

Cabinet Report



Listening Learning Leading

Report of Head of Planning

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To: CABINET

Date: 18 December 2018

Local Plan Publication Version (2034)

Recommendation

To recommend to Council

1. To approve the publication version of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and associated documents, for publication under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as the version of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan proposed to be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination.
2. To delegate authority to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, to make any necessary minor amendments and corrections to the Local Plan and its associated documents including the identification of any saved plan policies as considered appropriate prior to;
 - a) publication of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan; and
 - b) submission of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination and leading up to and during the examination.

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the contents of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan Publication Version (2034) and its associated documents listed in the Background Papers and appended to this report.
2. Subject to Council approval, it is proposed to commence consultation (under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations) on 7 January 2019, for a period of 6 weeks until 18 February 2019.

Background

3. At the Council meeting on 15 May 2018, the recommendations from Cabinet of 10 May 2018 were moved and seconded, which were:

“(a) subject to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government confirming that submission of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan in January 2020 would not significantly impact on the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal or the freedoms and flexibilities proposed as part of it, to ask officers to reassess all sites capable of forming a strategic allocation promoted through the Local Plan (to 2033) process up to the end of the Regulation 19 publication period (including all strategic sites proposed in the October 2017 Regulation 19 document) and to bring a draft Regulation 18/Regulation 19 document (as required) to Cabinet and Council to seek approval for publication for consultation; and

(b) in the event that such confirmation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is not forthcoming to the satisfaction of the Head of Partnership and Insight and the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Leader of the council and the Cabinet members for planning and partnership and insight by no later than completion of the site filtering exercise (expected July 2018), to adopt Option 3, set out in the report of the Head of Planning to Cabinet on 10 May 2018, and to ask officers to bring the Regulation 19 (October 2017) document including proposed additional reserve site(s) to Cabinet and Council to seek approval for publication for consultation.”

4. Since that Council decision on 15 May, the following actions have been taken:

- a) A dialogue with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to advise them of the position with the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and the Council recommendation; and a subsequent update on the progress of the site assessment work. MHCLG advised they were pleased that South Oxfordshire remained committed to the terms of the Housing and Growth Deal and will submit its Local Plan before the deadline specified in the Deal delivery plan;
- b) Welcomed support from the Planning Advisory Service and an advisory visit from a Planning Inspector;
- c) The undertaking of a comprehensive strategic site selection process alongside the production of the draft Site Selection Background Paper to review the potential strategic allocations that the Local Plan can allocate. The strategic allocations are proposed within the Draft Local Plan Publication Version (2034);
- d) Officers have been reviewing and responding to the comments received during the previous Local Plan Publication Version consultation under Regulation 19 in October 2017 and any suggested changes to the Local Plan have where necessary been incorporated into the Draft Publication version (2034);
- e) The Local Plan Publication Version has been adapted to respond to changes required in light of the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 (and its associated guidance). The Local Plan will be submitted for examination *after* the transitional arrangements that are in place for six months after the NPPF publication are coming to an end;

- f) The gathering of a comprehensive evidence base to assist with the site selection process and to respond to changes in light of the introduction of the NPPF;
 - g) The Local Plan Publication Version 2034 has been adapted to respond to changes in circumstances since the last Publication Version of the Local Plan e.g. Oxford to Cambridge Arc and the progression of adjoining Local Authorities plans. In order to help discharge the Council's legal duty to cooperate, the draft Local Plan Publication Version 2034 suggests a change to the way in which the unmet housing need arising from Oxford City are reflected in the Local Plan.
 - h) The Local Plan needs to have a lifespan of 15 years, therefore with the adoption of the Plan estimated for the end of 2019, the end of the Plan period needs to be extended from 2033 to 2034.
5. At its meeting on 2 August 2018, Cabinet considered an update report on the work that had been carried out since the Council meeting on 15 May 2018. This explained that officers had written an initial letter to MHCLG and had been in dialogue with them on it. It also explained the work being done with the support of the Planning Advisory Service and following discussion at the advisory visit from a Planning Inspector. As a result, a revised Local Development Scheme timetable had been prepared which provided a route forward to submission to meet the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal milestones.
6. Cabinet approved the Local Development Scheme in August 2018 and also endorsed the work programme set out to progress the Local Plan and bring this publication version to Council as set out in the timetable.
7. In essence, circumstances changed between May and August 2018 such that officers and the Cabinet believed they were able, within the Growth Deal deadlines and therefore without being dependent on MHCLG agreement, to carry out Council's primary request to reassess all sites capable of forming a strategic allocation and to bring a draft document to Cabinet and Council to seek approval for publication for consultation.
8. The 15 May Council resolution set out in paragraph 3 at part b was intended as a fall-back position if the primary request in resolution a could not be achieved (See <http://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/documents/g2307/Printed%20minutes%20Tuesday%2015-May-2018%2018.00%20Council.pdf?T=1>). In the event and in circumstances that could not have been anticipated at Council on 15 May, the fall-back position is not required.

Proposed Consultation

9. The consultation for the Local Plan is proposed as a second Regulation 19 Consultation, effectively replacing the previous October 2017 version.
10. Subject to Council's approval, the proposed dates for the formal consultation on the Local Plan are 7 January 2019 to 18 February 2019. There have been a number of emails and letters already received relating to the site selection process for strategic allocations, and a particularly high volume of correspondence relating to the site at Northfield (230 to date). Our responses to those letters have all indicated that the formal consultation does not commence until Council approves the Local Plan for consultation on 7th January. These responses will not be treated as formal representations to the Publication version of the Local Plan.

Local Plan Publication Version Key Changes

Vision and Objectives

11. There have been no substantial improvements suggested for the vision of the Local Plan except for a reference to meeting the unmet housing needs of Oxford City.
12. There have been some slight amendments to some of the Local Plans objectives, as a result of comments received during the Regulation 19 consultation in 2017. These improvements provide clarity to the purpose of the objectives.

Spatial Strategy

13. There have been some improvements proposed to the spatial strategy and Policy STRAT1 in the Local Plan. These suggested improvements were necessary to ensure that it can be expressed that the Local Plan is able to deliver its preferred strategy.
14. Despite the addition of a new element to the spatial strategy at Oxford City, the Council's preferred strategy of development within Science Vale and sustainable settlements (towns and larger villages) remains a significant focus for housing, employment and other growth within this Plan period. Those sites proposed as allocations that are adjacent to the city at Grenoble Road, Northfield and North of Bayswater relate well to the city and they are well located to meet some of the city's unmet housing needs. This provides housing close to where the need for it arises.
15. The spatial strategy proposed growth is concentrated primarily within Science Vale and sustainable settlements but the strategy also relies upon complementary, but not substantive growth options that would promote growth in the district, but this is done without undermining the principal aim of this Local Plan's spatial strategy.
16. A key diagram has been introduced into the spatial strategy to provide readers with a clear visual representation of the pattern of growth proposed in the Plan.
17. The spatial strategy has also changed to include a necessary reference to the influence that Government's plans for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc has on the Local Plan, including the proposed Expressway.
18. The strategies for Henley on Thames, Thame and Wallingford remain largely unchanged from the previous version of the Local Plan.

Strategic Allocations

19. Officers have produced a draft Site Selection Background Report which details all the background, the methodology and both the general and detailed appraisals of the potential strategic housing allocations.
20. The re-assessment process has been an opportunity to review the sites in light of the need to consider the potential for an alternative(s) to the proposed allocation of Chalgrove Airfield, as well as to undertake a review process applicable to all of the proposed Local Plan strategic allocations in the last version of the Local Plan. This will ensure consistency is applied when selecting the allocations, which the Plan promotes. By undertaking this review consistently, it allows greater transparency of the allocations decision-making process.

21. Fifteen sites that were assessed to be capable of forming a strategic allocation were assessed. Those are sites were:

- 1) Berinsfield
- 2) Chalgrove
- 3) Culham
- 4) Grenoble Road
- 5) Harrington
- 6) Land at North Weston, Thame
- 7) Land at Palmers Riding Stables
- 8) Land South of Great Western Park
- 9) Northfield
- 10) Playhatch - Reading
- 11) Reading Golf Club
- 12) Chalgrove
- 13) Thornhill
- 14) Wheatley Oxford Brooks University
- 15) Wick Farm/Lower Elsfeld (Later combined to be known as Land North of Bayswater Brook)

22. The recommendations arising from the assessment in the Site Selection Background Paper indicates that the Local Plan allocates eight of the above sites. The total amount of development from these allocations exceed the requirements for housing by 4,032 dwellings but it is important to achieve this to ensure that the Plan continues to deliver a five-year housing land supply and delivers growth throughout the plan period.

23. Improvements since the last version of the strategic allocation policies or key issues with the proposed additional allocations are described for each proposed allocation below. Some of the sites will not deliver their full housing capacity within the plan period and so the figures for homes we expect to come forward by 2034 have been provided.

- a. Grenoble Road for approximately 1,700 homes within this plan period:
 - i. There is an assumption that the density of this site can achieve 70 dph;
 - ii. The site and policy would require the delivery of a park and ride;
 - iii. The necessary mitigation for the sewage treatment works is referenced in policy to mitigate for the issues raised in the evidence base.
- b. Culham for approximately 1,850 homes within this plan period (previously 3,500):
 - i. The policy introduces an explicit policy requirement for a pedestrian/cycle bridge across the River Thames to link with Abingdon;

- ii. The policy introduces greater clarity for the provision of a range of onsite and offsite infrastructure;
 - iii. There are more stringent requirements to account for environmental constraints within and around the strategic allocation;
 - iv. The density of the development has been assumed as 45dph.
 - v. SSSI at Culham brake has been excluded for the allocated area and this helps form a more defensible and permanent green belt boundary.
- c. Berinsfield for approximately 1,600 homes within this plan period (Previously 1,700):
- i. The updated policy includes strong emphasis on the creation of permanent defensible green belt boundaries and the need for extensive Green Infrastructure provision to mitigate the significant effects noted in the latest evidence base;
 - ii. There is a risk to the delivery of this site. Since the last version of the Plan it has been evidenced that additional education capacity both on and off site is required as well as a new additional non-strategic access to the north of Berinsfield. This is to be developer funded and there are specific contributions towards off-site infrastructure upgrades. The delivery of the access may require the developer to work with third party landowners to deliver it, and this adds additional delivery risk to this site.
 - iii. The density of the development has been assumed as 45dph.
- d. Wheatley Oxford Brooks University for at least 300 homes (previously also 300):
- i. The updated evidence on Green Belt supports the case for the Wheatley site to be removed from the Green Belt;
 - ii. The density of the site would be approximately 45 dph if not utilising those parts of the site not appropriate for development.
- e. Northfield for approximately 1,800 homes:
- i. There is an assumption that the density of this site can achieve 70 dph;
 - ii. The boundary of the site has been established and the policy requires a permanent defensible Green Belt boundary to be created along Northfield Brook. The new boundary looks to address the constraints that the larger Northfield boundary (as proposed by the site promoters) have identified in terms of the impact on the Green Belt, landscape and Flood Zone 2 and 3.
- f. Chalgrove airfield for approximately 2,025 homes within this plan period (previously 3000):
- i. The area of the runway reserved for the continued operation of Martin Baker has been clearly established and safeguarded, and the policy includes more reference to the mitigation needed to account for its new location and its operation;
 - ii. The B480 has an indicative re-routing through the allocation;
 - iii. There is specific referral to employment land being provided to the East of the site to complement Monument Business Park;

- iv. The density across the site has been proposed at 45dph, there was no specific density assumed previously;
 - v. The benefits to the existing village of Chalgrove of surface water management to be provided on site has been strengthened in the policy;
 - vi. There have been improvements to the references made to infrastructure provision and additional clarity about the provision of public transport;
- g. Land north of Bayswater Brook for approximately 1,100 homes:
- i. There have been some helpful suggestions from Oxfordshire County Council on potential transport mitigations needed for this site:
 - 1. A new road connection from the site with the A40 at locations to the east and west of the strategic allocation;
 - 2. Significant enhancements to existing junctions at Oxford City;
 - ii. There is a need for more evidence on ecology;
 - iii. There is significant risk about the ability of us being able to demonstrate the deliverability of this strategic allocation.
24. The development arising from these strategic allocations will not all be achieved and delivered simultaneously. This does not include other planned growth at sustainable settlements.
25. All proposed strategic allocation policies have undergone a substantial re-write. This is predominantly to provide consistency across the policies, but also to ensure that the policies reflect the comments received during the Regulation 19 consultation that sought greater clarity of the policies and the related infrastructure proposed by key stakeholders.
26. Each of these strategic allocation policies will be accompanied by a concept plan. These concept plans visually represent some of the fundamental elements of what each Policy is expected to achieve for the site layout on an indicative plan. However, they are indicative and they do not form part of the policy itself.
27. Each of the strategic allocation policies now has three elements to it. Firstly, they set out what the development has to provide for in terms of number of houses, amount of employment etc. Secondly, they list the specific things that the development of each site needs to have delivered. Thirdly, they list what a collaborative masterplan for each site would be expected to consider and plan for.
28. The maps for the strategic allocations continue to be represented within the Local Plan at its Appendix 2. These have been amended in light of the introduction of concept plans to establish an indicative developable area rather than a fixed developable area which may change as schemes develop with a masterplan, and to reflect all key constraints that stakeholders requested at the Regulation 19 consultation in October 2017.

Housing

29. Policy STRAT2 sets out housing and employment requirements. This policy has been updated to take into account the need to plan for an additional year to 2034. It also sets out the provision of a level of housing that aligns with the Oxfordshire Housing

and Growth Deal for the County. Consequentially Policy STRAT3 (which was previously a policy referring to the Council’s position on Oxford City’s unmet housing need) is no longer necessary and has been deleted.

30. The supply of homes to come forward has been amended to reflect the allocations proposed, the most up to date completions and commitments and a suggested increase to the Council’s windfall allowance. The Local Plan is therefore supplying a total of **28,459 homes between 2011 and 2034**. Table 5c of the draft Local Plan (Chapter 5: Delivering New Homes) is provided below that sets out how this supply is established:

Breakdown of new housing supply	Net number of dwellings to 2034
Completions (1 April 2011 to 31 March 2018)	4,364
Commitments (as at 30 September 2018)	
<i>Sites under construction, with planning permission and allocations carried forward from the Local Plan 2011 and Core Strategy and from made NDPs</i>	11,362
New strategic allocations delivering in the plan period *	10,415
Outstanding Market towns housing requirement (provided through Neighbourhood planning)	519
Outstanding Larger villages housing requirement (provided through neighbourhood planning)	499
Windfalls (including within smaller villages and potential neighbourhood plan allocations)	1,300
Total	28,459

*strategic allocations continue to deliver housing beyond the plan period and will deliver a total of 14,400 homes.

31. Policy H3 Housing in the towns of Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford (Chapter 5: Delivering New Homes) now sets a housing requirement of 3,873 homes; originally the requirement was 1,155 homes. This is to account for the large numbers of completions of commitments that have occurred in these towns over the past few years. The towns cannot be expected, as sustainable locations in the district, not to plan for future growth (although we recognise that some of the commitments have not

yet been built out). This would not be positive planning and it would not reflect the Plan’s spatial strategy to principally rely on growth in Science Vale and sustainable settlements. If Neighbourhood Plans wish to plan for more than their requirement the policy encourages that, but the Plan does not factor this into the housing supply calculations.

32. Policy H4 Housing in Larger Villages (Chapter 5: Delivering New Homes) has been updated. The housing requirement for this tier of settlements has changed from 1,041 to 3,991 homes. This is to account for the large numbers of completions of commitments that have occurred in some of these larger villages over the past few years. If Neighbourhood Plans wish to plan for more or less than their requirement the policy supports that where it is evidenced, but the Plan does not factor this into the housing supply calculations. For each larger village an extract from the Local Plan is provided below to reflect the updates:

Larger Village	Core Strategy + 15% growth	Up to date Completions and commitments	Outstanding housing requirement for NDP
Villages without allocations in this Local Plan			
Benson	383	854	0
Chinnor	594	796	0
Cholsey	612	585	27
Crowmarsh Gifford	312	494	0
Goring-on-Thames	329	96	233
Sonning Common	377	269	108
Watlington	262	305	0
Woodcote	225	94	131

Villages with allocations in this Local Plan			
Berinsfield	274	7	0
Chalgrove	248	339	0
Nettlebed	70	15	0
Wheatley	305	129	0

33. Policies H5, H6 and H7 propose housing allocations for Nettlebed. This section of the Plan has been updated to reflect the new evidence base on landscape issues but all allocations and capacities of the sites at Nettlebed remain as they were in the previous version of the Local Plan.

34. Policy H8 Housing in the Smaller Villages has been substantially re-written to remove a requirement for housing from these settlements that Neighbourhood Plans would be expected to deliver. This would not diminish the supply of housing that was proposed in the previous version of the Local Plan (500 homes from smaller villages and windfalls) because there is a proposed increase of windfalls from 500 homes to 1,300 homes.

35. Policy H9 Affordable Housing has been re-structured, but essentially now refers to a split provision for the sites adjacent to Oxford City and direct provision of affordable housing within villages in the AONB, rather than the previous policy stance suggesting that these should be provided as financial contributions, though there remains an option if justified.
36. Policy H12 Self-Build and Custom Housing has been strengthened to refer to additional ways in which the local plan or neighbourhood plan can provide for these types of houses.

Employment Policies

37. Policy STRAT2 also sets out employment requirements. This has been updated to take into account the need to plan for an additional year to 2034.
38. To plan for the economic growth forecast in the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), the South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review Addendum' (SOELRA) published in August 2017 forecasts that between 33.2 and 35.9 hectares of additional employment land is required in the district over the period 2011 to 2033. The Council has previously published a 'South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review' (ELR) in 2015 which forecasts a requirement of 24.4 hectares of employment land for the period 2014 to 2031 or approximately 31.6 hectares if extrapolated over the previous plan period to 2033. Therefore, the SOELRA set a slightly higher requirement in line with the 2014 SHMA. Further to this, as the above employment forecast ends at 2033, to account for the additional year in the plan period beyond the date of the evidence base, an additional requirement of between 1.5 to 1.63 hectares is required (based on a pro-rata calculation over the previous plan period). This results in an employment requirement of between 34.7 and 37.5 hectares of employment land in the district over the period 2011 to 2034.
39. Policy EMP1 accordingly plans for 37.5Ha of employment land, with an identified supply of 37.2Ha; however, there is an additional proportion of employment to be delivered as part of the Grenoble Road strategic allocation which satisfies the employment requirement for District.
40. Policy EMP9 now includes an allocation at Monument Business Park owing to the lack of provision for employment within the draft Chalgrove Neighbourhood Development Plan. Without this allocation the employment evidence that suggests the business park requires expansion could not be achieved. Part of this site allocation has planning permission.

Retail Policies

41. The NPPF 2018 has introduced greater flexibility to the use of buildings within town centres, and it has removed the requirement for primary and secondary shopping frontages and creates a need for a primary shopping area, which SODC has not identified previously.
42. This exercise was undertaken in house and the Primary Retail Areas proposed largely reflect the original primary retailing frontage, but with some improvements suggested around Didcot to account for changes occurring with the development of the Orchard Centre.

43. The Retail Needs Update (2017) does set out that it can quickly become dated, but the evidence contained within it and the response suggested by officers to amend the policy account for changes to the retail market and potentially population change since that Retail Needs Update was completed. The retail evidence was predicated on the delivery of just four strategic allocations and a different delivery trajectory for those allocations. It is also clear that requiring strategic allocations to provide for an element of comparison retailing was onerous and unnecessary given the extent of development that has been provided for within the Plan period at the Orchard Centre in Didcot and also it was unlikely to be delivered, reflecting market changes. There are therefore suggested improvements to remove requirements for comparison retail to be delivered at strategic allocations.
44. The retail requirements policy has been reorganised to reflect a deficiency in its previous format. The purpose of the policy is to set out the district's evidenced requirements and then our proposed locations to meet them. However, this was not clear in the previous policy. The plan period extension of a year has increased the requirements slightly, and the monitoring of completions to offset that requirement has been updated and clearly indicated within the policy.

Environment Policies

45. All policies in this section have been reviewed for compliance with the NPPF 2018 and some policies have required more improvements than others. There were also a number of amendments proposed to the policies following the Regulation 19 consultation on the Publication Version of the Local Plan.
46. STRAT11 Green Belt has been amended to include reference to the additional Green Belt amendments being made to account for the proposed strategic allocations at Wheatley, North of Bayswater Brook, Northfield and Grenoble Road. These are in addition to the previously referred to allocations that are proposed to be removed from the Green Belt at Culham and Berinsfield. There is also now proposed removal of Green Belt at Wheatley at the strategic allocation, but not in relation to further growth at Wheatley that could come forward in the NDP. There has been an updated Green Belt Study prepared to support the revised publication of the Local Plan and the suggestions for the change of approach at Wheatley is evidenced within this Green Belt Study.

Transport and Infrastructure Policies

47. The Plan must recognise the work undertaken by the National Infrastructure Commission on developing plans for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, their recommendations on progressing growth along this corridor as set out in their 2017 report 'Partnering for Prosperity: a new deal for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor' and the Government's response to this report in the Autumn 2018 budget¹.
48. The Local Plan will be able to demonstrate that it already makes a positive contribution towards delivering the ambitions set out for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, but it is recognised that the key infrastructure schemes, namely the Oxford to Cambridge Arc and East-West Rail, are currently in the development stage, and their impacts on South Oxfordshire are currently not known. In particular, the decision on a route for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc round Oxford is not due until 2020. The Plan adequately

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cambridge-milton-keynes-oxford-arc-study-government-response>

recognises the need to work with partners to understand the longer-term implications of the Government Plans.

49. A new policy TRANS1a (Chapter 7: Infrastructure) has been included stating that the Council intends to plan for and understand the impacts of changes to rail infrastructure and service improvements linked to East-West rail and to plan for and understand impacts and required mitigation associated with the Oxford to Cambridge Arc if required.
50. Policy TRANS1b Supporting Strategic Transport Investment and TRANS2 Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility now refers to the need to support sustainable transport measures and improvements around Oxford and around the Didcot Garden Town area.
51. Policy INF1 and INF4 has been amended to reflect comments received during the Regulation 19 consultation in October 2017. The change to INF4 requires more upfront consideration of how planning applications will remedy capacity constraints to serve their development.

Monitoring and Review

52. This section of the Local Plan has been revised and is more comprehensive, providing a policy by policy approach to monitoring the delivery or achievement of the Local Plan.

Local Plan appendices

53. Appendix 1: Glossary has been reviewed and there are consequential improvements mostly as a result of new definitions introduced from the revised NPPF 2018.
54. Appendix 2: Strategic Allocations maps includes new maps for the new strategic allocations. These have been amended in light of the introduction of concept plans to establish an indicative developable area, and to reflect all key constraints that stakeholders requested at the Regulation 19 consultation in October 2017. Officers have suggested a slight amendment to the Culham strategic allocation boundary that would remove the part of the site adjacent to the SSSI at Culham Brake.
55. Appendix 3: Site Allocations that are non-strategic remain unchanged.
56. Appendix 4: Green Belt proposed changes includes new maps for the new strategic allocations that are within the Green Belt and a change to Culham Green Belt boundary to reflect the change made in Appendix 2 that warranted the allocation being removed from the SSSI.
57. Appendix 5: Safeguarding Maps has been updated because there has been further development of infrastructure planning for certain road schemes for which land is proposed to be safeguarded. This has led to proposed changes to the safeguarding area for four schemes, drawn-up in consultation with the County Council. Minor changes have been made to the safeguarding plans for the proposed new Thames road crossing between Culham and Didcot Garden Town and the Didcot Northern Perimeter Road. The safeguarding area for the proposed Watlington bypass has also changed to take into account the latest plans for this scheme, whilst the proposed area for A4074/ B4105 Golden Balls Junction improvements has been changed to reflect the latest transport modelling evidence which indicates that a more significant improvement scheme may be needed at this junction in the longer-term. The safeguarding area for

the proposed Stadhampton bypass has been removed, including its reference in Policy TRANS 3. Options for this mitigation will be reviewed in more detail by Homes England and the County Council as part of the transport mitigation required for Chalgrove, taking into account the relevant constraints including archaeology, flooding and environmental impacts.

58. Appendix 6: Didcot Garden Town Principles remain unchanged.

59. Appendix 7: Settlement Hierarchy and the background paper associated with it assesses each of the District's settlements sustainability against a number of criteria and categorises them on their suitability for growth. The hierarchy was reviewed following comments and advice received during and since the last consultation. The following changes have been made which have impacted on the scoring:

- a. Additional facilities/services counted; allotments, petrol stations, ATMs and places of worship. They were added as they are considered to have community/social value;
- b. Greater emphasis given to facility score multiply (x2) added to score for Pubs/Restaurants and Take Away. In line with how retail services are scored.
- c. The score for bus services has been halved to provide more balance in the scoring, as it was considered too much emphasis had been placed on it meaning settlements were being scored higher than would otherwise be expected. It also takes into account of the vulnerability of bus services in the district particularly in rural areas.
- d. The threshold for each category has changed to account for improvements to the scoring.
- e. Swyncombe has been removed from the hierarchy as had previously been scored as the parish as a whole.
- f. Cuddesdon and Berrick Salome have been reclassified from being 'Other Villages' to 'Smaller Villages', due to improvements in the scoring they have moved above the threshold. They were both categorised as 'Smaller Villages' in the Core Strategy 2012 which was scrutinised through examination.

60. Appendix 8: Local Plan Development Trajectory has been both improved for clarity and it has been updated to reflect the most up to date data.

61. Appendix 9: Designed sites for nature conservation has required updating to include a revised set of Local Wildlife Sites as opposed to County Wildlife Sites.

62. Appendix 10: Scheduled Monuments remain largely unchanged.

63. Appendix 11: Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in South Oxfordshire reference to English Heritage and now includes 'Friar Park (Grade II)'.

64. Appendix 12: Listed Buildings, Heritage at Risk and Conservation Areas in South Oxfordshire remain unchanged. However, the Policies Map accompanying the Local

Plan will require a change to reflect the Conservation Area boundary changes approved since the last version of the Plan was published.

65. Appendix 13: Town Centre boundaries have been amended to include Primary shopping area rather than primary shopping frontages.
66. Appendix 14: List of Core Strategy (2012) and Saved Local Plan 2011 policies and Strategic or Non-Strategic policy includes a new column to explicitly indicate whether each policy in the Local Plan is a strategic policy or a non-strategic policy. This is a requirement of the NPPF 2018.

Financial Implications

67. The cost of the additional assessment of sites and the supporting evidence base has all been met from the existing Planning budget, recognising that it had been anticipated that the cost of the Examination would be borne in this financial year. It will now be necessary to ensure the appropriate carry overs to 2019/20. The decision to commence consultation will incur some costs associated with the editing, printing and couriering of documents for consultation as well as the production costs of leaflets and display boards. These costs can all be met from within existing budgets.

Legal Implications

68. All aspects of the Local Plan preparation have been undertaken in accordance with the relevant Planning legislation and is deemed to be legally compliant with relevant regulations. We have sought to ensure that the appropriate legal advice has informed the production process of the Local Plan throughout to ensure compliance with relevant regulations.

Risks

69. There would be significant risk for the Council should the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal deadline of 31 March 2019 for Local Plan submission not be achieved.
70. If the Local Plan is not approved by Council, and if consequently the consultation on the Local Plan does not commence on 7 January as proposed in this report, the Council would not be able to meet the deadline imposed through the Growth Deal of the 31 March 2019. This would be a threat to the entire housing and growth deal for Oxfordshire and would put at risk up to £215 million of agreed government funding.
71. There would also be consequential risks for the Council for the Housing Infrastructure Funding bid for Didcot Garden Town, representing a further £171 million of potential funding towards road improvements including a new river crossing. The final business case for this bid must be submitted to Homes England by early March at the latest, and the case depends upon clarity over the proposed local plan site allocations, in particular those at Culham and Berinsfield.

Conclusion

72. The background and implications outlines in this report clearly establish the need for the local plan to be published now for Regulation 19 consultation in order to ensure it is possible for the local plan to be submitted before the end of March 2019 and to meet the milestones established through the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.

Appendices (all published on the councils' website)

- Appendix 1 - Draft Local Plan Publication Version (2nd) 2034
- Appendix 2 - Log of amendments to be made to Appendix 1 since the scrutiny version was published (attached to this report)
- Appendix 3 - Draft Sustainability Appraisal Main report
- Appendix 4 - Draft Habitats Regulations Assessment
- Appendix 5 - Draft Equalities Impact Assessment