

Cabinet Report



Listening Learning Leading

Report of Head of Planning

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To: CABINET

Date: 21/09/2017

South Oxfordshire Local Plan – Publication

Recommendations to Council

- (a) 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.
- (b) To delegate authority to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, to make any necessary minor amendments and corrections including the identification of any saved plan policies as considered appropriate prior to;
 - publication of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan; and
 - submission of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination and leading up to and during the examination.

Recommendations to Cabinet

- (c) To consider the Culham petition and agree the proposed strategic allocation at Culham remains in the publication version of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.
- (d) To consider the Chalgrove petition and agree that the proposed strategic allocation at Chalgrove Airfield remains in the publication version of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.
- (e) To consider the view recommended by Scrutiny Committee and agree any changes to the publication version of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

Purpose of Report

1. To approve the South Oxfordshire Local Plan for publication to enable the authority to progress its development plan.

Corporate Objectives

2. The delivery of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan will contribute towards four of the Council's six strategic objectives.
3. The Local Plan has a key role to play in delivering the District's future as it sets out the level and distribution of development to 2033, which will help to shape the future of South Oxfordshire.
4. The potential of Didcot, is a strategic objective, which is supported by the retention of the existing allocations of land at Didcot for residential and employment related development. To further support this, additional allocations for residential development have been proposed which reflect extant planning permissions.
5. A key role of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan is to identify sufficient employment and housing land for existing and future communities. This directly supports the strategic objective to deliver 'homes and jobs for everyone.'
6. The other strategic objective which the emerging Local Plan relates to is to 'build thriving communities'. In addition to the provision for different land uses, the policies within the plan will ensure that developers provide the necessary infrastructure to support the new communities

Background

7. All local authorities are under a statutory obligation to prepare a local plan. The current Development Plan for South Oxfordshire comprises saved policies of the Adopted Local Plan, Adopted Core Strategy and made Neighbourhood Development Plans. The emerging Local Plan will replace both the existing 'saved' policies of the Adopted Local Plan to 2011 and Adopted Core Strategy (2012).
8. We have previously consulted at the following stages

Issues and Scope – June 2014

Refined Options – February 2015

Preferred Options – June 2016

Second Preferred Options – March 2017

9. The first two stages of consultation were based on a plan period up to 2031. We are required to ensure that, once the plan is adopted, it has a life of 15 years from the date of adoption so that it provides an effective plan for future development. Our work programme indicates that the plan is likely to be adopted in 2018, therefore the plan period is to 2033.
10. The June 2016 Preferred Option version of the Local Plan did not contain all of the policies which would be used in the determination of planning applications.
11. The March 2017 Second Preferred Options version of the Local Plan complemented these earlier consultations and updated the Plan in terms of its evidence base and in response to representations made. It also included a full set of Development Management policies which would be used to determine planning applications.
12. The version of the Local Plan subject to this report is the Publication version of the Local Plan. It represents the version of the Local Plan which the Council intends to submit to the Secretary of State for examination.
13. Publication or 'regulation 19' public consultation is the first stage in the process of examining the Local Plan. It differs from previous consultations in that it is part of the Local Plan examination and the comments made are considered by the examining inspector rather than the council. The council does not need to formally consider or respond to them directly, although they will clearly be of interest and reviewed for information.
14. The council cannot make substantive changes to the Local Plan at this stage unless it chooses to withdraw the Plan from examination, modify, re-consult and re-submit. This might happen if a significant unforeseen matter arose through or during publication consultation. It can make minor clarification or corrections, which is suggested to be delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning.
15. Following consultation on the Publication version of the Local Plan, the council would submit the Local Plan in its current form to the Secretary of State for independent examination, together with the supporting evidence base studies and reports. The supporting material would include a summary of the representations made to the publication consultation.
16. We intend to submit the Local Plan for examination at the end of the calendar year. As set out in the Local Development Scheme we anticipate that the Local Plan would be examined in Spring 2018 and adopted in Autumn 2018.
17. Following the examination the inspector may recommend changes to the Local Plan, which the council would then consider (and usually accept unless there was a good Planning reason not to). A 'Modifications' version of the Local Plan would then be published for consultation, incorporating any recommended changes the council agrees. The Local Plan would then be finalised and adopted.

Structure of report and appendices

18. The structure of this report follows the key issues raised in respect of public consultation to date;
 - Duty to Cooperate matters
 - Housing numbers
 - Proposed strategic allocations
 - Infrastructure
19. There follows a summary of the key changes which have been made to the Local Plan since the Second Preferred Options document (March 2017).
20. The Publication version of the Local Plan is attached at Appendix 1. A schedule of the key changes which have been made from the previous version of the Local Plan to arrive at the Publication version of the Local Plan is attached at Appendix 2.
21. The publication version of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan is supported by a further summary consultation report (Appendix 3); Equalities Impact Assessment (4) Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appendix 5); a Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix 6) and the key headlines for engagement for the Publication consultation (Appendix 7).

Consultation responses to the Second Preferred Options & Petition

22. We received approximately 7,666 responses from 1,369 individuals and organisations to the Second Preferred Options version of the Local Plan. These responses were largely focussed on the following key issues;
 - Duty to Cooperate matters
 - Housing numbers
 - Proposed strategic allocations
 - Infrastructure
23. A consultation report which provides details of the comments received is attached at Appendix 3.

Culham Petition

24. Outside of the Local Plan consultation period, but linked to consultation on the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan, a petition was received by the Council on 2 August 2017 requesting that the Council “Protect the Green Belt at Culham from loss, shrinkage or relocation through future development.” As the petition has in excess of 500 signatures it is entitled to a debate at Council, in accordance with the Council’s Constitution. The Garden Town Consultation Report was considered at a Joint Scrutiny meeting on 12 September 2017.

25. Given that the removal of land from the Green Belt at Culham and development of a strategic allocation comprising 3,500 new homes and a net increase of 2 hectares of employment alongside Gypsy and Traveller provision is proposed in the Local Plan, it is logical to consider the request of this petition alongside the next stage of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan process.
26. The Council within its planning framework does have the opportunity to designate land as it feels appropriate and such designations are then tested through public consultation and wider stakeholder engagement and through public inquiry.
27. The proposed strategic allocation at Culham is one of four proposed in the emerging Local Plan. It accords with the overall spatial strategy for the distribution of development in South Oxfordshire, in particular, the focus of development within Science Vale.
28. It is considered to be suitable, available and achievable in the Council's assessment of land availability. It has capacity to provide circa 3,500 new homes, including affordable homes, which is a considerable contribution towards the overall housing needs of the district.
29. The site is one of three allocations proposed within the existing Green Belt. Culham Science Centre and the No.1 sites are major developed sites in the Green Belt. The land to the west, subject of the proposed allocation, does not perform strongly against all the purposes of including land within the Green Belt and this land was recommended to be considered for expansion and further assessment in the South Oxfordshire Green Belt report.
30. The relationship of the site to the rail station and existing employment use is recognised to be a further positive to weigh in favour of development taking place at this location. Development at this location also has the potential to support the delivery of strategic infrastructure.
31. It is considered that the positive benefits of this proposed development provide the exceptional circumstances to remove this land from the Green Belt and allocate the site for a large residential led scheme. It is recommended that this proposed strategic allocation remains in the Local Plan and the request of the petition is not agreed.

Chalgrove Airfield

32. A petition was received by the Council on 19 August 2016 during the consultation on the Preferred Options document. The petition was worded as follows, "We the undersigned, strongly object to the proposed development of 3,500 homes on the Chalgrove Airfield and Harrington Field, as part of the SODC Local Plan 2032."
33. At the time, this was recorded as a response to the Local Plan. As the petition has in excess of 500 signatures it is entitled to a debate at Council, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
34. At the time of the first Preferred Option consultation, the proposal in the emerging Local Plan was for 3,500 homes. This has since been reduced to 3,000 homes. It should also be noted that the Local Plan has been extended to cover the period 2011-2033.

35. Given that a strategic allocation comprising 3,000 new homes, 5 hectares of employment land and 3 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers at Chalgrove Airfield is proposed in the Local Plan, it is logical to consider the request of this petition alongside the next stage of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan process.
36. The Council within its planning framework does have the opportunity to designate land as it feels appropriate and such designations are then tested through public consultation and wider stakeholder engagement and through public inquiry.
37. The proposed strategic allocation at Chalgrove is one of four proposed in the emerging Local Plan. It accords with the overall spatial strategy for the distribution of development in South Oxfordshire, which seeks to strengthen the heart of the District.
38. It is considered to be suitable, available and achievable in the Council's assessment of land availability. It has the capacity to provide circa 3,000 new homes, including affordable homes, which is a considerable contribution towards the overall housing needs of the district.
39. The site is the only strategic allocation proposed which lies outside the existing Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
40. The site is a partially previously developed site, which is flat and relatively free from constraints. The relationship of the site to existing employment use is recognised to be a further positive to weigh in favour of development taking place at this location. Development at this location also has the potential to support the delivery of local infrastructure.
41. It is recommended that this proposed strategic allocation remains in the Local Plan.

What level of development are we planning for?

Housing (Objectively Assessed Need OAN)

42. In April 2014, the councils across Oxfordshire published a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), and this identified that South Oxfordshire needs additional housing beyond that which is planned for in the existing Core Strategy.
43. As well as this, Oxford City Council indicated that they would have difficulties in meeting their identified housing need entirely within the city boundary and that other districts across the county could be asked to consider taking some of this "unmet housing need."
44. In response we decided that we needed to review our existing plan and consider how we can plan for additional growth in the most advantageous and positive way.
45. The SHMA made recommendations in terms of a housing range that we should be planning for which recognised that the affordable housing evidence provided a basis for considering higher housing 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.

46. Given that we anticipate that the adoption of this Local Plan will be towards the end of 2018 as set out in the published Local Development Scheme and that Government guidance requires Local Plans to have a time span of 15 years from the point of adoption, the annual requirement for housing has been rolled on for the additional two years.
47. The SHMA evidence considers that the provision of 750 dwellings a year would support economic growth in South Oxfordshire. 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.
48. Officers have advised that there is a risk in not adopting the upper end of the range set out in the SHMA of 825 homes per year. However, it is noted that the other planning authorities in the housing market area have progressed their Local Plans on the basis of the mid-point and have been found sound.
49. We have previously consulted upon making provision for 17,050 new homes to be delivered to meet the District's own needs during the plan period (2011 to 2033). This equates to 775 homes a year, which reflects the midpoint of the recommended range in the SHMA. This is considered to be an appropriate response to meeting our housing needs, not only does this go beyond the committed economic growth housing requirement for South Oxfordshire, but also provides an uplift to deliver affordable housing identified in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market assessment (SHMA).
50. The midpoint of the SHMA has been selected as the Objectively Assessed Need for housing which represents an appropriate and sound basis for the amount of new housing we need to plan for. This equates to 775 homes a year and a plan period total of 17,050 homes.

Employment

51. The South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review has been updated to take account of the lengthened plan period and to ensure that the level of jobs forecast in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment is planned for.
52. The Employment Land Review Addendum projects an increase of 12,403 jobs from 2011 to 2033, including an increase of up to 6,734 jobs in the office, manufacturing and distribution sectors (B class uses). This has been translated into land requirements and identifies a need for between 33.2 to 35.9 hectares of employment land to be provided in the plan period. We have proposed land allocations to accommodate at least the upper end of this range.
53. We have ensured that there is a surplus of employment land to be delivered across the district as we have done for housing land. Additional employment land provides for greater choice and flexibility in the market.

Duty to Cooperate

54. Section 110 of the 2011 Localism Act inserts the Duty to Co-operate as a new Section 33A into the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Section 33A

came into effect 15 November 2011. Section 110 of the Localism Act sets out the new 'Duty to Co-operate'. The duty:

- Relates to sustainable development or use of land that would have a significant impact on at least two local planning areas or on a planning matter that fall within the remit of a County Council;
- Requires that Councils set out planning policies to address such issues;
- Requires that Councils and public bodies 'engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis' to develop strategic policies; and
- Requires Councils to consider joint approaches to plan making.

55. It imposes a duty on all planning authorities to work with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies when preparing their development plan documents for 'strategic matters'. In particular, the duty states that the Duty to Co-operate applies to Local Planning Authorities, County Councils and other prescribed bodies.
56. The local planning authorities in Oxfordshire have a history of working together and have continued to work closely together at all levels through the Oxfordshire Growth Board. Most recently the Growth Board has coordinated the preparation of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the work following this, including the preparation of an Oxfordshire wide Infrastructure Strategy.
57. Oxford City Council indicated that they would have difficulties in meeting their housing need set out in the SHMA and that other districts across the county could be asked to consider taking some of this "unmet housing need."
58. The extent of the unmet housing need has yet to be tested as the Oxford City Local Plan has not yet advanced to its examination stage. The Oxfordshire Growth Board proposed a working figure of 15,000 as the unmet housing need. The Growth Board also undertook an exercise to explore how this overall figure *could* be met by identifying a series of potential sites across Oxfordshire and to arrive at an apportionment approach.
59. South Oxfordshire did not agree to this apportionment approach and has sought to determine which sites to bring forward in the Local Plan to meet its own housing need and also to make contributions towards Oxford City's unmet housing need. It is not within the remit of the Oxfordshire Growth Board or another local planning authority to determine the location of land to be allocated in South Oxfordshire.
60. It should be noted that the approach South Oxfordshire has proposed to date, contained in the Second Preferred Options, has not met with the support of Oxford City, Cherwell and West Oxfordshire and will likely be the subject of early debate at the Local Plan examination. Officers have raised these concerns through the Round Table Sessions and advised of the risk of not meeting the figure arrived at through the Oxfordshire Growth Board work from the outset of the Local Plan.
61. We are proposing to make these contributions through the Duty to Cooperate to Oxford City to help meet some of their yet undetermined unmet housing need. The Publication Local Plan does contain provision to meet a quarter of the unmet housing need from Oxford City. This is based upon the Oxfordshire Growth Board working

figure of 15,000 homes to be addressed on a County wide basis shared between the four local planning authorities.

62. We propose to make these contributions from 2021 onwards as part of a 'stepped' housing trajectory which reflects the build out rates associated with the strategic allocations proposed in our Local Plan. We do not identify any one site or location from where this unmet need will be delivered as this can be met across the housing market area. Identifying a particular site or location could constrain our ability to make housing contributions and reduce the flexibility to support the City's unmet housing need.
63. We have included a specific Local Plan Policy STRAT3 – 'The unmet housing requirements from Oxford City' to make contributions of 3,750 homes towards Oxford city's unmet housing needs and make a commitment to undertake a partial review of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan at such time as the Oxford City Local Plan is adopted and the level of unmet homes is known.
64. We consider that this is an appropriate and reasonable response to this matter pending completion of the Oxford City Local Plan.
65. A detailed schedule outlining all the actions taken in relation to the duty to co-operate is in preparation and will be submitted, along with the Local Plan, to the Secretary of State. In some instances, Officers aim to formalise more detailed arrangements through the drawing up Memoranda of Understanding - for example with the Local Enterprise Partnership and Oxfordshire County Council.

Strategic Sites and proposed development

66. The objectively assessed need figure for South Oxfordshire, as set out above, is 17,050 new homes. The Duty to Cooperate contributions to help towards meeting Oxford City's unmet housing needs are 3,750 dwellings. This equates to a need to provide 20,800 new homes in the plan period.
67. In order to meet the level of housing required, there are a number of sources of housing supply which will ensure housing delivery across the plan period, and these include:
 - Strategic allocations proposed in this plan
 - Retained core strategy allocations
 - Existing planning commitments
 - Small scale (non-strategic sites) to be identified through neighbourhood plans or identified in this plan
 - Sites not yet identified that will come forward through the development management process in accordance with the policies in this plan, known as windfalls.
68. There are four proposed strategic allocations, Chalgrove Airfield (c.3,000), Land adjacent Culham Science Centre (c.3,500) Berinsfield (up to 1,700) and Oxford Brookes University, Wheatley (c.300).

Chalgrove Airfield

69. Land at Chalgrove Airfield has been proposed for mixed use development, comprising approximately 3,000 new homes, 5 hectares of employment land and 3 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. This is set out in Policy STRAT9. This land is partially previously developed in nature and is flat and relatively free from constraints. It is not within the AONB, Green Belt and is within Flood Zone 1. It lies adjacent to a registered historic battlefield and the site is currently used by Martin Baker Ltd and owned by the Homes and Communities Agency.

Culham

70. Land adjacent to Culham Science Centres is proposed to deliver approximately 3,500 new homes, a net increase of employment land with the adjacent science centre and 3 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. The policy which relates to this allocation is set out at STRAT7. The site lies within the existing Oxfordshire Green Belt and it is proposed that this land be removed through the preparation of this Local Plan and a new inset boundary created. The exceptional circumstances to release this land from the Green Belt are set out in the Local Plan.
71. Oxfordshire County Council have raised concerns in respect of additional homes in the Science Vale area without the delivery of strategic transport infrastructure. This could impact upon the number of new homes that can be delivered at the strategic allocation at Culham during the Local Plan period to 2033.

Berinsfield

72. Land at Berinsfield is proposed for development only to support the regeneration of the existing settlement. The proposal is to deliver up to 1,700 new homes and 5 hectares of employment land and is set out at STRAT8. Berinsfield itself and the land identified for regeneration purposes lies within the existing Oxfordshire Green Belt and it is proposed that all of this land be removed through the preparation of this Local Plan and a new inset boundary created. The exceptional circumstances to release this land from the Green Belt are set out in the Local Plan.

Oxford Brookes University, Wheatley

73. Oxford Brookes University plan to relocate their existing uses at the Wheatley Campus into an existing site within Oxford City, leaving the site at Wheatley available for redevelopment. The strategic allocation is expected to deliver at least 300 new homes at this location.
74. The whole site is washed over by the Green Belt, however the redevelopment of a previously developed site in the Green Belt is not considered inappropriate development, where it would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.
75. Notwithstanding the above, officers still recommend that the land at the Oxford Brookes University Wheatley campus be removed from the Green Belt as part of the strategic allocation and advise that there are exceptional circumstances to support this and that it provides a consistent approach to removing land to support proposed strategic allocations from the Green Belt. It is recognised that Cabinet has resisted this approach to date as it is considered that removing land from the Green Belt is not necessary as development of a previously developed site can take place anyway. It

is also recognised that the removal of this land from the Green Belt in the Publication version of the Local Plan would likely not be approved.

Site allocations

76. The market towns and larger villages across the district are expected to accommodate 15% growth in homes from that which existed at 2011. The information on dwelling numbers has been taken from the 2011 Census. The market towns are expected to deliver 1,155 additional new homes to 2033 and larger villages are to accommodate an additional 1,041 new homes.
77. We have now included revised numbers for the three market towns and the larger villages. We have undertaken a sense check of the potential for each of these towns to deliver housing based on the availability of suitable potential sites, landscape capacity work and infrastructure. This was done as a sense check only given that the Local Plan does not propose housing sites where there is a Neighbourhood Development Plan being progressed.
78. The Local Plan also includes site allocations at Nettlebed where there is not a Neighbourhood Development Plan in preparation.
 - Land to the West of Priest Close, Nettlebed for 11 dwellings
 - Land at Joyce Grove, Nettlebed for 20 dwellings
 - Land to the west and south of the filling station, Nettlebed for 15 dwellings

Infrastructure

79. The Local Plan includes proposals to safeguard land for infrastructure which may be required during the lifetime of the Local Plan. This provides the opportunity to support the delivery of a number of identified transport schemes and is set out at Policy TRANS3.
80. The Local Plan is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which sets out the infrastructure which is required to support the delivery of the Local Plan.
81. Each of the strategic allocations include details of the infrastructure required to support their delivery.

Key changes proposed to the emerging Local Plan

82. In response to consultation responses received to the Second Preferred Options version of the Local Plan and also to the updated evidence base, a number of changes to the emerging Local Plan are proposed. A list of these proposed changes are attached as an appendix to this report. Some of the changes necessary are minor and relate to typographical errors and to improve reader clarity which have not been included in Appendix 2. However there are several more significant changes proposed as below.
83. The first two chapters of the Local Plan; Introduction and Publication Version, set out the purpose and rationale for its production. These chapters have been updated to

reflect this formal stage of the plan production and provide summary detail of the Second Preferred Options consultation.

84. The third chapter provides the vision and strategic objectives for the Local Plan. These have remained largely unchanged since the initial preparation stages of the Local Plan. The strategic objectives are used in the assessment of the plan, its policies and proposals through the Sustainability Appraisal. The strategic objectives seek to provide a balance of the economic, environmental and social roles which the planning system provides.
85. Chapter four of the Local Plan is concerned with its spatial strategy. Essentially the overall level of development required between 2011 and 2033 and the distribution of this across South Oxfordshire. The overall strategy set out in Policy STRAT1 focusses development in the Science Vale, including Didcot Garden Town and Culham. It also seeks to provide for strategic development at Berinsfield and Chalgrove in the heart of the district. The strategy also supports the roles of the market towns and larger villages by directing a level of growth to these locations.
86. Policy STRAT2 outlines the need for new development in South Oxfordshire for housing and employment land.
87. The Spatial Strategy chapter also includes a simplified Policy STRAT3 for the unmet housing requirements of Oxford City. It no longer applies a percentage approach for the housing land supply surplus and provides a clear response to duty to cooperate contributions.
88. Policy STRAT5: Strategic Development has been expanded to ensure that the policy applies to large scale major development in addition to strategic allocations. Additional requirements have been included in the policy to require appropriate assessments to support planning applications.
89. The proposed strategic allocation at Berinsfield has been reduced from up to 2,100 houses to up to 1,700 new homes. This change arises from the updated work of the Berinsfield project team.
90. The delivery of new homes in the plan period on land adjacent to the Culham Science Centre has been reduced. The overall allocation of land remains for approximately 3,500 dwellings.
91. Policies STRAT6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 relate to the individual strategic allocations and the requirements which development must meet. A new policy STRAT8i has been included to allocate land in the centre of Berinsfield as Local Green Space to provide additional protection once the Green Belt is removed from this location.
92. Chapter 5: Delivering New Homes illustrates the sources of housing supply expected to be delivered to 2033.
93. The proposed site allocations at Crowmarsh Gifford have been removed from the Local Plan as a Neighbourhood Development Plan is now proposed to be produced for the settlement.
94. We have identified a further site allocation at Nettlebed for housing development on land to the west and south of the filling station for an additional 15 dwellings.

95. The implications of these changes and those set out in the section on strategic allocations have been carried forward in the supply of new homes to come forward in the table below. The completions to 2017 have been updated alongside the commitments figure.

Supply of new homes to come forward	Net number of dwellings
Completions 2011-2017	3,397
Commitments as at 31 March 2017 – sites under construction, with planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission and allocations carries forward from the Core Strategy (This will be amended	9,343
New strategic allocations	6,975*
New Henley, Thame and Wallingford allocations	1,155
New allocations in the Larger Villages	1,041
Sites in the smaller villages (Neighbourhood Plans and infill sites) and windfall sites	500
Total	22,411

*strategic allocations continue to deliver beyond the plan period.

96. This has reduced the overall source of housing supply from 23,468 to 22,411 dwellings. Whilst this still exceeds our objectively assessed need figure and the contribution towards meeting some of Oxford City's unmet housing need, there are likely to be challenges to this through this examination and the reduced figure could have a limiting factor on our ability to respond quickly to potential recommendations from the Planning Inspector.
97. We no longer propose to remove land from the Green Belt at Wheatley for the Neighbourhood Plan. Under current regulations Neighbourhood Planning Groups cannot review the Green Belt through the preparation of their Plans and this remains the responsibility of the Local Planning authority. Discussions earlier in the year with Wheatley Neighbourhood Planning Group indicated that they wished to explore the potential of developing land within the existing Green Belt. In response, we consulted upon removing this land but requested that the Neighbourhood Development group provided the exceptional circumstances and full proposals of development they wished to allocate. In the absence of this, the proposed removal of land is withdrawn.
98. The remainder of this chapter provides a series of key development management policies aimed at ensuring the provision of affordable housing at 40% on sites of 11 or more units and the circumstances in which exception sites can be delivered.
99. Housing mix, custom build and self-build, and specialist accommodation for older people policies are largely unchanged from the previous iteration of the Local Plan.
100. We propose to safeguard existing Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites and propose additional sites to meet the identified need. Further to the revised evidence regarding Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople need, there is a reduction in the quantum of pitches and plots required which has been updated in the Publication version of the Local Plan.

101. Policy H16: Infill development now includes the scale of infill which will be permitted depending on the scale of the settlement.
102. Employment is addressed in Chapter 6, and this section of the Local Plan has been updated to respond to the Employment Land Review addendum which has increased the level of need for traditional B Class employment uses to 35.9 hectares in the plan period. A new policy to require developers to provide community employment plans has been included through Policy EMP10.
103. Chapter 7 covers infrastructure, particularly transport. Policy TRANS1: Supporting Strategic Transport Investment and Policy TRANS2: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility set out the key transport schemes and transport priorities for the District and the commitment to work with stakeholders to ensure the delivery of these schemes and approaches.
104. Policy TRANS3: Safeguarding of land for Strategic Transport Schemes has been amended to include two additional schemes; Didcot Southern Spine Road and A4074/B4015 (Golden Balls) junction improvements. This policy is supported by a series of plans at appendix 5 of the Local Plan. Another key change is the expansion of the safeguarded area in respect of the new Thames road crossing between Culham and Didcot Garden Town. This change has been made to respond to concerns raised by Historic England regarding the potential impact on Scheduled Monuments. There is no longer a safeguarded area at Chinnor for a reservoir as our ongoing dialogue with Thames Water has determined that this is not now a favoured location for a new reservoir.
105. It is recognised in this chapter that the potential Oxford to Cambridge expressway would likely have significant impacts on the district if the route were to be planned through South Oxfordshire. It is acknowledged that no decision has been made on the route but that we will continue to work with the National Infrastructure Commission as this continues to be explored.
106. The Natural and Historic Environment chapter contains new policies to address waste collection and recycling provision in new development (Policy EP3) in some detail. A further new policy has been included to ensure that the risk and impact of flood risk is minimised (Policy EP4). The policy also sets out the circumstances in which developers will be required to submit a site specific flood risk assessment to support a planning application.
107. Chapter 9: Built Environment includes a new policy specifically to require major development to make provision for public art. Other policies have been updated to provide greater clarity and accord with the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.
108. The policies in Chapter 10: Town Centres and Shopping have been revised to reflect the updated evidence for comparison and convenience shopping need in South Oxfordshire.
109. Community and Recreation Facilities policies contained in Chapter 11 have been amended to provide more detail and to improve clarity.
110. The Monitoring and Review chapter remains largely unchanged.
111. The Appendices to the Local Plan have been updated to ensure that they accord with the policies in the plan. Appendix 7: Settlement Hierarchy has been revised on the

basis of a review of services and facilities undertaken in recent months. There have been no changes at the Larger Villages tier, though smaller and other villages have been subject to change.

- 112. We have included a development trajectory at Appendix 8 of the Local Plan which demonstrates the delivery of housing expected throughout the plan period. This trajectory will be regularly updated through the Council's Authority Monitoring Report.
- 113. Subsequent appendices include the lists of designated sites for nature conservation, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Listed Buildings, Heritage at Risk and Conservation Areas.
- 114. The Town Centre boundaries and shopping frontages referred to in Chapter 10: Town Centres and Retailing can be found in Appendix 13 of the Local Plan.
- 115. The maps and plans which have been included in the appendices to the Local Plan represent changes which will be made to the Policies Map which accompanies the Local Plan. A comprehensive Policies Map will be available when the Local Plan is published for comment in October.

Evidence Base

- 116. To inform the Local Plan, a wealth of evidence has been collected to support the development needs set out in the document and to shape the policies contained therein. The evidence can be divided into those studies which set out development requirements; the suitability of sites; the impacts of development and public consultation.
- 117. Many of the evidence base studies have been updated as the Local Plan has progressed. This is particularly relevant in the case of those studies which consider the impact of proposed development. The Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment are attached as appendices to this report and assess the likely impacts of the proposals contained in the Publication version of the Local Plan.
- 118. The evidence base which supports the Local Plan has been published on the Council's website.

Engagement

- 119. To provide information to Councillors and disseminate evidence that has been compiled, we have held a series of round table sessions. These sessions have proven extremely helpful to support the drafting of the plan from an officer perspective and to challenge the presentation of material.

Public consultation

- 120. The Local Plan will be published and available for consultation for six weeks (11 October – 22 November) and we are holding some drop-in events to support this process and to assist those who wish to make representations on the Local Plan. Details on the procedures and the tests of soundness will be provided to guide consultees.
- 121. This marks the start of a very different stage of the Local Plan preparation process where comments are only sought on issues of soundness and legal compliance.

Unlike the earlier consultations, the Regulation 19 stage is not an opportunity for new ideas or new development proposals to be put forward for consideration. Officers have prepared guidance on the process, and a bespoke form for the submission of representations. Any person may make representations on the Plan and those made in accordance with the representation procedure will be forwarded to the Inspector to consider as part of the formal examination process. Representations may be made that relate directly to the following (all taken from the NPPF):

- Legal compliance
- Duty to co-operate
- Soundness

122. This means that the Plan must be:

- Positively prepared - based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements.
- Justified - should be the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives.
- Effective - should be deliverable over the Plan period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities.
- Consistent with national policy - should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.

123. The publication period will be published in accordance with the Local Planning Regulations and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. A full engagement strategy is being prepared to support this stage. Key headlines are attached at Appendix 7.

124. The next steps in the process are as below

- Consultation on Publication Local Plan (Regulation 19) October 2017
- Submission to Secretary of State (Regulation 22) Winter 2017
- Examination in Public (Regulation 24) Spring 2018
- Inspector's report (Regulation 25) Summer 2018
- Adoption (Regulation 26) Summer 2018

125. A Consultation Statement, which sets out all of the consultation activities that have been carried out during the course of preparing the Plan, is being produced and will be submitted to the Secretary of State. The comments received throughout the process, along with the additional evidence prepared, have all been considered, as well as any changes to national policy and guidance.

Next Steps

126. Following publication, officers will consider representations received and, where appropriate, and with approval of the Cabinet Member, make minor changes to the Local Plan prior to submission to the Secretary of State for examination. At that

stage, there will be the option to make minor changes to the Plan; however, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Policy Guidance and statutory regulations, the Council should not be making significant changes, as to do so would necessitate a further stage(s) of consultation.

127. Unless there are any materially significant new issues raised during that period, it is anticipated that the Submission South Oxfordshire Local Plan, including any minor modifications, will be formally submitted to the Secretary of State, via the Planning Inspectorate, in December 2017.

Options

128. All local authorities are under a statutory obligation to prepare a development plan. Each iteration of the Local Plan has been subject to the sustainability appraisal process which considers alternatives for site allocations and policies. A copy of the Sustainability Appraisal which supports the Publication version of the Local Plan is attached at Appendix 6.

Equalities Impact Assessment

129. The Second Preferred Options version of the Local Plan was subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment which identified a number of minor changes to be made to the Local Plan. These have been incorporated within the Publication version of the Local Plan.
130. The council has reviewed the Publication version of the Local Plan to ensure that the objectives and policies have been prepared in line with our public sector equality duties to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate any potential for unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - advance equality of opportunity in service delivery and employment between people who share a protected characteristic¹ and those who do not
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not ².
131. The equalities officer has reviewed the objectives and policies, making suggestions to strengthen the policies where appropriate to take account of the needs people protected by the Act. Policy officers have considered these and where possible the policy has been updated to reflect the feedback. A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment can be found at appendix 4.

¹ A 'protected characteristic' under the Act is colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, age, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion, belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity

² Bullets two and three do not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership

Financial Implications

132. The preparation of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan is undertaken by officers within the Planning Policy team and is supported by an extensive evidence base. The activities of this team are met from the existing Planning Policy budget.

Legal Implications

133. The Publication version of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan has been produced for publication under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 ("Local Planning Regulations").
134. Local authorities are required by law to prepare a development plan for their administrative area and the process for doing that is governed by statute. The regulations require local authorities to notify and invite comments from a range of specified persons and organisations on their development plan proposals.
135. In the absence of an up to date Local Plan, South Oxfordshire remains vulnerable to challenge given that they are unable to demonstrate a robust five year housing land supply (HLS). In the absence of a five year HLS, local authorities are having imposed upon them by decision of the Secretary of State, planning permissions which need not necessarily comply with the current or emerging Local Plan. It is therefore essential that the Local Plan is progressed expeditiously if the threat of adverse planning decisions is to be avoided.
136. Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as inserted by the s110 of the Localism Act 2011) ("s33A") provides that local planning authorities must co-operate with other local planning authorities in maximising the effectiveness with which activities such as the preparation of local plan/development plan documents are undertaken so far as they relate to strategic matters. This 'duty to cooperate' requires the local authority to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in any process by means of which activities such as the preparation of Local Plan are undertaken.
137. If the person appointed to carry out the independent examination considers that the South Oxfordshire has not complied with its duty under s33A in relation to the preparation of its Local Plan the person can neither recommend adoption nor modifications and in such cases, South Oxfordshire cannot then adopt the Local Plan.

Risks

138. Specific risks relating to the overall level of development, the extent to which the unmet housing needs are initially planned for and the consistency of approach to taking land out of the Green Belt have been raised elsewhere in the report.
139. More generally, a failure to progress a Local Plan that identifies future development requirements for the area and strategic locations where these requirements can be accommodated will result in a policy vacuum, increasing the risk of ad hoc development proposals being submitted and potentially, to decisions being secured by appeal.

140. The absence of a Local Plan could result in an uncoordinated approach to development, leading to inappropriate and incremental development being allowed on appeal that does not take account of cumulative implications and requirements for supporting infrastructure, with the potential for adverse environmental impacts.
141. The Council is currently in a position where it cannot demonstrate a sufficient level of land for housing and there are planning applications pending which have been submitted on this basis. It is therefore critical that progress is made on agreeing the emerging Local Plan. Any delay in progressing the Local Plan to submission and examination increases the risk of inappropriate development and lack of delivery of key infrastructure.

Conclusion

142. The Publication version of the Local Plan is the one which the Council will publish and submit to the Secretary of State for examination. At that stage there will be the option to make minor changes to the Local Plan, however in line with the NPPF, PPG and statutory regulations the Councils should not be making significant changes. Review of the representations received to the Publication Local Plan will be managed through existing programme arrangements and representations packaged and passed to the Inspector considering the examination of the Local Plan.
143. Approval of the Publication version of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan enables the Council to progress its development plan.

Background Papers

Previous versions of the Local Plan and evidence base studies available on the Council's website

Appendices

1. South Oxfordshire Local Plan – Publication document
2. Key proposed changes to the Local Plan
3. Summary report on the responses received to the Reg. 18 Local plan document – Second Preferred Options March 2017
4. Equalities Impact Assessment
5. Habitats Regulation Assessment
6. Sustainability Appraisal
7. Key engagement headlines for Publication consultation

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