

Cabinet Report



Report of Head of Planning

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To: CABINET/COUNCIL

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South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032 – Vision, objectives and housing supply target.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to consider this report and refer it to Council with the following recommendations:

(a) the plan period be amended to 2011 – 2032, to allow the Local Plan to operate for 15 years after the currently forecast adoption date, and the plan be retitled the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032;

(b) the Vision and Objectives set out in Appendix A of this report are endorsed for the purposes of consultation (Regulation 18) on the Preferred Options for the Local Plan 2032; and

(c) the target of 19,500 homes over the plan period 2011-32 and the proposed housing distribution as set out in para. 18 of this report are endorsed for the purposes of the consultation (Regulation 18) on the Preferred Options for the Local Plan 2032

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the proposed Vision, Objectives, housing target and housing distribution for the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032 Preferred Options consultation, scheduled for June 2016.

Corporate Objectives

2. Progressing the Local Plan rapidly towards adoption will assist in meeting the following objectives within the current Corporate Plan (2012-2016):
 - Set housing targets and identify land supply to meet future housing need
 - Process planning applications for housing promptly
 - Secure financial contributions from development to deliver essential infrastructure
 - Work with developers to overcome obstacles to development
 - Work with local communities to identify suitable sites for community led housing schemes
 - Continue to invest to improve the vitality and viability of our towns
 - Support business growth in appropriate locations across the district, whilst protecting the character of our towns and villages
 - Improve infrastructure to support business growth
 - Increase the value of the visitor economy in South Oxfordshire

Background

3. A Local Plan is required to have a plan period which stretches at least 15 years beyond the date of the Plan's adoption. It is currently timetabled for the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 to be adopted in late 2017. This would only give 14 years to the currently proposed end date, 2031. It is therefore proposed that the plan period be extended by one year, to 2032 and to roll forward requirements, such as our housing requirement. It is also proposed that the plan be retitled the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032, to reflect this proposed change.
4. The emerging Local Plan is progressing through its statutory stages. To date, two consultations have been undertaken under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. These stages were:
 - Issues and Scope (June 2014)
 - Refined Options (February 2015)

5. The next stage is the publication of our Preferred Options document for public consultation (June 2016). It is intended that this will be a draft of the Local Plan and will include those issues originally planned to be provided in the Core Strategy Part 2; housing allocations in the larger villages where they are not undertaking a Neighbourhood Development Plan and development management policies (such as saved policies from Local Plan 2011).
6. Given the comprehensive nature of the proposed Preferred Options document, it is considered appropriate that Cabinet and Council endorse key elements of the proposed document at this stage. These two elements are:
 - The Vision and Objectives which will underpin the Local Plan 2032; and
 - The overall level of housing provision for our district following the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), including Oxford City's unmet housing need, and its distribution across our area.
7. Although these components will be for Regulation 18 consultation purposes only at this stage, they are fundamental to how the rest of the draft Local Plan is structured and that the assumptions are made in terms of, for example, employment land and retail provision. The draft policies will flow from the Vision and Objectives, and the housing target will form the basis upon which a range of other issues, such as transport, will be assessed.

Vision and Objectives

8. The draft Vision and Objectives are set out in Appendix A. The Vision is the Council's statement of what it wishes the District to be at the end of the Local Plan period (2032). It is, in effect, a statement of intent.
9. The Strategic Objectives flow directly from the Vision and provide the broad tools with which to achieve that Vision. The draft policies within the Local Plan will then provide the detailed tools for delivery. The policies will be cross-referenced back to the Strategic Objectives, setting out which Objective(s) each policy will help to deliver.
10. The Vision continues to reflect the Core Strategy component that focuses growth at Didcot. A proposed major strategic housing allocation elsewhere in the district outside the Green Belt would not compromise growth at Didcot as it would help meet Oxford City's unmet housing need, rather than our own housing need.

Housing Provision

11. The proposed level of housing provision to form the basis of the Preferred Options document is set out in Appendix B.
12. The table in Appendix B shows that the overall housing requirement for which the Local Plan has to make provision is initially assessed to be 19,500 homes. This comprises 15,750 for our own needs. This is derived from the Committed Economic Growth Scenario assessed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, of 750 dwellings per year, multiplied by the now proposed 21-year

Plan period (2011 – 2032). The annual housing requirement of 750 homes is consistent with our Refined Options consultation, undertaken last year.

13. In addition, as part of our Duty to Cooperate, it is expected that the District will be required to meet a proportion of the housing need for Oxford that the City Council is unable to provide itself. As reported to the Growth Board, Oxfordshire councils have agreed 15,000 homes as a working assumption to help meet Oxford's unmet housing need. For the purposes of the Preferred Options consultation and until Oxford City have an updated adopted Local Plan which formally sets out what the level of unmet housing need is, we will use a working assumption of 3,750 homes as Oxford's unmet housing need. This is derived from splitting the 15,000 homes equally between the remaining four districts, on the assumption that Oxford cannot accommodate further housing. However, it should be noted that this is **a working assumption only**, for the purposes of the Preferred Options consultation and this figure may change prior to the Regulation 19 stage consultation, which is likely to be reached towards the end of 2016.
14. This gives a housing requirement of 19,500 dwellings for which the draft Local Plan seeks to make provision.
15. The table in Appendix B also looks at the proposed supply of the housing provision equation. The Plan period starts on 1 April 2011. Therefore, we already have five years of existing housing supply which has contributed to the requirement of 19,500 dwellings. This has to be taken account of in calculating the balance. Housing completions and commitments currently equate to 12,300 dwellings.
16. Deducting the already identified supply of 12,300 dwellings from the requirement of 19,500 gives a balance of 7,200 dwellings (rounded), for which the draft Local Plan seeks to make provision. However, there are a three main uncertainties which also have to be taken into account:
 - Some current planning application commitments may not actually be developed. This can be for a number of reasons, including for example changing market conditions and changing ownership.
 - If the Local Plan 2032 allocates one or more large sites for development, the scale may mean that the site(s) may not be completed within the Plan period.
 - The proportion of Oxford City's unmet housing need that we offer to accommodate may increase, conversely it may decrease.
17. It is therefore prudent to take account of these uncertainties when setting out the draft housing provision figure.
18. The proposed supply strategy and distribution of housing is set out on the basis of:
 - a major strategic housing allocation,

- 10% increase in the number of dwellings (existing (2011) plus Core Strategy provision) at Thame and Wallingford,
- 10% increase (based on the number of existing dwellings (2011) plus Core Strategy provision) in the larger villages
- 5% increase (based on the number of existing dwellings (2011)) in the smaller villages
- redevelopment of two brownfield sites

19. The total draft net/residual housing provision figure for the purposes of the Preferred Option consultation is a theoretical overprovision of approximately 520 dwellings. This will assist in taking account of the uncertainties set out in paragraph 16, above.

20. The calculations are set out in Appendix B.

Financial Implications

21. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

22. There is a need to satisfy the requirements of Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and our Duty to Cooperate.

Risks

23. There is a risk that the proportion of Oxford's unmet housing need set out in the Plan may increase or decrease. This risk will need to be managed through the Council's ongoing effective discharge of its Duty to Cooperate.

Conclusion

24. It is scheduled that a South Oxfordshire draft Local Plan Preferred Options consultation will commence in June 2016. It is important that the underlying Vision and Objectives and the proposed housing provision figures are endorsed for the purposes of this consultation. The Vision, Objectives and the housing figures may be amended, as a result of the Preferred Options consultation and other factors, prior to the Regulation 19 stage consultation in late 2016.

Appendix A – Draft Vision and Objectives

South Oxfordshire is a beautiful and prosperous place with many strengths: its natural environment, picturesque towns and villages, and a buoyant and successful economy. There are challenges in ensuring that we plan for development in a way that protects and enhances all that is special about our district. In our vision for 2032 we set out how we see the district evolving, building on our strengths and rising to the challenges.

A set of strategic objectives define what the Local Plan 2032 will focus on to deliver our stated vision. Our strategy is an evolution of that developed for the Core Strategy 2012, as we believe it is still appropriate and sustainable, and it reflects valued input from the community.

Our Vision for 2032

South Oxfordshire will remain a beautiful and prosperous place to live, for existing and future residents and it will be an attractive place for people to work and spend their leisure time.

By meeting our housing and employment need and the creation of new, sustainable and vibrant places, we will have provided enough homes and jobs for those wishing to live and work here. By planning for housing in our four market towns of Didcot, Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford and in our villages, we will have ensured that all our communities thrive and that everyone has access to services within a short distance. New development meets the highest standards of design with necessary associated infrastructure.

Science Vale will have continued to grow as a world renowned science, research and innovation led hub that attracts business and creates job opportunities, and delivers housing growth. Didcot will be a flourishing Garden Town, being both the gateway to and the heart of Science Vale. Roads and rail links will have been improved and pedestrian and cycle networks will have made it easier for people to get around, in particular to major employment sites.

Through careful management of the Oxford Green Belt we will have protected the important setting of Oxford whilst also making appropriate provision for housing, business growth and urban and rural regeneration. The North Wessex Downs and Chilterns Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and enhanced, whilst also allowing for appropriate and sustainable growth in places that will thrive and benefit. Our rich and varied history is celebrated, protected and enhanced for the benefit of residents and visitors.

We will exceed people's high expectations in terms of healthy living, sustainable travel and the design of buildings, homes and public spaces. Everyone will have access to high quality leisure, retail and cultural facilities which will also attract

visitors. South Oxfordshire will be a top tourist destination, helping our towns and villages to remain vibrant and prosperous. Communities will thrive, and through Neighbourhood Planning and community engagement, they will have their say on how their local area is shaped.

Strategic Objectives

Our Strategic Objectives are underpinned by the three strands of the National Planning Policy Framework: Social, Economic and Environmental, and our new Corporate Objectives.

1) Settlements

Support the settlement hierarchy, the development of Didcot Garden Town, the growth of our market towns and the vitality of our villages.

Support rural communities and ‘their way of life’, recognising that this is what attracts people to the district.

Meet identified housing needs by delivering high-quality, sustainable, attractive places for people to live and work.

Focus growth in Science Vale through delivering homes and jobs, retail and leisure facilities and enhanced transport infrastructure.

2) Housing

Deliver a wide range of housing options to cater for the housing needs of our community (self-build, starter homes, older person’s accommodation).

Support the regeneration of housing and facilities to strengthen communities, and address identified poverty and social exclusion.

Support meeting the economic and housing needs of the county as a whole, reflecting the special character of South Oxfordshire

3) Economy

Improve employment opportunities and employment land provision, providing high quality local jobs to help retain more of its skilled residents in the local workforce.

Support business growth, especially in locations close to existing business areas, transport connections and broadband provision and which provide the opportunity to reduce commuting distances.

Ensure economic and housing growth are balanced, thus facilitating sustainable journeys to work.

Support the retail and service sectors as well as high-tech industries.

Create the conditions whereby world-renowned and cutting edge industries choose to locate and grow their businesses here, contributing to a strong and successful economy, in line with the Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire.

Inspire the next generation of workers by planning for high quality education facilities.

Encourage tourism by protecting our built and natural assets, such as the Thames, and providing services and facilities for visitors.

4) Infrastructure

Ensure that essential infrastructure is delivered to support our existing residents and services as well as growth.

Make sustainable transport an attractive and viable choice for people, whilst recognising that car travel and parking provision will continue to be important in this rural district.

5) Design

Deliver high quality, innovative, well designed and locally distinctive developments in sustainable locations.

Support development that respects the scale and character of our towns and villages, enhancing the special character of our historic settlements and the surrounding countryside.

6) Community

Champion neighbourhood planning, empowering local communities to direct development within their area and provide support to ensure neighbourhood plans are deliverable, achievable and sustainable.

Provide access to high quality leisure, recreation, cultural, community and health facilities.

Ensure all communities have access to the services and facilities they value, supporting the health and wellbeing of everyone.

7) Natural and Built environment

Protect and enhance the natural environment, including biodiversity, the landscape, Green Infrastructure and our waterways, placing particular importance on the value of the Oxford Green Belt, our two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the River Thames.

Conserve and enhance our rich and varied historic assets and their settings, celebrating these as some of our strongest attributes.

8) Climate change

Minimise carbon emissions and other pollution such as water, air, noise and light, and increase our resilience to the likely impact of climate change, especially flooding.

Appendix B - DRAFT HOUSING DISTRIBUTION – SOLP 2032

Housing Target

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|---------------|
| SHMAA OAN (750) x 21 years | 15,750 | |
| Allowance for Oxford's unmet need | 3,750 | |
| Total requirement | | 19,500 |

Less Identified Supply

| | | |
|--|-------|----------------------|
| Completions 2011 - 16 | 2,629 | |
| Commitments 2011- 32 | 9,678 | |
| Total identified supply | | <u>12,307</u> |
| Balance to be identified in SOLP 2032 | | 7,193 |

New Supply to Meet Balance

| | | |
|--|-------|---------------------|
| Town - Thame (Core Strategy + 10%) | 565 | |
| Town - Wallingford (Core Strategy + 10%) | 400 | |
| Larger villages (Core Strategy +10%) | 1,690 | |
| Smaller villages (+5%) | 760 | |
| Major strategic housing allocation | 3,500 | |
| Brownfield – OBU Wheatley | 300 | |
| Brownfield – Culham | 500 | |
| Total new supply in SOLP 2032 | | <u>7,715</u> |
| Total dwelling provision balance | | +522 |