many towns are ‘burgage plots’. Surviving patterns of burgage plots have considerable historic and archaeological significance and contribute much to the character of Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford. They are among the principal historic assets of these towns and should be conserved.
- 7.38 When undertaking Conservation Area Appraisals the opportunity will be taken to produce and update lists of locally important non-designated heritage assets and identification of any heritage assets ‘at risk’ in order to encourage better understanding.

Archaeology

Policy ENV9: Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

1. **Development must protect the site and setting of Scheduled Monuments or nationally important designated or undesignated archaeological remains.**
2. **Applicants will be expected to undertake an assessment of appropriate detail to determine whether the development site is**

3. **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.**
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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.

3. Where the assessment indicates archaeological remains on site, and development could disturb or adversely affect archaeological remains and/or their setting, applicants will be expected to:
 - i) submit an appropriate archaeological desk-based assessment; or
 - ii) undertake a field evaluation (conducted by a suitably qualified archaeological organisation), where necessary.
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 archaeological remains, 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.
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. Planning permission will not be granted until this programme has been submitted to, and approved by, the Council and development should not commence until these works have been satisfactorily undertaken by an appropriately qualified organisation. The results and analysis of findings subsequent to the investigation should be published and made available to the relevant local and county authorities.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 7.

- 7.39 Our archaeological resource has great social, economic, cultural and educational value for the community and this potential can be developed through suitable management and interpretation. Some archaeological sites and monuments are designated as Scheduled Monuments and are legally protected under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act.
- 7.40 A network of historic routes also exist as archaeological features in the district, ranging from pre-historic tracks, Roman roads, medieval coffin ways, salt roads, and droveways, to later turnpike roads. These routes are integrated into the district's landscape and serve an important function in linking settlements and forming a unique setting for the district's distinctive landscape features and will therefore be protected.

Historic Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Landscapes

Policy ENV10: Historic Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Landscapes

- 1. Proposals should 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.**
- 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. All other options for their conservation or use must have been explored.**
- 4. A balanced judgment, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset, will be required in assessing proposals affecting non-designated historic battlefields, parks and historic landscapes including historic routes.**

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- 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. 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.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 7.

- 7.41 Historic battlefields, landscapes, parks and gardens are an important part of the district's heritage and environment. They comprise a variety of features including the open space itself, views in and out, archaeological remains and, in the case of parks or gardens, a conscious design incorporating planting and water features, and frequently buildings. The Green Infrastructure and biodiversity value of historic landscapes is also important. There is a need to protect such sites and their settings and to encourage sympathetic management wherever possible.
- 7.42 A number of the most important sites have been included on the "Historic England Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England". Registered Parks and Gardens are included on the National Heritage List for England. Registered sites are of national importance, but the district has several other sites of regional or local importance that should also be protected from harm, and enhanced where possible.

Environmental Protection and Pollution

Policy ENV11: Pollution - Impact from Existing and/or Previous Land Uses on New Development (Potential Receptors of Pollution)

- 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. 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.**

- 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. 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.**

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2. 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:
 - noise or vibration;
 - smell, dust, odour, artificial light, gases and other emissions;
 - air pollution, contamination of the site or its surroundings and hazardous substances nearby;
 - land instability; and
 - any other relevant types of pollution.
3. Opportunities to mitigate and/or remediate the impacts of pollution on the natural environment should also be considered wherever possible and related to a development.
4. Development on contaminated land will not be permitted unless the contamination is effectively treated by the developer to prevent any harm to human health and the natural environment (including controlled waters).

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

Policy ENV12: Pollution - Impact of Development on Human Health, the Natural Environment and/or Local Amenity (Potential Sources of Pollution)

1. Development proposals should be located in sustainable locations and should be designed to ensure that they will not result in significant adverse impacts on human health, the natural environment and/or the amenity of neighbouring uses.
2. The individual and cumulative impacts of development on human health, the natural environment and/or local amenity will be considered when assessing development proposals.
3. The consideration of the merits of development proposals will be balanced against the adverse impact on human health, the natural environment and/or local amenity, including the following factors:
 - noise or vibration;
 - smell, dust, odour, artificial light, gases and other emissions;
 - air pollution, contamination of the site or its surroundings and hazardous substances nearby;

- **land instability; and**
- **any other relevant types of pollution.**

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

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

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

7.45 Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner. Proposals should avoid or provide assessments of and mitigation for all significant adverse impacts from pollution. Further information on requirements and standards is available from the Council’s Environmental Protection Team.

7.46 The Council will also consider that existing businesses and uses may wish to develop in continuance and will therefore consider the effect nearby proposals may have on these existing businesses and uses.

7.47 The Council will consider proposals against current local and national standards, guidance, legislation and/or objectives. This will include consideration of the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality. There are currently three Air Quality Management Areas within South Oxfordshire at Henley-on-Thames, Wallingford and Watlington. The adjoining urban areas of Oxford City and Reading town centre, and the town centre of Abingdon-on-Thames are also designated Air Quality Management Areas.

Policy EP1: Air Quality

1. In order to protect public health from the impacts of poor air quality:
 - i) development must have regard to the measures laid out in the Council's Developer Guidance Document and the associated Air Quality Action Plan, as well as the national air quality guidance and any Local Transport Plans;
 - ii) where sensitive development is proposed in areas of existing poor air quality and/or where significant development is proposed, an Air Quality Assessment will be required;
 - iii) all development proposals should include measures to minimise air pollution at the design stage and incorporate best practice in the design, construction and operation of the development;
 - iv) where a development has a negative impact on air quality, including cumulative impact, developers should identify mitigation measures that will sufficiently minimise emissions from the development. Where mitigation is not sufficient the impacts should be offset through planning obligations; and
 - v) development will only be permitted where it does not exceed air pollution levels set by European and UK regulations.

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

Hazardous Substances

Policy EP2: Hazardous Substances

1. Development which involves the use, movement or storage of hazardous substances will only be permitted where a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been carried out and identified control measures implemented to adequately reduce risk as far as reasonably practical to the health and safety of users of the site, neighbouring land and the environment. Development within the vicinity of an installation involving hazardous substances or activities will only be permitted if the impact on health and safety of occupants of that development is acceptable. The Council will seek to reduce the potential for conflicting land uses and promote safety of people and protection of the environment.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 6 & 7.

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This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 6 & 7.

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

Waste Collection and Recycling

Policy EP3: Waste Collection and Recycling

1. **Development proposals for residential use must ensure:**
 - i) **adequate facilities are provided for the sorting, storage and collection of waste and recycling;**
 - ii) **sufficient space is provided for the storage and collection of individual or communal recycling and refuse containers; and**
 - iii) **access is provided that is safe for existing users/residents and for refuse and recycling collection vehicles.**
2. **Development proposals for non-residential use must ensure:**
 - i) **sufficient space is provided for the storage of communal recycling and refuse containers; and**
 - ii) **provision is made that is adequate for the proposed use. The location and design of recycling and refuse provision should be integral to the design of the proposed development.**
3. **In assessing recycling and refuse provision, the following points should be considered:**
 - i) **the level and type of provision, having regard to the above requirements and relevant space standards;**
 - ii) **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;**
 - iii) **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;**
 - iv) **the impact of the provision on health and amenity of neighbouring development and the proposed development; and**
 - v) **the security of the provision against scavenging pests, vandalism and unauthorised use.**

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 - iv) **the impact of the provision on health and amenity of neighbouring development and the proposed development; and**
 - v) **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. Development will not be permitted if recycling and refuse provision that meets the above requirements cannot feasibly or practicably be provided.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 4 & 8.

- 7.49 In promoting good design 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.
- 7.50 Policy DES7 encourages developers to make provision for the effective use of resources, including minimising waste and making provision for the recycling of waste on site.
- 7.51 In combination with Policy DES7, Policy EP3 requires that adequate facilities for the sorting, storage and collection of waste are provided on all new developments and seeks to further encourage sustainable waste management initiatives.
- 7.52 Refuse and recycling storage and collection facilities should be designed and provided with regard to the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Council's Waste Planning Guidance which can be found on the Council's website.

Flood Risk

Policy EP4: Flood Risk

- 1. The risk and impact of flooding will be minimised through:**
 - i) directing new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding;**
 - ii) ensuring that all new development addresses the effective management of all sources of flood risk;**
 - iii) ensuring that development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere; and**
 - iv) ensuring wider environmental benefits of development in**

4. **Recycling and refuse storage should be separate from cycle storage, car parking and key circulation areas.**
5. **Development will not be permitted if recycling and refuse provision that meets the above requirements cannot feasibly or practicably be provided.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 4 & 8.

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 - i) **directing new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding;**
 - ii) **ensuring that all new development addresses the effective management of all sources of flood risk;**
 - iii) **ensuring that development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere; and**
 - iv) **ensuring wider environmental benefits of development in**

relation to flood risk.

2. The suitability of development proposed in Flood Zones will be strictly assessed using the 'Sequential Test' and where necessary the 'Exceptions Test'. A sequential approach should be used at site level.
3. A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be provided for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3. In Flood Zone 1 a FRA should accompany all proposals involving:
 - sites of 1 hectare or more;
 - land which has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems;
 - land identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as being at increased flood risk in future; or
 - land that may be subject to other sources of flooding, where development would introduce a more vulnerable use.
4. All development proposals must be assessed against the current South Oxfordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment or any updates and the Oxfordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to address locally significant flooding. Appropriate mitigation and management measures must be implemented and maintained.
5. All development will be required to provide a Drainage Strategy. Development will be expected to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems 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.
6. Sustainable Drainage Systems should seek to enhance water quality and biodiversity in line with the Water Framework Directive.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 8.

7.53 Areas of South Oxfordshire are at risk of flooding and the impact of climate change is important. Climate change allowances should be taken into consideration in Flood Risk Assessments as set out in National Planning Practice Guidance. The planning system has an important role to play in minimising flooding, the risk of flooding and increasing resilience. Only appropriate development should take place in areas at risk from flooding, and development

should be directed away from areas of the highest risk. A sequential, risk-based approach to locating development, referred to as applying the Sequential Test, and if necessary, the Exception Test should be applied, taking into account climate change.

7.54 The Council will uphold the sequential approach to flood risk. Neighbourhood planning groups considering proposed development within areas at risk of flooding must apply the Sequential Test to the whole neighbourhood area. If necessary, the Exception Test should also be applied. The Environment Agency provide bespoke advice where developments in high flood risk areas require a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment. Should mitigation be required, the Council will expect those measures to be in the application proposals and part of the development.

7.55 Where the redevelopment or change of use of a previously developed site in Flood Zone 2 or 3 is proposed, opportunities should be taken to:

- reduce vulnerability to flooding by promoting less vulnerable and water compatible uses; and
- reduce the built development footprint, thus improving floodplain storage and flow paths.

Minerals Safeguarding Areas

Policy EP5: Minerals Safeguarding Areas

1. **Minerals are a non-renewable resource, therefore to safeguard future potential extraction, development will be directed away from Minerals Safeguarding Areas.**
2. **Where development in Minerals Safeguarding Areas cannot be avoided, developers are encouraged to extract minerals prior to non-mineral development taking place, where this is practical and environmentally feasible.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objective 7.

7.56 Minerals Safeguarding Areas as identified in Oxfordshire County Council's Minerals and Waste Core Strategy are shown on the Policies Map.

8 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- 8.1 Our “built environment” consists of all the man-made aspects of our surroundings. It includes not only buildings but the spaces between buildings such as parks and gardens, and social spaces such as squares, as well as the infrastructure that supports our daily activities such as streets, railways, utility networks and flood defences.
- 8.2 The way we develop our built environment has a direct impact on how successful and sustainable places and communities are. In South Oxfordshire we want to create places where people want to live, work and visit. Successful places allow us to carry out daily activities with ease and offer choice as to how to do them. These places should be designed for everyone and built to last.

High Quality Development

- 8.3 The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, which is an important component of sustainable development. New development should create a sense of place and enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit there.
- 8.4 We are committed to securing the highest quality of design in new development of all types and scales in South Oxfordshire. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016) seeks to define high quality development, the principles to achieving it and raise the profile of high quality design throughout the district. It aims to address specific design issues that we have been experiencing within South Oxfordshire. We consider the Design Guide to be a vital tool that will help us create successful and sustainable places. The value and quality of the Design Guide has been demonstrated by it being shortlisted for two national awards. The Design Guide together with the policies in this Plan, will ensure that we can deliver our objectives for high quality developments.



Policy DES1: Delivering High Quality Development

1. All new development must be of a high quality design that:
 - i) uses land efficiently while respecting the existing landscape character;
 - ii) enhances biodiversity and, as a minimum, leads to no net loss of habitat;
 - iii) incorporates and/or links to a well-defined network of Green and Blue Infrastructure;
 - iv) is sustainable and resilient to climate change;
 - v) minimises energy consumption;
 - vi) mitigates water run-off and flood risks;
 - vii) takes into account landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping;
 - viii) provides a clear and permeable hierarchy of streets, routes and spaces to create safe and convenient ease of movement by all users;
 - ix) ensures that streets and spaces are well overlooked creating a positive relationship between fronts and backs of buildings;
 - x) clearly defines public and private spaces;
 - xi) provides access to local services and facilities and, where needed, incorporates mixed uses, facilities and co-locates services as appropriate with good access to public transport;
 - xii) provides a wide range of house types and tenures;
 - xiii) respects the local context working with and complementing the scale, height, density, grain, massing, type, and details of the surrounding area;
 - xiv) 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;
 - xv) does not differentiate between the design quality of market and affordable housing or the adjacent public realm;
 - xvi) is designed to take account of possible future development in the local area;
 - xvii) understands and addresses the needs of all potential users by ensuring that buildings and their surroundings can be accessed and used by everyone;
 - xviii) creates safe communities and reduces the likelihood of crime and antisocial behaviour as well as the fear of crime itself; and
 - xix) ensures a sufficient level of well-integrated and imaginative solutions for car and bicycle parking and external storage

including bins.

2. **Where development sites are located adjacent to sites that have a reasonable prospect of coming forward in the future, integration with the neighbouring site should form part of the proposal's design.**
3. **Where the Council is aware that adjacent or closely related sites with similar delivery timescales are coming forward together, a coordinated, integrated and comprehensive masterplan will be required to be prepared across all the sites.**

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

- 8.5 Creating high quality buildings and places is fundamental. Policy DES1 sets out the key design objectives that we consider critical in delivering high quality development. These must be considered at the outset and throughout the design process. The Council will support development that meets these objectives. Developers should also have regard to the principles and design criteria set out in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide. New development should take account of all relevant guidance including the Government's priorities for well-designed places set out in the National Design Guide (2019), Oxfordshire County Council's Cycling Design Standards (2017), Walking Design Standards (2017) and Residential Road Design Guide 2nd Edition (2015) or updated versions of these documents. New development within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty should meet the principles set out in the Chilterns Building Design Guide.
- 8.6 Securing high quality design is about more than just aesthetics. It is important that new development delivers sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities in order to create successful places where people want to live, work and play. New development should be designed to meet the needs of all users including the young and elderly, disabled, parents and carers. It is important that the places that we create are safe. To ensure that the development we deliver is designed to reduce the opportunity for crime, as well as the fear of crime itself, proposals must, wherever possible, incorporate the principles set out in the "Secured by Design" scheme.
- 8.7 The quality of the spaces between buildings is as important as the buildings themselves. They are the setting for most movement and should be designed to support an active life for everyone. These should include areas allocated to different users for different purposes, including movement, parking, hard and soft surfaces, street furniture, lighting, signage and public art.

- 8.8 In the right locations, public art can play an important part in the design and place making of new developments and can make a contribution to the creation of a high quality public realm. It can make places more interesting, exciting and aesthetically pleasing. The Council will support the provision of public art within new development schemes in accordance with the Arts Development Strategy. The Council will encourage and promote quality art within new developments by encouraging partnership working between professional artists and craftspeople and encouraging local participation to help establish an identity for an area. The Council will particularly support proposals that use public art to make a positive contribution to the character of an area and that is of benefit to the local community by establishing civic or corporate pride and identity, encouraging public enjoyment and engagement and/or promoting the renewal of social skills.
- 8.9 Past developments in the district have not always taken account of future development coming forward on adjacent sites, this has undermined the integration of new development with existing communities.

Policy DES2: Enhancing Local Character

- 1. All new development must be designed to reflect the positive features that make up the character of the local area and should both physically and visually enhance and complement the surroundings.**
- 2. All proposals for new development should be informed by a contextual analysis that demonstrates how the design:**
 - i) has been informed by and responds positively to the site and its surroundings; and**
 - ii) reinforces place-identity by enhancing local character.**
- 3. 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.**
- 4. Where there is no local Character Assessment a comprehensive contextual analysis of the local character should be prepared as part of an application. This should identify the positive features that make up the character of the area. The proposal must demonstrate that these positive features have been incorporated into the design of the development.**

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4. **Where there is no local Character Assessment a comprehensive contextual analysis of the local character should be prepared as part of an application. This should identify the positive features that make up the character of the area. The proposal must demonstrate that these positive features have been incorporated into the design of the development.**

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 Character Appraisal.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 7.

- 8.10 All proposals should take account of the local context, including the local character and existing features. Important local features, both within the landscape and built environment, in particular should be retained as part of the proposal. This should be set out on an opportunities and constraints plan.
- 8.11 National planning guidance emphasises the importance of promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness as well as being positive about good contemporary design. Proposals for new development should demonstrate how they reflect the special character of South Oxfordshire as well as the distinct character of the local area. This should be set out in the Design and Access Statement that supports the application.
- 8.12 The Council encourages communities preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans to consider what the positive features are in their local area and identify them as part of a made Plan. Where these local features have been identified as part of a made Neighbourhood Development Plan, proposals should demonstrate that they have been incorporated into the design. Where these local features have not been identified, proposals should include a comprehensive contextual analysis that identifies them.
- 8.13 In some cases developers have been selective in the features that they have identified as forming part of the local character and have not always considered whether the features form a positive part of the local character. To avoid developments reflecting previous poor quality design the Council may undertake its own contextual analysis if it is considered that the positive features of the local character have not been identified correctly.

To avoid developments reflecting previous poor quality design the Council may undertake its own contextual analysis

Policy DES3: Design and Access Statements

1. **Where an application is required to be supported by a Design and Access Statement, this must demonstrate how the development proposal meets the design objectives and principles set out in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.**
2. **The Design and Access Statement should be proportional to the scale and complexity of the proposal. It should include:**
 - i) **a clear drawing trail that shows how the design of the proposal and the rationale behind it has evolved and clearly demonstrates that the design objectives and principles set out in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide have been considered at the outset and throughout the process and have been met by the final design;**
 - ii) **a constraints and opportunities plan that clearly informs the design process and final design;**
 - iii) **the delivery implementation phases and strategies to be put in place to ensure the timely delivery of infrastructure and services when they are needed by new residents; and**
 - iv) **how consultation with the existing community and communities in the surrounding area has informed the design of the development.**

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 7.

- 8.14 Design and Access Statements are an important mechanism for communicating the design of a development. A checklist setting out when a Design and Access statement is required as part of a planning application can be found on the Council's website.

Policy DES4: Masterplans for Allocated Sites and Major Development

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:**

Policy DES3: Design and Access Statements

1. **Where an application is required to be supported by a Design and Access Statement, this must demonstrate how the development proposal meets the design objectives and principles set out in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.**
2. **The Design and Access Statement should be proportional to the scale and complexity of the proposal. It should include:**
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 - ii) **a constraints and opportunities plan that clearly informs the design process and final design;**
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- i) clearly set out the land uses proposed including the amount, scale and density of development, the movement and access arrangements and Green Infrastructure provision;
- ii) 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;
- iii) be based on a full understanding of the significance or special interest of the historic environment as it relates to the site, including above and below ground archaeological remains and other heritage assets on the site or within the setting of which the site lies, and the conservation and enhancement of those remains or assets and significance or special interest;
- iv) define a hierarchy of routes and the integration of suitable infrastructure, including for example SuDS within the public realm;
- v) demonstrate a legible structure and identify key elements of townscape such as main frontages, edges, landmark buildings, key building groups and character areas;
- vi) 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 which provide direct access to the street or space and that positive relationships have been created between the fronts and backs of buildings;
- vii) demonstrate as appropriate the careful siting of community facilities and other amenities to meet the needs of the existing and future community, including access to education/training facilities, health care, community leisure and recreation facilities;
- viii) demonstrates a clear link to the principles established in the Design and Access Statement and the South Oxfordshire Design Guide; and
- ix) demonstrate that it has been prepared with the involvement of the local community and other stakeholders and in consultation with the local planning authority.

*As defined by the Development Management Procedure Order 2010.

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

- 8.15 Masterplans are an important tool used by designers to set out the strategy for a new development and to demonstrate that the general layout, scale and other aspects of the design are based on good urban design principles. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide sets out the principles of good design that must be demonstrated through the preparation of a masterplan as part of applications for major development and development of allocated sites.
- 8.16 Masterplans should be produced in consultation with South Oxfordshire District Council, the community and other stakeholders. As part of the masterplanning process site promoters and developers should also, where appropriate, explore the possibility of long-term stewardship of assets with the local community.

Policy DES5: Outdoor Amenity Space

- 1. A 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 or shading, leaf litter and anxiety of established significant trees and hedges that would lead to future pressure to prune or remove these landscape features.**
- 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.**

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

- 8.17 The relationship of a building with its plot is critical to how well it fits in with neighbouring development and to its impact on the overall character of the street. The extent of plot coverage also determines the external area available for private garden space. This policy and the Design Guide seek to ensure that reasonable standards of private amenity space are provided in new developments.

- 8.18 The Design Guide contains guidelines in respect of the recommended minimum size of private amenity space that should be provided, with the size relating to the number of bedrooms in the proposed dwelling. Used on their own, these standards would lead to uniform plot sizes and shapes that pay little regard to the character of the area. This policy, however, requires the character of the site and the surrounding development to be considered in determining the appropriate garden area, as well as the type of dwelling that is being provided. It also requires that private garden and outdoor sitting areas are designed to provide a reasonable degree of privacy, sunlight and outlook.
- 8.19 Often garden and outdoor amenity spaces, particularly communal areas provided for flatted developments, are identified at the end of the design process and consist of the leftover space surrounding the building(s). This tends to result in spaces of an inappropriate size and shape that bear no relation to the internal workings of the building and/or the requirements of the intended user(s). Gardens and outdoor amenity spaces should be considered from the beginning of the design process and throughout. The provision of garden and outdoor amenity spaces should not be compromised by the need for parking or garages.

Policy DES6: Residential Amenity

- 1. Development proposals should 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:**
 - i) loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight;**
 - ii) dominance or visual intrusion;**
 - iii) noise or vibration;**
 - iv) smell, dust, heat, odour, gases or other emissions;**
 - v) pollution, contamination or the use of/or storage of hazardous substances; and**
 - vi) external lighting.**

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

- 8.20 New dwellings should be designed to ensure adequate privacy for existing and new residents to enable them to enjoy their homes without undue intrusion from neighbours or the public. Buildings should also be orientated within their plots to maximise daylight and passive solar gain, with garden areas orientated to maximise sunlight. These objectives can be achieved by careful siting of properties,

by ensuring that there are adequate distances between properties and through the erection of screen walls and fencing. Developments should be designed to avoid overshadowing of any adjoining dwelling or dwellings, although it is recognised that in high density housing schemes overlooking distances may not be so readily achievable. Innovative design approaches will therefore be sought to provide acceptable standards of privacy. The Design Guide contains detailed guidance.

Policy DES7: Efficient Use of Resources

- 1. New development is required to make provision for the effective use and protection of natural resources where applicable, including:**
 - i) the efficient use of land, with densities in accordance with Policy STRAT5 Residential Densities. Proposals which seek to deliver higher quality and higher density development which minimises land take will be encouraged;**
 - ii) minimising waste and making adequate provision for the recycling, composting and recovery of waste on site using recycled and energy efficient materials;**
 - iii) maximising passive solar heating, lighting, natural ventilation, energy and water efficiency and the re-use of materials;**
 - iv) making efficient use of water, for example through rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling, and causing no deterioration in, and where possible, achieving improvements in water quality (including groundwater quality);**
 - v) taking account of, and if located within an AQMA, is consistent with, the Council's Air Quality Action Plan;**
 - vi) ensuring that the land is of a suitable quality for development and that remediation of contaminated land is undertaken where necessary;**
 - vii) avoiding the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, unless it is demonstrated to be the most sustainable choice from reasonable alternatives, by first using areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality; and**
 - viii) re-using vacant buildings and redeveloping previously developed land, provided the land is not of a high environmental value.**

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

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- 8.21 In South Oxfordshire, the prudent use of natural resources is a key element of delivering sustainable development as this contributes to tackling climate change. The Council encourages applicants to consider how our existing resources can be used effectively and efficiently when planning and designing development proposals. Housing density should be optimised in strategic allocations and at the towns in the district, unless there are overriding reasons concerning townscape, character, landscape, design or infrastructure capacity. Special consideration will be given to the prevailing character and appearance in Conservation Areas and the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 8.22 National policy requires planning policies to take account of the presence of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. There are three Air Quality Management Areas designated in South Oxfordshire in the Market Towns of Henley-on-Thames and Wallingford, and the Larger Village of Watlington. This Plan seeks to ensure that new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with our Air Quality Action Plan.
- 8.23 The Water Framework Directive seeks to protect the quality of water, including the aquatic ecology, unique and valuable habitats, drinking water resources and bathing water. It requires that there is no deterioration in the status of water bodies and that they all achieve good ecological status by 2027. The Thames River Basin Management Plan sets out actions to help meet this obligation. Policies on Green Infrastructure, biodiversity and promoting sustainable design will also assist in achieving this objective by ensuring that surface water run-off is appropriately controlled. Aquifers within South Oxfordshire support strategically important public drinking water abstractions. Policies will seek to ensure that essential water resources are protected from derogation and pollution. Where required, references will be made to the Environment Agency, Source Protection zone mapping and their guidance - The Environment Agency's approach to Groundwater Protection.

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- 8.24 Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for determining planning applications for minerals and waste development and producing the Minerals and Waste Local Plan, which will safeguard mineral resources, aggregate rail depots, sites for recycled and secondary aggregate supply, other minerals infrastructure sites and sites for waste management. These areas are marked on the Policies Map. Should the District receive a planning application in any of these areas, Oxfordshire County Council will be consulted on the development. Applicants are advised to review the Minerals and Waste Local Plan prior to making a planning application.
- 8.25 All development will be expected to use land efficiently, with a density and form appropriate to the site and its surroundings, taking into account local character and accessibility to services and facilities.

Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy DES8: Promoting Sustainable Design

- 1. All new development, including building conversions, refurbishments and extensions, 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 taking into account any nationally adopted standards and in accordance with Policies DES10: Carbon Reduction and DES7: Efficient Use of Resources.**
- 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.**
- 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. The Council will not refuse planning permission for buildings or infrastructure of an outstanding or innovative design which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design, as long as they fit with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.**

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5. A sensitive approach will need to be taken to conserve the special character of designated and non designated heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

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

- 8.26 Increasing our resilience to the likely impact of climate change and promoting a low carbon future is one of the Local Plan's strategic objectives in response to the Climate Change Act (2008) as amended (2019) which mandates a 100% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050.
- 8.27 The design and construction of new developments and refurbishments to existing buildings can have a significant role in helping to reduce carbon emissions, which can be supported by improving the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings.
- 8.28 To improve resilience to the anticipated effects of climate change, the Council expects applicants to consider the effects of changing weather patterns and design new developments so that they incorporate measures to combat these. This could include planting, shading, the orientation and positioning of windows and advanced glazing systems to reduce solar heat gain in the summer and from lower sun angles in the winter; using cool building materials to prevent the penetration of heat and flood resilient building materials; increasing natural ventilation; incorporating flood resilient measures such as raising floor levels and preventing the infiltration of heavy rain around windows and doors. Consideration should also be given to using locally sourced, more sustainable building materials and fuel, for example, locally sourced wood.
- 8.29 The South Oxfordshire Water Cycle Study identified South Oxfordshire as being in an area of water stress. In order to address this, Policy INF4: Water Resources applies a higher standard for water efficiency.
- 8.30 The Government has established that through Part L of the Building Regulations, emissions allowed from new buildings will be reduced incrementally and that "zero carbon" buildings will be required within the plan period. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 stipulated that a review of minimum energy performance requirements under Building Regulations must be carried out and it is expected that current standards will be improved with the introduction of the Future Homes Standard. Policy DES10 sets the Council's policy requirement for carbon reduction.

The design and construction of new developments and refurbishments to existing buildings can have a significant role in helping to reduce carbon emissions

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation

Policy DES9: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

1. **The Council encourages schemes for renewable and low carbon energy generation and associated infrastructure at all scales including domestic schemes. It also encourages the incorporation of renewable and low carbon energy applications within all development. Planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy generation will be supported, provided that they do not cause a significantly adverse effect to:**
 - i) **landscape, both designated AONB and locally valued, biodiversity, including protected habitats and species and Conservation Target Areas;**
 - ii) **the historic environment, both designated and non-designated assets, including development within their settings;**
 - iii) **openness of the Green Belt;**
 - iv) **the safe movement of traffic and pedestrians; or**
 - v) **residential amenity.**

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

8.31 The Government has set a target that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 is 100% lower than the 1990 baseline³⁵. To help increase the use of renewable and low carbon energy the Council will promote the use of energy from renewable and low carbon sources, including community-led initiatives, and will develop policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts. The Council will support the inclusion of connection readiness for decentralised energy networks and the use of decentralised energy sources in development. The Council will identify and publish a list of any areas considered suitable for wind energy development within the district.

8.32 There are many forms of renewable energy. The most prevalent being wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, hydro power and biofuels. The most appropriate form of renewable energy for a development will depend on the scale of the development and the opportunities and constraints presented by its location.

³⁵ Climate Change Act 2008 available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>

Policy DES10: Carbon Reduction

1. Planning permission will only be granted where development proposals for:
 - i) new build residential dwelling houses; or
 - ii) developments including 1,000sqm or more of C2 use (including student accommodation); or
 - iii) Houses in Multiple Occupation (C4 use or Sui Generis floorspace) achieve at least a 40% reduction in carbon emissions compared with a code 2013 Building Regulations compliant base case. This reduction is to be secured through renewable energy and other low carbon technologies and/ or energy efficiency measures. The requirement will increase from 31 March 2026 to at least a 50% reduction in carbon emissions and again from 31 March 2030 to a 100% reduction in carbon emissions (zero carbon). These targets will be reviewed in the light of any future legislation and national guidance.
2. Non-residential development proposals are required:
 - i) to meet the BREEAM excellent standard (or a recognised equivalent assessment methodology)
 - ii) in addition development proposals of 1,000sqm or more are required to achieve at least a 40% reduction in the carbon emissions compared with a 2013 Building Regulations compliant base case. This reduction is to be secured through renewable energy and other low carbon technologies and/ or energy efficiency measures. The requirement will increase from 31 March 2026 to at least a 50% reduction in carbon emissions.
3. An Energy Statement will be submitted to demonstrate compliance with this policy for all new build residential developments (other than householder applications) and new-build non-residential schemes over 1,000sqm. The Energy Statement will include details as to how the policy will be complied with and monitored.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5 & 8.



8.33 To tackle the causes of climate change and address the commitment of the Council to become a carbon neutral district by 2030 it is crucial that planning policy limits carbon dioxide emissions from new development by ensuring developments use less energy and assess the opportunities for using renewable energy technologies.

8.34 The Council has ambitious aspirations for reducing the district's carbon emissions and recognises that more could be done to reduce emissions with regards to construction emissions, unregulated energy and reducing, capturing and storing embodied carbon. The Council also recognises that zero carbon homes are achievable for many residential developments now. The Council would encourage the delivery of zero carbon homes as soon as possible to avoid the need for costly retrofitting and would support development permitted by this Plan that exceeds the carbon reduction requirements set. The Council would also encourage similar reductions in terms of construction emissions and would implore developers to consider a development's overall carbon footprint and opportunities to reduce carbon emissions from the construction of infrastructure through offsetting. A request for a departure from this policy is expected to be supported by robust evidence including

viability assessments where required and will only be supported exceptionally. The Council will monitor the effect of this policy and consider a review of the policy in the light of any future legislation and national policy in this field.

- 8.35 New build non-residential buildings are required to meet the BREEAM excellent standard. This broadly represents performance equivalent to the top 10% of UK non-domestic buildings. Other recognised equivalent assessment methodology may be used, applicants are advised to check with the Council in order to ensure their alternative assessment methodology is acceptable. In addition to meeting the BREEAM excellent standard, new build non-residential development proposals of 1,000sqm or more, are required to achieve at least a 40% reduction in carbon emissions, increasing to 50% from 2026.
- 8.36 All energy efficiency measures used to achieve a reduction in carbon emissions, including renewable energy and low carbon technologies, should be delivered on-site, where possible. Where off-site renewable energy and low carbon technologies need to be used, the renewable or low carbon energy produced should directly service the proposed development scheme.
- 8.37 The Council encourages developers to take account of the energy hierarchy when identifying the measures taken to reduce carbon emissions and to adopt a fabric first approach by maximising the performance of the components and materials that make up the building fabric before considering the use of mechanical or electrical building services systems. Consideration should also be given to modern methods of construction.
- 8.38 It is important that the carbon emissions of these new developments are monitored effectively to ensure compliance. The Energy Statement submitted to support the application needs to set out how the developer will demonstrate compliance with the carbon reduction requirements and how emissions will be monitored to ensure that the development continues to comply. Suitable accreditations can be used to demonstrate compliance as part of the Energy Statement, for example the Passivhaus standard or the highest BREEAM standards. However, it will need to be clear how the accreditation relates to the requirements of the policy.
- 8.39 More information regarding sustainable design and construction is set out in the Council's Design Guide.