

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

- 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

- 1. During the plan period, provision will be made to meet the following requirements:**
- 2. 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