West Oxfordshire
Local Development Framework

Core Strategy: Preferred Approach

This document sets out how West Oxfordshire could develop over the next 15 years.

We would like your views on our approach before the Core Strategy is finalised ready for submission to the Government. All relevant documents are available via our website.

There is now an opportunity to respond online to this consultation via www.westoxon.gov.uk/LDF

Please return your response to this consultation by Monday 22 March 2010.

February 2010
1.1 This document contains the Council’s preferred strategy to help meet the challenges expected to be faced by West Oxfordshire over the years ahead. These challenges include global issues such as climate change and fluctuations in the economy as well as changing expectations and needs of people living in and visiting the District. Planning has a key role to play but is only part of the way forward. Successful delivery of the strategy can only be achieved through working in partnership with the many organisations that have a responsibility or interest in some aspect of West Oxfordshire, particularly local communities and landowners. A strong message received throughout local consultation is that this part of the country is a special place which is highly valued by the people who live here and which must not be eroded by decisions to accommodate future development or other change.

1.2 The content of this document builds upon and expands the Council’s interim position statement (The Core Strategy So Far) published for consultation in February 2009. It also has its foundations in the strategy of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan adopted in June 2006. Local plan policies will continue to be part of the statutory planning system in West Oxfordshire until formally replaced by new policies adopted through the Local Development Framework (LDF).

1.3 No final decisions have been made on the Core Strategy. During 2010 the Council intends to prepare the full Core Strategy development plan to meet all the statutory requirements before formal submission to the Government ready for public examination in front of a Planning Inspector in 2011. That document will contain policies and proposals with a detailed delivery strategy and a management and monitoring framework.

What are the LDF and the Core Strategy?

1.4 The Core Strategy is the key document in the Local Development Framework, the statutory development planning system introduced by the Government in 2004 to replace the previous process of structure and local plans. Supporting planning guidance already exists in the form of two adopted supplementary planning documents - the West Oxfordshire Design Guide and Affordable Housing. The need for any other LDF documents will be reassessed following adoption of the Core Strategy (scheduled for late 2011).

1.5 The Core Strategy should set out the key elements of the planning framework for the District to guide public and private sector investment; it must make clear spatial choices about where development should go in broad terms. All decisions reflected in the Core Strategy must be informed by a relevant and up to date evidence base (such as studies and local surveys) alongside the consultation feedback from stakeholders and the local community. All strategic options must be subjected to sustainability appraisal. As the Core Strategy should cover at least 15 years from the date of adoption this Plan will cover the period up to and including the year 2026/7.
Important influences

1.6 The drawing together of the Preferred Approach for the Core Strategy has been informed by on-going discussion since 2007 with local communities and various organisations such as Oxfordshire County Council (key responsibilities for transport, education, social care, and minerals and waste planning), the Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust (health), and Thames Water and the Environment Agency (sewerage, water supply, flooding and the water environment in general).

1.7 Other key influences are:

- Oxfordshire and West Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategies. Public consultation on the District document was undertaken in conjunction with early consultation on the LDF.
- District Council Strategies such as Housing and Tourism.
- Town and parish plans.
- LDF documents in neighbouring local authorities.
- Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and planning guidance.
- The South East Regional Plan issued by the Government in May 2009.
- National planning policy - the Core Strategy must comply with this unless special local circumstances demonstrate an alternative approach is sound.
- Information, including site suggestions for development, provided by parish councils, landowners, developers and their agents
- Specific LDF studies such as town and village services and facilities, various aspects of housing provision and need, the economy, retail needs, transport, landscape, flood risk, renewable energy and sustainable construction.
2.1 This section summarises the key issues and challenges that the Core Strategy will need to address.

Further information is presented in other sections of this document and also in the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal and West Oxfordshire Shaping Futures (the Sustainable Community Strategy): www.westoxon.gov.uk/LDFappraisal

Location and connections

2.2 West Oxfordshire is a largely rural district to the west of Oxford and adjoining Gloucestershire, and Warwickshire. With a population of just over 100,000 and area of 71,500 hectares (276 square miles), this is one of the least densely populated areas in the South East. Dispersed across the District are around 130 separate towns, villages and hamlets. 40% of people live in the two largest towns of Witney (26,000) and Carterton (15,000). Nearly 60% of the 81 parishes contain less than 500 residents.

2.3 Oxford to the east is the regional hub, and a designated growth point, and the focus for the District’s main transport connections. Major housing and employment growth is also planned for Bicester, Didcot and Swindon, a regional hub to the south west of the District. To the west is Cotswold District, primarily a rural area, and similar in character to West Oxfordshire. Figure 1.1 identifies West Oxfordshire in its wider setting.

Figure 1.1 West Oxfordshire in its wider setting

2.4 Main transport connections reflect the focus on Oxford and London. Rail services connecting to Birmingham and London pass through a small part of the eastern fringe of the District. The Cotswold line passes through the largely rural central part of West Oxfordshire, connecting several small towns and villages with Hereford in the west and Oxford and London in the east. Witney and Carterton, the two largest settlements, are connected to Oxford by high frequency bus services. Other bus services operate throughout the rural area with varying frequencies but many require ongoing public subsidy.

2.5 A large number of people commute out of the District to work, particularly to Oxford and the employment locations in the Abingdon and Didcot area. Many journeys continue to be made by private car and the number of people and distance people travel to work by car increased between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses.

2.6 Commuting creates congestion on major routes, particularly the A44, A40 and A415 as well as within towns. As a result of traffic congestion, central areas of Chipping Norton and Witney have been identified as failing national air quality standards. Air Quality Management Areas have been designated in these towns and the reduction and re-routing of traffic has been identified as the appropriate action.
2.7 The rural nature of West Oxfordshire and proximity of regional and sub-regional growth centres presents significant challenges for achieving sustainable development.

2.8 The Core Strategy must locate housing and employment development in a way which reduces the need to travel by private car and unnecessary long distance commuting. As a mainly rural area with limited public transport provision the strategy must recognise that many journeys will continue to be made by private car.

Climate change

2.9 The UK Climate Projections scenarios confirm that the South East will be one of the most severely affected regions by climate change. Greater extremes in temperature, more storms and extreme weather events (eg torrential rainfall, heatwaves) are predicted. Planning has a significant role in mitigating the effects of and adapting to the inevitable impacts of climate change. In the past this has focussed on reducing the need to travel but in the future buildings will need to be more energy efficient, use decentralised, low carbon or renewable energy sources and be designed and located to be resilient to more extreme weather events and increased risk of flooding. This has considerable implications for the design and location of new development and addressing climate change must underpin the Core Strategy as a whole.

Population and household changes

Expected population change 2006 - 2026
2.10 The population of West Oxfordshire is expected to grow by about 14,000 people between 2006 and 2026, an increase of 14%. The District has a high proportion of older people at present and this is expected to increase significantly; the proportion of people over 65 years is expected to increase by about 60%. The ageing of the population is also a key factor resulting in a reduction in household size, with more homes being occupied by fewer people in the future.

2.11 As the population ages, this will have implications for housing provision, healthcare, the economy and transport.

Housing needs

2.12 There is considerable need for more affordable housing. Over the last ten years house prices have increased faster than the increase in wages. The cheapest (lower quartile) housing in the district is now 10 times the lowest earnings. Although house prices have declined slightly recently, the recession has increased demand for affordable housing and housing support. Whilst there are over 5000 affordable homes within West Oxfordshire, managed by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), there are currently some 2,000 households on the waiting list for affordable housing. The Housing Market Assessment found that both affordable housing and properties available to rent are limited, particularly in rural areas. Significant levels of housing to meet the specific needs of the elderly are also required.

2.13 The South East Plan requires 7,300 new homes to be built in West Oxfordshire between 2006 and 2026. There are no large previously developed sites remaining in the District, such as derelict factory sites, where significant numbers of homes can be built. The majority of future development will need to be on greenfield sites. About 2,500 homes have recently been developed on former agricultural land on the edge of Witney and Carterton, the two larger towns.
Community infrastructure

2.14 On national measures of multiple deprivation the area appears to score favourably, reflecting a generally high level of affluence. However, on issues such as access to housing and services, some areas of the District are highlighted as amongst the most deprived in the country. 38% of areas in rural West Oxfordshire are ranked in the worst 10% in England for accessibility to services (CLG IMD 2007). The lack of access to services is of particular relevance for those living in relative poverty and in West Oxfordshire the majority of people claiming pension credit live in rural areas. Where public transport is limited, those without access to a car, are particularly at risk of social exclusion.

2.15 There is a continuing trend towards the loss of rural services, shops and pubs as many face economic problems which can lead to closure. This reflects changing shopping habits, and new ways of providing services such as through the internet. Village shops and pubs however represent an important part of community life and are an essential service for some residents. There is a need to support rural communities to maintain their vibrancy, and several have undertaken parish and town plans to identify priorities for development.

2.16 The main towns and larger villages provide a focus for the provision of services (schools, health services, shopping and leisure facilities). Previous housing growth has put pressure on the capacity of their services and facilities. In Witney there is little capacity in existing primary and secondary schools to accommodate further growth. How to meet future secondary education needs, in particular, is a key challenge for the town. Primary schools elsewhere are also generally lacking capacity to take any significant increase in pupil numbers. New development will need to make provision for new/improved services and facilities as well as address transport problems.

The Local Economy

2.17 The local economy is diverse and performs relatively well, even in the current recession. Around three quarters of people work in the service sector. Manufacturing retains a significant presence and there are several manufacturing and engineering firms linked to the biotechnology, healthcare and automotive sectors, and characteristic of the Oxfordshire high technology economy. Some businesses have links to RAF Brize Norton which is strengthening its role as the major air transport military base and makes an important contribution to the economy of the Carterton area.

2.18 The main retail centres are generally vibrant and the quality of the natural and built environment and attractions such as Blenheim Palace are a significant draw for the tourist economy. There are high rates of new business formation and self employment reflecting entrepreneurial activity. Employment in agriculture has continued to decline. The land based sector will face further challenges through changing subsidies and climate change, indicating the likely need to continue to diversify the rural economy.
2.19 Economic activity rates are high at 88% indicating little potential to expand the resident labour force although the 2001 Census identified a significant outflow of 18,000 workers from the district. The proportion of people claiming unemployment benefit (Job Seekers Allowance) is now around 1.7%, a significant increase compared to a year ago, but significantly lower than regional (3.0%) and national (4.2%) averages. West Oxfordshire has a relatively skilled workforce with no major skills gaps identified. Wages for workers in the District are lower than for those living here, highlighting the outflow of managers and professionals to higher paid jobs elsewhere.

2.20 Employment is focussed in the main towns, in large employment areas, but there are many small businesses, often in converted farm buildings, throughout the towns, villages and in the open countryside. The West Oxfordshire Economy Study identified no major gaps in the range of business property types available, although some shortage of small managed office and small industrial units. The stock of industrial premises was also identified as soon to become dated in relation to modern needs. A need for further employment land was identified to provide flexibility in the land supply, to enable modernisation of the existing building stock, provide opportunities for investment and seek to reduce out-commuting. Reflecting the recession and an ageing population the amount of additional land needed for employment is however considered to be less than in the past.

A high quality environment

2.21 The District has a rich archaeological and architectural heritage. There are 3,200 listed buildings (including Blenheim Palace a World Heritage Site), over 150 scheduled ancient monuments, 50 conservation areas and 16 parks and gardens of special historic interest. One third of the countryside is also recognised nationally for its landscape quality falling within the Cotswolds AONB (See Figure 1.3). Land on the eastern edge of the District is within the Oxford Green Belt. Opportunities to accommodate major development without a significant adverse impact on the special character of West Oxfordshire are limited.

2.22 West Oxfordshire has a rich variety of habitats supporting a range of wildlife. There are numerous important conservation sites - Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Ancient Woodland, Local Wildlife Sites. About 4% of the District falls within sites designated for their nature conservation or geological importance. However, much of our wildlife lives outside the network of somewhat isolated nature reserves and protected areas. There is a need to enhance and extend habitats to develop networks. A series of Biodiversity Target Areas (see Figure 2.2 in Section 8) have been identified where the restoration and enhancement of habitats would have the greatest benefit.

2.23 There are several rivers which flow through West Oxfordshire including the Thames on the southern boundary and its tributaries the Windrush and Evenlode rivers which flow through the western and central parts of the district. These rivers and their floodplains are also important corridors for biodiversity, provide opportunities for recreation and form part of the setting of many towns and villages.

2.24 Flooding is a key issue with severe flooding events affecting many communities in 2007 from several sources including fluvial flooding and surface water run off. Large parts of the district are within natural and functional floodplains.

2.25 West Oxfordshire contains some extensive sand and gravel and limestone resources, the extraction of which needs to be managed to protect environmental quality and help ameliorate flood risk (see Figure 1.4). Significant extraction of sand and gravel has already occurred and continues in the Lower Windrush Valley with after-uses presenting opportunities for leisure and tourism as well as creating opportunities for nature reserves. This is however an area with a rural road network and where extraction can significantly impact on local communities.

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2 Source: NOMIS Local Police Authority Profile
3 Source: NOMIS Local Police Authority Profile: www.nomisweb.co.uk
Figure 1.3 Key environmental constraints

[Map showing key environmental constraints in West Oxfordshire Core Strategy Preferred Approach]
Figure 1.4 Mineral consultation areas
3.1 The spatial vision for the Core Strategy has evolved through consultation with local communities and partner organisations. Initial consultation on the strengths of the District and future challenges took place as part of the West Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy - Shaping Futures. The Community Strategy contains nine priorities for action:

- To keep towns and villages economically prosperous and vibrant
- To tackle the specific challenges of accessing services and facilities
- To help young people to move from childhood to adulthood
- To support individuals and young families who want to stay in the area where they grew up
- To support older people to maintain their independence and health
- To maintain and improve the health and well-being of all residents in West Oxfordshire
- To reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime across the District to improve the quality of life in our neighbourhoods
- To keep West Oxfordshire clean and beautiful while protecting the environment and trying to reduce the causes of and effects of climate change
- To campaign to improve the transport infrastructure.

3.2 At the County level, Oxfordshire 2030 (the partnership plan for improving quality of life in Oxfordshire) contains the following long-term vision:

“By 2030 we want Oxfordshire to be recognised for its economic success, outstanding environment and quality of life; to be a place where everyone can realise their potential, contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity and where people are actively involved in their local communities”.

Our vision for the future...

...is to meet the needs of West Oxfordshire’s communities without significant change to the intrinsic character of the District. We wish this area to continue to be one of the best places in which to live, work, play and visit. There will be a network of safe, inclusive, vibrant and prosperous market towns and villages within a healthy and attractive environment where new development will respect and complement the distinctive character of the area whilst managing the impacts of climate change.

Over the next two decades Witney will strengthen its position as the main market town providing a wide range of services and facilities. The town will offer a choice of well-designed housing which meets lifetime needs together with a network of green spaces linking with the surrounding countryside. There will be a diverse range of local employment which will reduce the necessity for commuting to nearby cities. The town centre will be vibrant, attractive, convenient and safe for all users with a wide range of retail and leisure activities on offer and will be well served by parking facilities and frequent bus services.

Carterton will consolidate and strengthen its role as a relatively modern town meeting the daily needs of its residents and work force, including personnel at the country’s premier military transport airbase, RAF Brize Norton. Much of the older MOD housing will be replaced with new urban development which will complement Carterton’s enhanced role. The range of services and facilities in the town centre will expand, alongside further improvements in the quality of the built environment. Local employment opportunities will continue to increase.

Chipping Norton will strengthen its role as a centre of enterprise in the northern part of the District. It will be an economically and socially strong market town serving the needs of a large rural area. Its distinctive historic character and fine setting will be conserved at the same time as accommodating new development to meet identified needs.

The distinctive qualities of the smaller towns and villages will be protected. Services and facilities in these communities will be supported and strengthened through improved partnership working between the organisations involved and through more innovative practices. New affordable housing for local families and development specifically to meet the needs of the elderly will be delivered to help maintain the vibrancy of rural communities.
3.3 West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district with its population dispersed to market towns and villages. It is vital that its distinctive rural characteristics are maintained while meeting the needs of local communities. Although it is a relatively affluent area there are pockets of deprivation.

3.4 There needs to be a greater choice within the local housing market to help balance the preponderance of family housing. Two key housing challenges will be to help address as much local housing need as is feasible and sustainable, and to better meet the needs of older people.

3.5 In a rural area it is important to achieve a sensible balance between delivering services direct to local residents and expecting people to travel elsewhere to particular services. In many parts of the District there is little choice other than to travel by private transport. However new development should not lead to more people being isolated from services and facilities which they need on a regular basis. New development must provide the necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of its residents and/or users.

3.6 These objectives seek to deliver a high quality of life with a prosperous and sustainable economy whilst improving opportunities wherever possible or appropriate for travel by means other than the car.

3.7 These objectives seek to meet the challenge of climate change and to improve the sustainability of new development within the context of an area of high environmental quality.
4.1 The preferred spatial strategy sets out how the overall vision and core objectives for West Oxfordshire will be achieved over the coming years. This strategy builds upon the foundations established in previous local plans and looks at how the challenges facing the District now and in the future will be tackled in partnership with those responsible for delivering key services and facilities such as education, healthcare and transport.

4.2 The changing structure of the resident population and demands upon local services and facilities, the pressures faced by the rural environment and the overarching impact of climate change are key challenges which must be addressed.

4.3 Major growth will be taking place close to the boundaries of West Oxfordshire - to the south-west at Swindon and to the east at Oxford and Bicester. There will be movement of people between homes and jobs in these growth areas and West Oxfordshire. Adverse consequences of urban pressures upon our rural areas must be controlled. A key plank of our strategy is to enhance the many strengths of the District, including helping to maintain the existing strong network of towns and villages, with emphasis upon their individual character and particular needs. There will be choice of new homes, jobs and services to help meet the needs of people within the District, most particularly through strengthening the role of local service centres.

The overall strategy intends to:

- deliver sustainable development which maintains and enhances where possible the self-sufficiency and high quality of life in West Oxfordshire and which addresses the social, economic and environmental challenges facing this predominantly rural area;
- address the causes and impacts of climate change by robust decisions on the location of new development and by maximising the resource efficiency of new buildings and activities as well as seeking improvements to the efficiency of existing buildings as and when opportunities arise;
- maintain and strengthen the existing strong network of towns and villages through support for and enhancement of local services and facilities. This will be delivered through reinforcing the role of service centres at the same time as ensuring facilities to meet day to day needs remain available in other communities, especially those with a key focus of activity, such as the primary school and village hall;
- continue to strengthen and diversify the local economy through choice in location and type of local job opportunities but with emphasis placed upon those activities, particularly in tourism and high tech industries, which add real value to the area;
- deliver new development and supporting infrastructure of an appropriate quality, scale, type and design which complements the character and context of the built environment and countryside;
- widen the choice of new homes available with particular emphasis upon new affordable housing and accommodation for a maturing population;
- protect and improve our green infrastructure to ensure that access to nature and its diversity remains an integral part of life in West Oxfordshire.

4.4 Of the 130 villages and small towns only two towns have a population above 10,000 with both Witney (26,000) and Carterton (15,000) located in the southern part of the District. Apart from larger scale healthcare and leisure facilities available in the sub-regional centres outside the District, the day to day needs of people living in or visiting West Oxfordshire can generally be met in the immediate locality and/or in nearby towns or villages. The movement of people between individual services and facilities is complex, reflecting the differing destinations for different purposes.

4.5 The potential for self-sufficiency in our towns and villages has been monitored for many decades. There has been significant change, especially apparent in the declining number and distribution of shops and pubs. However there are now increasing levels of community involvement in delivery of local services as well as sharing of suitable premises for a wide range of activities which bodes well for more sustainable living patterns in the future.

4.6 The range of services and facilities in towns and larger villages, along with the individual characteristics of these settlements, was assessed as part of previous local plans and more recently in Settlement Sustainability reports.

Network of towns and villages

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The Settlement Sustainability reports are available on the Council’s website: 
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4.7 Table A sets out the broad settlement hierarchy which forms the basis for much of the spatial strategy to accommodate future development. Many villages and hamlets are very small with little or no supporting facilities within that community. It is unrealistic to expect this situation to significantly change over the next 15-20 years.

Table A: West Oxfordshire Spatial Strategy - Settlements and their function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement type</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Town/Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Service Centre</td>
<td>Main retail, education and employment centres with more than 5,000 population. Witney is the main centre for much of the District as well as the eastern fringes of Gloucestershire. The relatively modern Carterton has an additional role in helping to meet the needs of people associated with the operations of RAF Brize Norton. The much smaller town of Chipping Norton serves the northern part of the District as well as communities in nearby districts. The three towns are suitable for urban scale development both within and on the edge of the built-up areas to provide new homes, employment, retail and leisure opportunities.</td>
<td>Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Service Centres</td>
<td>Local service centres which provide a wide range of services. All have a population below 3,000 apart from Eynsham (5,000). Burford, Woodstock and Eynsham contain secondary school/leisure facilities. Both Burford and Woodstock are historic towns with an important tourist role and where opportunities for further development are constrained. Eynsham is constrained by its location alongside the Green Belt and congested roads approaching Oxford, its internal mediaeval road pattern, as well as flood land and mineral reserves. These six towns and villages are suitable for limited development of an appropriate scale and type that would help reinforce the existing service centre role.</td>
<td>Bampton, Burford, Charlbury, Eynsham, Long Hanborough, Woodstock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages</td>
<td>Villages with less than 2,000 population but with some local services and facilities. All identified villages have a primary school with the exception of five villages - Churchill (near Kingham), Curbridge (near Witney), Filkins (near Langford), Fulbrook (near Burford) and Over Norton (near Chipping Norton). Suitable for limited new housing and supporting development which would help maintain the vitality of these communities.</td>
<td>Alvescot, Aston, Bladon, Brize Norton, Cassington, Chadlington, Churchill, Clanfield, Combe, Curbridge, Ducklington, Enstone, Filkins &amp; Broughton Poggs, Finstock, Freeland, Fulbrook, Great Rollright, Hailey, Kingham, Langford, Leafield, Middle Barton, Milton-u-Wychwood, Minster Lovell, North Leigh, Over Norton, Sipton-u-Wychwood, Standlake, Stanton Harcourt, Stonesfield, Tackley, Wootton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other villages and hamlets</td>
<td>All other settlements in the rural areas with generally less than 500 population and limited or no facilities. Not suitable for further development (other than reuse of existing appropriate buildings) unless it meets local needs which cannot be better met in any other way.</td>
<td>All other settlements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Delivering new homes - where and when?

4.8 The number of additional new homes to be built in West Oxfordshire by 2026 has been decided by the Government through the South East Regional Plan and its various consultation stages. Housing policy and housing figures will however be reviewed and revised during the coming years, not least in response to new national population forecasts.

4.9 The South East Plan requires West Oxfordshire to deliver 7,300 additional homes during the 20 year period 2006 - 2026. Providing less than this number is not an option – the local strategy must clearly demonstrate that at least this level of new housing will be built. The District is divided into two policy areas by the South East Plan (see Figure 1.1) with 3,800 dwellings to be steered to Witney and the eastern part of the District closest to Oxford and 3,500 dwellings to be provided in the remaining area which includes Carterton and Chipping Norton.

4.10 New homes are needed to accommodate West Oxfordshire’s increasing number of households. Apart from the growing population, the number of households is increasing at a faster rate as household size decreases with more and more homes accommodating one or two people only. (County forecasts for 2006-2026 show a 10.6% increase in the number of households in the District compared to a 7.7% increase in population). In addition, changing needs are not being met by the existing housing stock, particularly in relation to the modern lifestyles of older people and the needs of newly forming households who are unable to purchase or rent at local prices.

4.11 A significant number of new homes have already been built since the beginning of the plan period (April 2006), particularly through the Madley Park and Shilton Park developments on the edge of Witney and Carterton respectively. Table B shows the position in West Oxfordshire at 1 October 2009 when compared to the South East Plan housing provision. Those sites with planning permission that had not commenced at that date have been discounted by 5% to allow for possible lapses. The number of dwellings to be built on these sites has been added to those expected to be built on remaining local plan allocated sites to give an indication of the current available supply.

Table B: Housing Position at 1 October 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>SE Plan 2006-2026</th>
<th>Completions (1 Apr 06 - 31 Sept 09)</th>
<th>Available supply</th>
<th>Potential shortfall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Oxon (part)</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>1,240</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>1,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witney</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,030</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsewhere</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remainder of West Oxon</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>1,210</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carterton</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipping Norton</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsewhere</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Oxon total</td>
<td>7,300</td>
<td>2,450</td>
<td>1,650</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.12 Most new homes provided through previous local plans were built on farmland around towns and villages. This will continue. Larger-scale developed sites no longer required to accommodate traditional industries have already been redeveloped for new homes (and jobs) over the last 20 years or so. The remaining potential for reuse of any other similar brownfield sites is limited. Replacement of large areas of poor quality MOD housing in Carterton to meet the future needs of RAF personnel is likely to be the main source of new housing created through redevelopment.

4.13 An ‘organic’ supply of new housing continues to come forward from within the towns and villages as existing buildings and surrounding land are adapted to meet current needs. Planning policy makes provision for such small-scale development to come forward (subject to criteria) and this equally applies to the preferred future strategy. New homes can be provided through the use of undeveloped plots of land, through redevelopment of existing properties and through the extension, sub-division or conversion of existing buildings – some already used as dwellings and some not. We estimate that in accordance with the preferred strategy about 1,000 additional new homes will be provided from this source over and above those already granted planning permission (see Housing Land Supply Position Statements).

4.14 However, the main source of new housing (and associated facilities) will be through the extension of towns and larger villages. We have looked at the potential of land in and around these settlements to accommodate new homes (on sites for 10 dwellings or more). This study confirmed that the main potential to demonstrate delivery of the South East Plan housing figures will be through the identification of sites at Witney, Carterton and to a lesser extent at Chipping Norton. Any further substantial development to the west of Eynsham (the fourth largest settlement) is unacceptable primarily because of traffic impact upon the internal mediaeval streets and surrounding congested road network (A40 in particular) as well as impact upon rural character; expansion in other directions is not a sustainable option (Green Belt, flood risk, mineral sterilisation etc). Housing supply in the three main towns can be supplemented by smaller scale sites in the villages which will be specifically identified in a future Plan (Site Allocations and Development Management Plan); this must accord with the overall Core Strategy.

4.15 Various combinations of locations have been considered in order to identify the most appropriate strategy for West Oxfordshire including a new village, concentration in one or more towns through to widespread dispersal to a variety of locations. However there is only a limited range of spatial options which would satisfactorily meet sustainability criteria as well as conform to national and regional requirements for plan content and housing delivery. An assessment of these options has been undertaken as part of the required Sustainability Appraisal. This assessment has concluded that the more sustainable settlement strategy would be to focus most development in the main towns but with some development of an appropriate scale continuing in the rural areas to help meet local needs.
4.16 The general distribution, in accordance with the preferred strategy, of about 7,300 new homes required by the SE Plan (including those already built since April 2006) is diagrammatically depicted in Map A. The defined sub-areas are derived from the general catchment areas of the service centres and larger villages (see supplement to Settlement Sustainability Reports).

The supplement to Settlement Sustainability Reports can be viewed online - please see the LDF Sustainability Appraisal and Evidence Base page: [www.westoxon.gov.uk](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk)

Serviced Centres

150 (100) 150 new homes to be built 2006-2026 of which 50 are already constructed or have outstanding permission or are allocated in the Local Plan with about 100 homes remaining to be identified at 1 October 2009.
**Preferred spatial strategy for new homes 2006-2026**

The majority of new homes in West Oxfordshire will be built within or on the edge of the District Service Centres of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. Additional housing of an appropriate scale will be provided at other service centres and villages identified in Table A.

About 40% of new residential development built by 2026 will be on previously developed land within existing built-up areas.

The general distribution of about 7,300 new homes in accordance with the preferred strategy (including those already built since April 2006) is outlined in the following table and is diagrammatically depicted in Map A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub Area</th>
<th>New homes 2006 – 2026</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Oxon (part)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witney area (town and neighbouring parishes)</td>
<td>minimum of 3,000 with at least one strategic site (focused on Witney)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eynsham, Woodstock and Hanborough area plus neighbouring parishes</td>
<td>about 800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remainder of West Oxon</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carterton area (town and neighbouring parishes, including villages near the Oxfordshire/Gloucestershire boundary)</td>
<td>minimum of 1,500 with at least one strategic site (focused on Carterton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipping Norton area (town and neighbouring parishes)</td>
<td>about 1,000 with one strategic site (focused on Chipping Norton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Evenlode Valley (Charlbury, Wychwoods and other villages along the Cotswold railway)</td>
<td>about 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Thames Valley (Bampton, Standlake and nearby parishes)</td>
<td>about 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Windrush Valley (Burford and neighbouring parishes)</td>
<td>about 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartons and Enstone area (including villages near the West Oxon/Cherwell boundary)</td>
<td>about 150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other than strategic sites for development identified in the Core Strategy, new sites for residential development will be allocated as appropriate on land within or adjoining some of the designated service centres and villages listed in Table A, in addition to small-scale opportunities for new housing that will emerge in these settlements through the development management process over the plan period. New residential development will:

- be of an appropriate scale and will complement the form and character of the individual town or village
- create a high quality living environment which contributes towards the objective of sustainable development
- help meet local needs wherever possible
- help facilitate the provision or enhancement of identified local services and facilities
- be located within a reasonable and safe walking distance of a primary school with capacity to accommodate additional children (for proposals where family housing is likely to be provided)
- not create unacceptable impacts upon the local environment and infrastructure.
Strategic sites

4.17 The overall spatial approach for delivery of additional new homes comprises development of larger scale strategic sites to be identified in the Core Strategy, other sites of 10 or more dwellings to be identified in the separate Site Allocations Plan and smaller scale housing sites which will come forward in accordance with the overall strategy.

4.18 So far three strategic development areas are specifically identified:

- land to the west of Witney (including land reserved in the adopted Local Plan to meet future needs)
- land off Swinbrook Road, Carterton (as allocated in the adopted Local Plan)
- land to the east of Chipping Norton (including land allocated in the adopted Local Plan).

4.19 These strategic areas are shown diagrammatically on the maps within the later Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton sections and will be the subject of specific policies as outlined in these sections. About 1,000 homes are expected to be delivered from the West Witney Development Area, about 200 on the northern edge of Carterton and about 200 within the East Chipping Norton Development Area. Construction of new homes on these sites is expected to be underway during the period 2011-2016 i.e. the first five year period following anticipated adoption of the Core Strategy for West Oxfordshire. These strategic sites, together with smaller sites to be allocated elsewhere in the District in accordance with the preferred approach, plus outstanding planning permissions, will continue to maintain the required land supply from 2011 onwards.

4.20 However the Core Strategy looks well beyond 2016. In order for the overall strategy for West Oxfordshire to be considered sound, there needs to be additional housing provision identified in the event that:

- some allocated sites do not come forward for development as anticipated (due perhaps to unforeseen infrastructure or land ownership constraints)
- the supply of future small sites turns out to be significantly less than allowed for (even though the preferred strategy makes lower provision for new homes from this source than has been delivered in the past).

4.21 Carterton Town Council is keen to see further population growth in order to increase the town’s sustainability and to improve local infrastructure. The District Council supports this approach for further consultation purposes. How this growth is to be accommodated is yet to be decided upon although land to the east and west of the town is considered to have the most potential to deliver sustainable development rather than further substantial development to the north (see later Carterton section).

4.22 Local authorities are required to demonstrate at least a 15 year supply of housing land from the date of adoption of the Core Strategy (i.e. for West Oxfordshire this means from 2011/12 to at least 2026/7). Additional strategic sites would help ensure that the
overall approach for delivery of new homes will be robust in the longer term and in the event of changing circumstances. Additional land identified could be released as and when necessary to help meet housing land supply requirements. The larger-scale options considered most feasible are at Carterton and at Witney and are described in more detail along with alternative options in the later town chapters and separate Sustainability Appraisal.

**Preferred Approach: Strategic Development Sites**

Strategic development sites are identified at:
- Witney (land to the west)
- Chipping Norton (land to the east)
- Carterton (remaining local plan allocation off Swinbrook Road to the north)

At least one additional strategic site will be added to the above list to help accommodate the development needs of West Oxfordshire as and when required. The options for larger scale development (about 1,000 dwellings) are:
- Carterton East - land between Carterton and the village of Brize Norton. Challenges of landscape setting and settlement coalescence, rural highway network, provision of education and community facilities (including playing fields), proximity to RAF Brize Norton, sewerage and flooding.
- Carterton West - land to the north of Alvescot Road and west of the Shill Brook valley. Challenges of landscape setting and integration with existing built-up areas, impact upon biodiversity target area, rural highway network and limited bus services, education provision, proximity to RAF Brize Norton, sewerage and flooding.
- Witney North - land between Hailey Road and Woodstock Road. Infrastructure challenges of limited highway network and bus services, education provision and severe flooding.

In terms of the future distribution of development in the District, if only one additional strategic site is identified then the preference is for it to be in the Carterton area.

4.23 The challenges associated with each of the potential options for longer term development will be further assessed alongside the responses to this document. A decision will then be made by the Council in 2010 as to the number and location of additional strategic sites to be identified in the submission version of the Core Strategy.

4.24 The following housing graph shows the likely timing of new housing delivery over the plan period 2006-2026/7 reflecting the preferred approach and anticipated delivery of the three identified Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton strategic development areas. The pattern for the sub-areas of Central Oxon (part) and the remainder of West Oxfordshire will vary in response to future decisions on additional strategic sites at Witney and Carterton.
Meeting specific housing needs

Density, mix and type of new housing

4.25 The need to use land efficiently and effectively with preference given to use of previously developed land is a worthy aim. However there are mounting concerns about the impact that higher development densities are having upon the character of our towns and villages, especially where redevelopment of existing properties and their curtilage is involved. Undeveloped areas, including large gardens, can make an essential contribution to local character, amenity and biodiversity, sometimes more so than agricultural land adjoining settlements. It is important to ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to the local environment in its widest sense. Consequently, the design process, taking into account the intrinsic qualities of each potential development site, will be the main determinant of density.

4.26 The South East Plan proposes an overall regional target of 40 dwellings per hectare although it is not expected that this target should be applied uniformly to all areas. Generally new housing schemes in West Oxfordshire will be within the density range of 30 - 50 dwellings per hectare. However, such indicators in isolation remain an unreliable guide to the quality of a new scheme or its efficiency of land use; developments with an identical density of dwellings per hectare can look radically different.

4.27 Growth of smaller households, including single person households, and the increasing proportion of the population aged over 65 are likely to have a marked impact upon future housing type, mix and resultant density. Oxfordshire County Council estimates there will be a need for about 800 extra care dwellings across the District during the plan period. The current housing stock is dominated by detached and semi-detached houses, with under-occupation a feature of the owner occupied (no mortgage) sector containing elderly households. The 2008 West Oxfordshire Housing Needs Assessment suggests as a guide that about 60% of future housing should contain less than three bedrooms.

4.28 Planning for lifetime homes and neighbourhoods is becoming more mainstream as national policy moves towards requiring such standards for all new homes, not just publicly funded housing, such as through the Code for Sustainable Homes. This approach will assist independent living and quality of life. The Council will seek to enable the provision of appropriate accommodation to meet specific identified local housing needs, such as accommodation for people with disabilities.
Preferred Approach: Density, type and mix of new housing

A range of housing will provide choice in both type and location, with particular emphasis on provision of accommodation for older people and newly forming households.

Appropriate densities will be determined through the design process, taking into account all factors which influence development quality. Generally new schemes of 10 or more units will be within the density range of 30 – 50 dwellings per hectare (dph), with densities at the higher end of this range or beyond in locations where services and facilities are within a reasonable walking distance of the new homes. New urban extensions will be built to an overall average density of 35 – 40 dph and incorporate homes specifically designed for older people. The design of smaller housing schemes, particularly in rural locations, will give special emphasis to the scale, pattern, character and context of the area.

Affordable Housing

4.29 The provision of a significant increase in number, type and distribution of affordable housing for both rent and subsidised sale is a key priority for West Oxfordshire. Included in this is the achievement of further small scale affordable housing schemes in villages where there is housing need which is best met locally.

4.30 Modelling undertaken as part of the Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment showed that by 2026, even with the most optimistic assessment of supply, there would be around two households requiring affordable housing for every affordable home available. Currently about 2,000 people are registered on the West Oxfordshire waiting list. The 2008 West Oxfordshire Housing Needs Assessment calculates that there is an overall annual shortfall of affordable housing in the district of 567 units after allowing for re-lets. This shortfall is well in excess of the expected build rate for all new housing and so an affordable housing target at this level is not sustainable, viable or deliverable.

4.31 The high level of housing need is generally recognised. The South East Plan contains an overall regional target that 35% of all new housing should be affordable but considers a higher figure is justified in the Central Oxfordshire sub-region. In this case at least 40% of all new housing is to be affordable.

4.32 Taking into account these regional targets and the distribution of local housing need across the District, as well as the likely supply of development sites and continuing high property prices, the Council will aim to achieve an overall target of at least 40% of all new homes to be affordable. Prospective developers of sites throughout West Oxfordshire will be expected to provide at least 40% of the proposed dwellings as affordable, subject to individual site assessment of development viability. The 2009 Affordable Housing Viability Study shows this level of delivery to be generally realistic. Levels of 40% or above have already been secured on both previously developed and greenfield sites under the existing Local Plan Policy H11 which seeks 30% - 50% affordable housing on qualifying sites.

4.33 Qualifying sites under current local plan policy are allocated sites (residential and mixed use sites including housing) as well as unallocated sites which come forward under locational criteria. Outside the four largest settlements qualifying sites are those that propose an increase of 2 or more dwellings. In Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton and Eynsham a threshold of 15 dwellings (or an area of 0.5ha or greater) applies. The Council has concluded there is no reason on viability grounds why a low site threshold should not equally apply across the District (a net gain of one or more dwellings).

4.34 Discussions with local developers, agents and landowners in relation to affordable housing provision have shown that viability is not necessarily an issue with sites accommodating well below 15 dwellings. Seeking a contribution towards affordable housing does not render a site with four or five new homes unviable however accommodating a potential mix of tenures on the same small site can often present difficulties. Potential developers may decide not to proceed unless there is the option to make an equivalent contribution to affordable housing delivery on another site, such as a rural exception site. This option may have the effect of increasing overall affordable housing delivery, particularly in rural areas, providing landowners are willing to bring forward suitable land to accommodate the required affordable housing.
4.35 Although our preferred approach is to generally seek new affordable homes as part of a mixed tenure scheme together with market housing, provision through a separate site may be acceptable where there is evidence that this would more satisfactorily meet local housing need.

4.36 New affordable homes contributing towards the District target will include those provided as an element of new residential development, additional homes proposed and built by housing associations on land in their ownership and homes delivered through the rural exception policy.

4.37 The Affordable Housing SPD adopted in 2007 contains guidance on the Council’s approach to affordable housing delivery. The need to review this guidance will be assessed alongside progress on the Core Strategy and subsequent Site Allocations and Development Management Plan. The Council will continue to work with its partner organisations to maximise delivery of affordable housing in West Oxfordshire.

More information available online:

The Affordable Housing SPD:

www.westoxon.gov.uk/LD7

Preferred Approach: Affordable housing

At least 40% of all new homes (including conversions) in West Oxfordshire will be affordable housing, of which about 45% will be aimed at single people or couples (without children). 40% will be family homes containing two or more bedrooms. Specialist housing for older people, including extra care accommodation, will comprise about 15% of new affordable homes delivered.

About 30% of new affordable housing will be built in the smaller towns and villages outside Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton.

Taking into account housing needs of the area and having regard to the economic viability of new development, developers seeking permission for a net gain of one or more dwellings on all sites will be expected to provide at least 40% affordable homes.

Schemes to be managed by a Registered Social Landlord (or equivalent) will comprise about 70% social rented homes with 30% intermediate housing.

Developers will provide the new affordable housing as an integral part of the overall development unless the Council considers housing need would be met more satisfactorily by provision on another site. In these circumstances the developer will either build the affordable housing on a separate site with planning permission for the required scheme or provide an equivalent financial contribution.

Affordable housing is defined as being affordable to those who cannot afford market priced housing locally to either rent or purchase. It is housing provided with either public or private subsidy for people who are unable to resolve their housing requirements in the local housing market because of the relationship between housing cost and local incomes.
Accommodation for Travelling Communities

4.38 Local authorities are required to assess the accommodation needs of travelling communities and identify sites to help meet these needs. Three studies have been undertaken to assess the local need (one in 2006 for Gypsies and Travellers covering the Thames Valley, one in 2008 for travelling showpeople in Oxfordshire and a Regional Transit Study in October 2009). These studies have fed into a partial review of pitches and plots in the SE Plan.

4.39 These studies show that there is a recognised need for additional permanent pitches and plots throughout the South East, including West Oxfordshire. Satisfactory provision to meet these particular housing requirements will need to be made, otherwise unauthorised sites will occur that can create problems for the families involved as well as the local settled community. The specific level of provision will be established through the South East Plan, following an Examination in Public early in 2010. Once the requirement for the District is agreed, this will be delivered through additional site identification and/or criteria-based policy.

Preferred Approach: Travelling Communities

Provide new pitches/plots/sites in accordance with identified needs by:

i. safeguarding existing sites
ii. extending existing sites where appropriate
iii. allocating new sites.

New sites should meet the following criteria:

i. be in or near existing settlements with access to local services and facilities, especially schools, shops and healthcare;

ii. be well located to the highway and public transport network, as well as having safe and convenient vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access;

iii. not to have an adverse impact on environmental assets, particularly the character and appearance of the surrounding area;

iv. be designed in accordance with Government’s Good Practice Guide (Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites).

More information available online:
Local Need Studies for Travelling Communities:
www.westoxon.gov.uk/housingneeds
Sustainable economic growth

5.1 We must plan for economic growth to maintain high and stable levels of employment and ensure that the local economy remains competitive in the long term. Economic growth is also recognised as a means to achieve social and environmental gains.

5.2 The Core Strategy can have a significant impact on levels of economic and employment growth through policies which allow employment development, including development within business, tourism and retail (shopping) sectors. The amount and location of employment development should meet business needs but can also have significant implications for levels of commuting and traffic congestion and impact on the high environmental quality of the District, itself an economic asset.

5.3 The key challenge for the Core Strategy is to deliver economic growth which is sustainable – economic growth which does not adversely impact upon the environmental quality of the District. The principle of ‘Smart growth’ - achieving economic growth whilst minimising the increase in its ecological footprint - underpins our approach.

How much employment growth should we plan for?

5.4 The Economy and Central Oxfordshire sections of the South East Plan together with the Regional Economic Strategy give the regional context. The strategy for Central Oxfordshire is to strive to be a world leader in education, science and technology. The South East Plan sets a monitoring figure of at least 18,000 new jobs to be created by 2016 in the Central Oxfordshire sub-region. This equates to 3,200 new jobs in West Oxfordshire as a whole 2006-2016 (nearly a 6% increase). Estimates for 2006 indicate there were a total of 55,000 jobs in the District.

5.5 Although the local economy appears relatively successful, significant numbers of residents commute out of the District to work in regional centres of employment including Oxford and Swindon and also to sub-regional centres such as Harwell, Culham and Milton Park in the Didcot area (also known as ‘Science Vale’). This creates congestion on the primary road network. These economic centres are also growth centres and the Core Strategy must therefore recognise that a level of commuting out of the District will continue. The strategy can also seek to reduce commuting by providing more jobs than the growth in the labour force and by providing jobs close to where people live. Reducing out-commuting by 5% would require provision of an additional 1,000 jobs. Due to an ageing population and household changes, the economically active population is expected to increase up to 2016 (by around 2,000 economically active residents) but then decline to 2026. This would indicate a need to provide for around 3,000 new jobs 2006-2016 which broadly equates to the SE Plan job monitoring target.

5.6 Monitoring data indicates that there is a supply of approximately 30 hectares (ha) of available employment land through planning permissions and remaining allocations. Much of the stock of business premises however was identified as becoming dated to

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1 SE Plan Supplementary Guidance on Employment Land Reviews July 2009 disaggregates this to 1,500 jobs in the Central Oxfordshire part of the District and in addition identifies 1,700 jobs for the rest of West Oxfordshire.

2 Census 2001 results indicated that 18,000 residents commuted out of the District, and the District had 8,000 fewer jobs than working residents.

meet modern needs and the West Oxfordshire Economy Study identified a need to provide further employment land to provide flexibility for the expansion and movement of businesses within the district, business start-ups and inward investment (albeit at a relatively low level).

5.7 The West Oxfordshire Economy Study presented three strategic options for economic growth each with differing land requirements. These were subject to consultation and the Steady Growth Scenario (involving an additional 30ha of employment land over and above existing commitments) was preferred.

5.8 Not all of this land, however, would need to be allocated as criteria based policies can encourage, where appropriate, the modernisation of existing sites, the adaptation and expansion of existing businesses, and also the provision of new sites through rural diversification. This was recognised in the Core Strategy So Far consultation which put forward a strategic allocation of an additional 10ha of employment land at Witney. This approach was also broadly supported through consultation.

5.9 Taking into account potential job growth in other sectors (such as from tourism and retail), the proposed level of employment land provision (at least 40ha including existing commitments) has the potential to provide many more jobs than required to meet the projected growth in the labour force. It is however, similar in scale to the SE Plan job monitoring target if extrapolated to 2026. Actual job growth is however very difficult to predict. New land can be needed even if employment is falling, and significant areas of new land may accommodate business relocations and the loss of some sites may mean that employment growth remains limited. A level of flexibility must be applied particularly when planning for the longer term.

Witney

5.10 Witney is the largest town and is where demand for employment premises is strongest and where access and infrastructure is better within the District context. Large employment estates are located to the south and west of the town where significant amounts of employment land were allocated in previous local plans, some of this land remaining available for development (around 10ha). This area has seen steady take up for a range of premises and accommodates a variety of businesses, particularly related to engineering and manufacturing. The availability of good quality land in the area to the west facilitated investment from large high technology manufacturers related to the healthcare sector, including Abbot Diabetes Care. With sufficient available land, particularly large sites enabling further inward investment, there is potential for a cluster of high tech manufacturing to develop in this area.

5.11 As the location to meet a significant part of the housing requirement, and where demand for premises is strongest, Witney requires a significant allocation of land to provide flexibility in the land supply for the longer term up to 2026. Further employment development off Downs Road can be integrated into a mixed use urban extension, with good public transport links and improved

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4 Roughly estimated to provide 7,500-9,000 jobs - see Economy Study 2009 Update.
access to the A40 via a new A40/Downs Road junction, thus minimising pressure on the local road network.

5.12 The preferred approach is to identify an additional 10ha (minimum) of employment land as part of the mixed use urban extension to the west of Witney. This land is required to provide flexibility in the land supply, opportunities for inward investment and potential for relocations, facilitating the modernisation of ageing industrial estates. This level of employment land provision (20ha in total) could provide in the region of 2000 extra jobs in the town (around 3000 when additional retail and other jobs are included). This will help balance the levels of housing growth proposed.

Carterton

5.13 Until recently the town had only one established employment area (Carterton South Industrial Estate) although RAF Brize Norton on the edge of the town provides employment for large numbers of servicemen many of whom live in Carterton.

5.14 Significant areas of new employment land have been provided in recent years: Ventura Park (4ha) as part of the North East Carterton Development Area and an expansion of the West Oxon Business Park opposite (7ha). Ventura Park in particular has seen significant take up of land with a mixture of office units, industrial units and storage yards and just under 1ha remains without a detailed planning permission. Several industrial, office and retail (non-food) units have been constructed on West Oxon Business Park although most are vacant. Much of this site (approximately 5ha) remains undeveloped.

5.15 The MOD has confirmed the future role of RAF Brize Norton as a strategic air transport base. A new hangar is being constructed to service new aircraft and will involve significant numbers of MOD personnel and civilian contractors, increasing employment in the town. There is potential for Carterton to increase its employment role and develop as a focus for related aviation services and industries. Proposed improvements in the town centre will also increase local jobs. The preferred approach is to retain the existing supply of employment land which together with the potential for some modernisation of the Carterton South Industrial estate will serve the short to medium term needs of the town. Longer term needs should be taken into account through the consideration of a further strategic development site or through the site allocations process.

Chipping Norton

5.16 Chipping Norton had a broad balance of jobs and workers at the time of the 2001 Census but since then its largest employer (Parker Knoll) closed in 2003. The expansion of Owen Mumford, a large manufacturer to the west of the town, has partly offset the loss of jobs but the Economy Study and consultation identified the need for further employment development, particularly small workshops. The Parker Knoll site has since been redeveloped for housing although 2ha of land was retained for employment purposes and remains to be developed. Potential for a further
3ha of employment land remains adjacent to the Cromwell Business Park to the east of the town (including the former depot site 1ha, and land allocated for a mix of uses including a hospital and care home now under construction). There is also some potential to make more efficient use of existing sites, including at the Greystones estate.

5.17 The preferred approach is to retain the existing level of land available (5ha) to mitigate for the loss of jobs incurred in the past and broadly balance the provision of new homes.

Promoting flexibility and rural economic diversity

5.18 One of the key strengths of the West Oxfordshire economy is its diversity. Diversity provides resilience during economic down turns and also provides a range of employment opportunities at different skills levels. This is apparent both in terms of the types of businesses but also the location and type of premises available in the main towns and in rural areas. Retaining the diversity of premises and locations is necessary to support the diversity of businesses. The Economy Study identified no major gaps in terms of the supply of sites nor an oversupply of sites. High house prices however mean that redeveloping employment sites for housing is economically attractive. To prevent the erosion of the District’s stock of employment land and premises, the strategy proposes to continue the policy for retention of employment sites where there is an ongoing prospect of continuing use for employment purposes.

5.19 Flexibility within planning policies relating to employment land and premises is necessary to enable businesses to adapt to changing economic circumstances. Flexibility is provided in current planning policies enabling the expansion of existing businesses. This policy approach will be continued and expanded to encourage the efficient use of existing sites, where appropriate, through intensification and redevelopment.

5.20 Existing criteria based policies also support homeworking and the development of small business premises through farm diversification, the provision of new small employment sites on the edge of towns and larger villages and the re-use of existing buildings. These policies will be continued and expanded to enable the provision of small new business premises within or on the edge of towns and villages identified in the settlement hierarchy, provided that environmental impacts are acceptable.

5.21 The role of large country estates as managers of significant historic, natural and economic assets will also be recognised through enabling the diversification of their economies where this would contribute to sustainable estate management (and therefore applying a similar approach to farm diversification).

Contributing to the competitiveness of the region

5.22 The Oxfordshire economy specifically has been highlighted as one of the best performing regions – identified within the Regional Economic Strategy as a ‘Diamond for Growth’. Oxford is the hub of the sub-region, and a centre of university research which has enabled the growth of high technology industries particularly related to health technologies. Although not a centre of research, West Oxfordshire contributes to the Oxfordshire high tech economy and has particular strengths in high technology manufacturing and engineering. The availability of good quality employment sites, accessible to the labour supply, will enable the District continue to develop its role within the Oxfordshire high tech economy. The proposed employment site to the west of Witney will provide a strategic investment or relocation opportunity.

5.23 Small businesses are also a particular feature of the District’s economy, and a source of entrepreneurship and innovation. The policy approach to promote rural economic diversity through the provision of small business premises supports this source of innovation and entrepreneurship.

A sustainable tourism economy

5.24 Tourism remains an important and growing economic sector. The strength of the tourism economy in the District reflects the attractive countryside, historic Cotswold market towns and villages and a range of visitor attractions such as Blenheim Palace and Cotswold Wildlife Park. The strategy for tourism capitalises on these inherent assets and promotes tourism development which complements them.

5.25 The development planning strategy for tourism will promote new accommodation and tourism development through the conversion of existing buildings or associated with existing attractions. Significant new attractions will be restricted except where they would deliver overall improvements to the environment and benefit local communities and visitors alike. This particularly applies in the Lower
Windrush Valley, an area of mineral extraction, where the restoration and after-use of mineral working sites has created opportunities for new tourism development.

Skills development

5.26 Ensuring the workforce has the necessary skills suitable to the employment opportunities is clearly necessary to ensure continuing high levels of employment, and vibrant and inclusive towns and villages. The District has a reasonably skilled labour force at present. A recent skills survey of Oxfordshire employers (Nov 2008) did not highlight significant skills gaps in West Oxfordshire. The survey however highlighted that continuing investment in skills development must ensure that it meets workers' and businesses' expectations. We will continue to work in partnership with skills providers and business development organisations to ensure that skills development meets business needs.

Preferred Approach for Sustainable Economic Growth

- Focus on the main towns through retaining existing allocations and remaining land in these towns to improve jobs/homes balance (see relevant chapters).
- Allocate a strategic employment site of a minimum of 10ha to the west of Witney to provide opportunities for inward investment and strategic relocations with potential to create a cluster of high technology manufacturing in this area. The need for further specific site provision elsewhere will be considered through the separate Site Allocations process, taking into account implementation of criteria based policies.
- Promote the efficient use of existing employment sites (where viable and sustainable) to maintain diversity through the policy approach:
  - retention of existing employment sites where there are reasonable prospects for their continuing use for employment
  - allow intensification and redevelopment where appropriate
- Provide flexibility and enable rural diversification, through criteria based policies which:
  - enable the expansion of existing businesses where appropriate
  - support home working through the development management process
  - enable the development of small business premises in or next to the towns and villages, where this is consistent with the scale and character of the rural area (towns and villages as listed in the settlement hierarchy and linked to opportunities for new housing development)
  - support farm diversification which helps to sustain farm enterprise,
  - support rural diversification within large country estates which supports the management of the built and natural environment through estate management plans
- Continue to promote sustainable tourism which capitalises on and protects the attractive environment, utilises existing attractions and existing buildings. New tourism development will be allowed where this would enhance the environment of the District and benefit local communities and visitors alike.
Vibrant town centres

5.27 The Core Strategy should set out the hierarchy and network of town centres and how they should develop to meet the needs of the District’s population. The main town centres of Witney, Chipping Norton and Carterton appear healthy with low shop vacancy rates and a variety of independent shops and national multiples. The policy approach nationally is to follow a ‘town centre first’ approach for new shopping and leisure development to ensure town centres remain vibrant and resilient to economic downturns.

5.28 The West Oxfordshire Retail Needs Assessment 2007 identified limited need for further retail development within the District up to 2016, taking into account existing commitments. Longer term needs will be kept under review and future provision will follow the town centre first approach.

5.29 Witney is the primary shopping destination in the District and has a reasonably large number of retail and service uses serving West Oxfordshire and beyond. Its role will be enhanced through planned developments including:

- completion of Marriotts Walk, a significant expansion of the town centre which will also enhance the leisure and night time economy offer. The first shops and cinema were open at the end of October 2009.
- an extension to the Woolgate Centre which is under construction.

5.30 A broad area of opportunity to meet longer term town centre development needs has been identified to the south of Welch Way opposite the Marriotts Walk development. The town centre boundary and primary shopping frontages will be revised to include the Marriotts Walk development. There is a need to ensure that the vibrancy and character of the town centre is retained throughout. Investment in the public realm and ensuring sensitive shop front design will help to maintain a high quality environment.

5.31 Carterton and Chipping Norton are much smaller centres, with a more limited range and choice of shops serving more local areas. They form the next tier in the retail hierarchy.

5.32 Carterton has a relatively good provision of food and grocery shopping and services, which will be complemented by proposals for an Aldi store, but has more limited choice in terms of comparison shopping. It has been a long term aim to improve the town centre facilities and an area of land within the centre will continue to be allocated for refurbishment/ redevelopment for retail and ancillary town centre uses.

5.33 Chipping Norton is the largest market town in the north of the District, within the Cotswolds AONB, and serves a rural hinterland. The centre provides a range of facilities primarily serving the day to day needs of local residents and surrounding villages but also attracts passing tourist trade. An opportunity exists to extend the current town centre to accommodate retail development or other town centre and community uses on the former burgage plots. The town centre boundary will be amended to include this area.

5.34 These main centres are supported by a number of smaller neighbourhood and village centres. Of particular significance are the centres of Burford and Woodstock which have a relatively large number of shops and facilities for their size relating to their historic and tourist roles. Existing policy seeks to maintain the current mix of shops, hotels and other town centre uses interspersed with residential properties as a key part of their character and charm.

5.35 Elsewhere throughout the rural area, there has been a decline in the number of shops, relating to the increased polarisation of shopping towards bulk food shopping, including through the use of the internet. Small local shops can however meet top-up shopping needs, reduce the need to travel to larger centres and also offer a valuable community resource, many including other services such as a post office. Planning policy can seek to resist the loss of rural shops although cannot enforce this where a shop has become economically unviable to run. Existing policy seeks to resist their loss where there is some prospect of continuing use unless adequate alternative provision remains nearby. The policy also encourages the provision of small scale shops to meet local needs. This policy approach will continue.
Preferred Approach: Town centres and shopping

Provision of further significant shopping development and other town centre uses will reflect the ‘town centre first approach’ set out in national guidance.

**Town centre hierarchy**

- **Principal town centre** – Witney
- **Primary town centres** – Carterton, Chipping Norton
- **Secondary town centres** – Burford, Woodstock

Land is allocated in Carterton town centre to improve the retail offer and range of town centre facilities.

New shopping development will be located in or adjacent to town centres and will be of a scale in keeping with the role of that centre.

Longer term potential development opportunities are identified at:
- Land to the south of Welch Way on the edge of Witney town centre; and
- Land incorporating former burgage plots between High Street and Albion Street on the edge of Chipping Norton town centre

The Council will continue the existing policy approach of resisting the loss of local shops and community facilities and supporting the provision of shops serving local needs where appropriate.
6.1 Access to services and facilities is fundamental to the delivery of sustainable development and a healthy local economy. However accessibility does not necessarily involve movement, as demonstrated by the phenomenal increase in use of the internet for work and leisure purposes. Almost a quarter of the workers in the rural areas outside Witney and Carterton are now home based.

6.2 Although national policy seeks to minimise need to travel, especially by car, this must be seen in the rural context of West Oxfordshire where there is often no safe or convenient travel alternative to use of the private car.

6.3 The District Council has very limited transport powers, primarily confined to car parking provision and its management. Close working with the County Highway Authority and Oxfordshire Rural Community Council remains essential. However the District Council, as local planning authority, does have a key input to improving accessibility through control over the location of new development which in turn influences the need to travel and how people may travel. The availability of services and facilities and the scope for improvement, including public transport, is a major influence upon the settlement strategy and the location of future development.

6.4 Although the strategy aims to improve the range and quality of local services and facilities to meet most of the needs of West Oxfordshire’s residents, the employment, leisure and health facilities at the regional centres of Oxford and Swindon will remain an attraction. This is particularly the case for those locations closest to Oxford such as Eynsham and Woodstock.

**Rail and roads**

6.5 The main transport routes are shown on the Preferred Strategy diagram. The towns and most villages have no direct access to rail services. The main railway line from Oxford to Banbury and Birmingham is on the eastern fringe of the District with one station at Tackley. The Cotswold line from Hereford and Worcester to London passes near several Cotswold villages with four stations and three rural halts in the District. Improvements to this line are underway with a second track being laid from east of Charlbury to Ascott-under-Wychwood. This should significantly reduce delays to trains using the current single line. Proposals to increase the effectiveness of local stations will be pursued.

6.6 There are now no trunk roads in West Oxfordshire. Most of the major routes radiate from Witney, Chipping Norton and Burford. Carterton, the second largest town, is not directly served by any A-class roads. The A40 is the main east-west transport route with congestion on the section between Witney and Oxford amongst the most severe transport problems in Oxfordshire (Local Transport Plan 2006-2011). One cause of the congestion is insufficient capacity at the Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts (outside the District) with the traffic lights and junctions at Eynsham and Cassington adding to the problem. The resultant congestion severely impacts upon timing of bus services, particularly at peak times.

6.7 New roads have been added to the network over the last 30 years as part of the expansion of Witney and Carterton. In Witney the peripheral distributor roads of Deer Park, Thorney Leys and Jubilee Way, and Witan Way in the central area, were all funded by or built by the developers of the adjoining mixed use developments. Monahan Way, providing a link between Carterton and the road to Minster Lovell and A40 north of Brize Norton village, was built as part of the recent Shilton Park development. Public funds have been and will continue to be extremely limited.

6.8 Witney continues to be the main focus of new highway schemes. The main need is to provide acceptable alternative routes for traffic to move around the town without passing through the central area and Bridge Street in particular (a designated Air Quality Management Area). The proposed Cogges Link Road and new A40/Downs Road junction are of immediate priority. Complementary traffic management measures will need to be considered in conjunction with the provision of increased highway capacity. The County Highway Authority has requested that land associated with the following schemes is safeguarded from development through the Local Development Framework:

- Cogges Link (planning permission was granted in April 2009 for this new distributor road on the eastern side of Witney crossing the River Windrush and connecting Witan Way with Oxford Hill)
- West End Link (crossing of the River Windrush between Hailey Road and Burford Road to the west of Bridge Street)
- A40/Shores Green junction (west facing slip roads)
- A40/Downs Road junction (alternative designs of an at grade roundabout or grade separated junction with east and west facing slip roads)
6.9 At Carterton/Brize Norton a section of the A40 Access Road between Minster Road and Curbridge Road to bypass the northern part of Brize Norton village remains to be built although the need for this short section of road is to be re-assessed in relation to traffic movements associated with the new A40/Downs Road junction.

6.10 The River Thames creates the southern boundary of the District where the only road crossings are historic bridges, mainly of single vehicle width. Currently none of these have an ability to carry all modern vehicles. The Scheduled Ancient Monument of Newbridge dating back to the twelfth century carries the A415 over the Thames and the bridge structure is deteriorating fast. A weight restriction order is in operation. Oxfordshire County Council proposes, as the solution, a new river crossing and approach roads away from the present bridge.

6.11 Elsewhere the County Highway Authority has retained other proposals to address local environmental problems and these will be reviewed through the next Local Transport Plan:

- Eynsham - bus lane on approach to River Thames toll bridge
- Sutton - B4449 bypass (associated with mineral working in the Lower Windrush Valley)

6.12 The County Council is developing its Access to Oxford project for delivery between 2013 and 2015. An important part of this project is aimed at reducing queueing on the A40 and A44 by tackling congestion to the north of Oxford at and on the approaches to the main roundabouts. Key aspects of this will be intercepting more journeys by public transport and helping to improve journey time reliability. As well as tackling existing issues, the South East Plan recognises Access to Oxford as a priority scheme in ensuring growth can be delivered across the sub-region.

6.13 In addition to the above list of highway schemes the County Council has identified the need for possible bypasses for Burford (A361) and Chipping Norton (A44) if lorry routeing and traffic management schemes prove not to be the solution to traffic problems in these historic town centres (Chipping Norton town centre is a designated Air Quality Management Area). The continued need for these improvement schemes will be considered as part of the development of the County Council’s third Local Transport Plan.

**Pedestrians, cyclists and bus services**

6.14 Opportunities for increased walking, cycling and use of public transport will be promoted. This will include safe, direct and attractive walking and cycling routes and good quality facilities at bus stops. New and improved footpaths and cycleways will be provided in conjunction with proposed development.

6.15 West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural area where access to frequent bus services is limited, particularly in evenings. The only commercial service providing at least a 30 minute frequency connects Carterton and Witney to Oxford stopping in the villages of Brize Norton, Curbridge, Minster Lovell and Eynsham on route. Oxfordshire Rural Community Council continues to support rural community transport.

**Car parking**

6.16 In this competitive world the continued viability of our service centres and main employment areas relies on a reasonable amount of car parking space being available. We shall continue to balance car parking requirements at destinations with the need to promote alternative means of travel wherever possible and feasible.

6.17 High levels of car ownership in West Oxfordshire create a design challenge when accommodating the parked car conveniently and unobtrusively. Oxfordshire County Council, in conjunction with the district councils, is in the process of reviewing residential car parking requirements for future developments.
The Preferred Approach to Transport and Movement

- locating as much new development as possible in locations where there will be access to a reasonable range of services and facilities and where the need to travel, particularly by private car, can be minimised
- continuing to work with the highway authority, local councils and other organisations, including the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, to provide safe and convenient travel within and between the network of towns and villages in West Oxfordshire, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport
- securing appropriate improvements to the main road network so it can accommodate the safe movement of people and goods whilst minimising its impact upon the environment
- promoting traffic management and environmental improvement schemes to help improve quality of life
- accommodating the private car whilst minimising the impact of parking and movement upon the local environment

Proposals for new developments that have significant transport implications either arising from the development proposed or cumulatively with other proposals will be required to include a transport assessment.

Travel plans will be required to form part of development proposals which will potentially attract large numbers of traffic movements.
7.1 The provision of adequate and timely infrastructure is a key requirement of the South East Plan (Policy CC7 refers). It is an essential part of the delivery of sustainable development. The definition of infrastructure covers a wide range of physical, social and green supporting services and facilities including transport, health, education, utilities such as water and sewerage, and space for flood control, recreation, amenity and biodiversity. Green infrastructure is specifically covered in the following section.

7.2 Infrastructure provision is not just the delivery of new services and facilities but includes the retention of existing useful facilities. This can involve resisting development proposals that would result in the loss of a useful existing local facility (or where it would provide a less than satisfactory replacement), seeking to combine facilities to ensure continued delivery as well as establishing community schemes to assist viability.

7.3 Generally the availability of supporting infrastructure in West Oxfordshire is constrained by the rural nature of much of the District. Many of the smaller towns and villages have seen the closure of schools, shops, post offices, public houses and other facilities during the second half of the twentieth century. This is due in part to changing social and economic circumstances of their residents together with economies of scale leading to public services being increasingly concentrated in the larger centres of population. In Witney where major expansion of the town has taken place, new services and facilities have been delivered, particularly through an improved town centre. However there is increasing local concern about yet further growth particularly as some of the identified infrastructure needs of the town, notably transport, remain to be implemented. Delivery of at least one new river crossing in the town as well as improved access to the A40 remains a critical part of the required local infrastructure improvements.

7.4 The District Council is not a major landowner and in 2001 transferred its housing stock to Cottsway Housing. It has a very small capital budget. Delivery of new infrastructure has always been a partnership approach with other organisations and developers. Oxfordshire County Council is an essential provider of services, most notably transport, education and care. The County Council is in the process of making its capital programme more co-ordinated and transparent so it can fully assist delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategies and LDFs.

7.5 Both Thames Water and the Environment Agency are key partners in ensuring that a high quality of life is maintained in West Oxfordshire. Accommodating surface water run-off in the most effective way during times of high rainfall is an important influence on both their investment programmes.

7.6 The Council financially supports rural services through its own grants and through the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) which co-ordinates support for community transport schemes, village shops and halls as well as promoting parish planning and helping to deliver affordable housing through rural exception sites.
7.7 We will continue to seek appropriate contributions from new development to help deliver new infrastructure. These contributions may take the form of built facilities as part of the new development and/or financial contributions which are pooled to improve infrastructure in the locality. The cumulative impact of individual development proposals may be considered when assessing infrastructure requirements with standard charges applied to the payment of financial contributions. The use of Section 106 agreements as part of planning decisions and a tariff approach will change in the coming years as the Government brings forward its Community Infrastructure Levy. It is hoped that the impact of this new legislation upon West Oxfordshire’s approach will become clearer during 2010.

7.8 Further detail on new infrastructure needs is set out in the individual sections covering the main service centres and the rural areas. The full infrastructure and delivery strategy will be included in the submission document. Further policy or guidance on the delivery of new infrastructure will be addressed through a subsequent DPD or SPD.

Preferred Approach: Infrastructure provision

Infrastructure which will help support existing and new communities will be delivered by:
• retaining and strengthening existing local services and facilities and adding to their range and effectiveness wherever possible
• ensuring that appropriate supporting infrastructure will be available to meet the needs of new development
• addressing existing deficiencies which adversely impact upon the quality of life.

New developments that individually or cumulatively generate a requirement for new infrastructure will be expected to deliver, or contribute towards the provision of, supporting services and facilities. Planning permission will only be granted for new development where the identified level and range of supporting infrastructure to meet the needs of the new development is already available or will be available in accordance with an agreed timescale.

Proposals which would result in the loss of existing useful services and facilities will only be supported where it can be clearly shown that appropriate alternative and equivalent facilities will remain locally available or that the existing use is not viable and is incapable of being made viable.
8.1 The Government emphasises, through Planning Policy Statement 1, the importance of planning in helping to achieve sustainable development and addressing environmental issues, in particular:

- mitigating the effects of, and adaptation to, climate change through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the use of renewable energy, avoiding areas at risk of flooding, etc
- protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment
- ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design and the efficient and prudent use of resources
- protecting and enhancing landscapes, wildlife, species and habitats and natural resources and the promotion of biodiversity.

8.2 The Oxfordshire and the West Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategies identify these themes as priorities for the area, in particular the importance given to environmental quality. Each of these themes is considered in this section.

Climate change, sustainable design and construction

8.3 Planning has an important role to play in helping to tackle climate change, both through mitigating the causes of climate change and adapting to the current and future impacts of these changes in terms of weather events. Climate change is the Government’s key concern for sustainable development.

8.4 Achieving sustainable development and addressing climate change underpins and permeates this Core Strategy. The need to reduce the level of carbon dioxide (CO$_2$) emissions - a major contributor to climate change - is particularly important.

Issues

8.5 Over the last 10 years or so the emphasis, nationally and locally, has been on getting development in the most sustainable locations and in so doing reduce the need to travel and car dependence and thus reduce CO$_2$ emissions from transport. This continues to be our preferred approach advocated for the Core Strategy.

8.6 With emissions from buildings accounting for approximately 50% of CO$_2$ emissions in the UK, there is increasing recognition that constructing buildings, using sustainable techniques, is also essential in addressing climate change, through influencing resource use, especially energy, as well as carbon emissions. An important part of this is the use of decentralised and renewable or low-carbon energy sources (such as biomass, solar, wind and ground-source heat). Assessing the impacts of the inevitable changes to our climate, which are likely to include higher temperatures and more extreme weather events, is also important – both in terms of where to locate new development and its design, layout and proposed land uses.

8.7 In addition to advocating sustainable construction, the use of renewable energy and measures to reduce CO$_2$ emissions, the SE Plan identifies how careful use and creation of energy supplies is a key challenge for the region.
8.8 The West Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy identifies one of the main challenges facing West Oxfordshire as ‘encouraging new development while protecting and improving the environment and managing the impacts of climate change’. Addressing the causes and effects of climate change is one of nine themes for action that has emerged. The West Oxfordshire Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP) highlights how the District is likely to experience more extreme weather conditions. This is echoed in the recently published UKCP09 weather scenarios. The severe impacts caused by extreme weather events were exemplified by widescale flooding in the District in the summer of 2007; the flood risk areas have since been revised as a result of this incident (see later section).

8.9 The District Council has signed the Nottingham Declaration, demonstrating its commitment to tackling climate change and reducing its own ‘carbon footprint’, and has set out a number of actions it intends to undertake in order to reduce local carbon emissions through a Climate Change Policy 2008-12.

Emerging Strategy

8.10 The February 2009 ‘Core Strategy So Far: interim position statement’ set out the emerging approach on climate change. Before progress could be made, a more detailed analysis was required on a range of issues to provide an evidence base for the preferred approach. CAG Consultants have undertaken a ‘Renewable energy and sustainable construction study’ for West Oxfordshire (the CAG Study). The recommendations, published in September 2009, have informed each of the elements that were identified in the emerging preferred approach:

1. Overall approach to climate change
2. Strategic opportunities for renewable energy
3. Renewable energy development – criteria-based policy
4. Decentralised and renewable or low-carbon energy standards/targets
5. Sustainable design and construction

Overall approach to climate change

8.11 The overall strategy intends to deliver sustainable development and address the causes (through mitigation) and impacts (through adaptation) of climate change.

8.12 Based on South East Plan Policy CC2, West Oxfordshire’s Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council’s Climate Change Policy and Action Plan and the responses to consultation on the LDF, there are a number of key considerations that provide a climate change context for our strategic proposals:

Mitigation

- Sustainable settlement pattern - distribution and selection of new development based on an analysis of sustainability factors
- Sustainable transport - emphasis on proposals that reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport
- Energy - incorporating energy efficiency, renewable and low carbon energy
Adaptation

- Design - approaches resilient to climate change eg the use of passive solar design approaches for heating and cooling
- Flooding - minimising the risk of flooding, including incorporating sustainable drainage measures and increasing flood storage to reduce run-off
- Heat waves - provision of open space and water, planting and green roofs, for example, for their cooling effect
- Water management - to address issue of both high and low precipitation

Energy hierarchy

8.13 Looking specifically at the issue of energy, there is a need to establish an order of priority in applying policy and assessing proposals. It would be counter-productive to encourage the increased generation of on-site renewables if energy is being wasted by lack of, often inexpensive, efficiency measures. The CAG Study recommends the use of a three-step hierarchy. The volatility of the energy market reinforces the merits of this approach.

8.14 The three-step hierarchy:
1. Lean - use less energy, by the use of sustainable design and construction measures
2. Clean - supply energy efficiently, giving priority to decentralised energy supply
3. Green - use renewable energy, especially biomass

Preferred Approach: Climate change and sustainable design and construction

All proposals for new development will be expected to incorporate a high standard of sustainable design and construction, optimising energy and resource efficiency and delivering a proportion of renewable or low-carbon energy on site, in accordance with a three-step energy hierarchy ('lean, clean, green').

New development will be designed and located to be resilient to future climate change; proposals will need to demonstrate, in particular, resilience to increasing temperatures and flood risk and the use of water conservation and management measures.

Renewable energy generation

Targets for renewable energy

8.15 The government has announced new and higher targets in the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan and Renewable Energy Strategy 2009 (UKRES 2009) which will mean that delivering significantly higher levels of decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy will become ever more pressing. Additionally, the traditional energy market is volatile and is likely to become increasingly expensive and difficult to access. South East Plan Policy NRM14 includes sub-regional targets for installed renewable electricity generation capacity. The CAG Study concluded that robust district-specific targets would be difficult to justify in the Core Strategy at this stage (see Sustainability Appraisal). The consultants assessed the potential for renewable energy generation in the District and believe that West Oxfordshire can make a contribution to achieving the UKRES 2009 targets (as well as contributing towards the targets and policy framework provided by the South East Plan).

Stand-alone renewable energy development – strategic opportunities

8.16 In assessing the potential for stand-alone renewable energy development, the CAG Study concluded that there are significant constraints on large scale renewables schemes in West Oxfordshire due to the high-valued landscape and historic environment, which are subject to significant protective safeguards. In relation specifically to large scale wind development, while there may be some potential for larger, commercial, wind turbines the development pattern is likely to be one of single turbines and small clusters, scattered rather than being grouped in a particular part of the District. The constraints – especially the AONB, landscape character, airfields and widely distributed settlement patterns - mean that each scheme will need a high level of testing. There are, however, some areas that might be suitable for community wind projects. Here single turbines or small clusters, owned by groups or individuals, may be able to be located relatively close to small towns and villages.

8.17 The level of environmental and technical constraints on wind power in the District, led CAG to conclude that, in order to achieve significant levels of renewable energy generation, the development of biomass as a fuel source will need to play a crucial role. Biomass is a good, viable option for new build development (and existing
buildings). The County has a large number of small woodlands. These, together with larger woodlands and estates in West Oxfordshire, should be capable of producing enough biomass to support a local wood fuel industry. Not only will this provide renewable, low carbon energy, there will also be local environmental and economic benefits. Further work, however, is needed to stimulate demand and develop local, sustainable supply chains.

Renewable energy development – criteria-based policy

8.18 The SE Plan advocated the inclusion of a criteria-based policy for renewable energy schemes and sets out specific issues to be considered (Policies NRM15 & NRM16).

8.19 The Core Strategy needs to provide clear criteria for assessing applications for renewable energy developments, including addressing issues specifically applicable to West Oxfordshire, for example:

- Impacts on landscape and biodiversity designations
- Visual impacts on local landscape
- Impacts on the historic environment
- Impacts on residential amenity
- Highways and access issues

8.20 The CAG Study assesses the applicability of smaller scale renewable technologies for West Oxfordshire. All of the main technologies appear, in principle, to be appropriate for the area, for example, small-scale hydro, ground source heat pumps, biomass boilers and solar panels. Small scale renewable energy development in the Cotswolds AONB is encouraged both through the SE Plan and by the Cotswolds Conservation Board. In terms of wind development, there is, however, discrepancy in their definitions of ‘small scale’. As the Board’s definition is the result of a specific assessment of the Cotswolds AONB, this is the one that will be used in West Oxfordshire: ie acceptable turbines serving individual businesses and communities are likely to be in the 2-50 kW range of capacity with overall heights to turbine tip of approximately 15-20m.

Preferred Approach: Renewable energy development

In principle, renewable and low-carbon energy developments will be supported, especially community based wind schemes and the use of biomass.

By being generally supportive, and encouraging the use of renewable energy in development proposals, the Core Strategy will contribute to the delivery of existing regional renewable electricity targets and to the achievement of electricity and heat targets set out in the new UK Renewable Energy Strategy 2009.

A criteria-based policy will be introduced to assess applications which will include the need to consider landscape, biodiversity and historic environment impacts and scale of proposal.

Given the limited opportunities available in West Oxfordshire, the Core Strategy will not be overtly prescriptive in either location or energy type of renewables, but our evidence shows that biomass, and to a lesser extent wind, will provide the greatest potential for larger scale renewable generation.

The strategic development sites offer opportunities to incorporate large scale or area-wide renewable energy or low carbon technologies; the appropriate technologies for each location will be investigated separately through the Master Planning/SPD process.

Sustainable design and construction

8.21 The SE Plan highlights the important contribution towards renewable energy generation that can be achieved by requiring new development to incorporate decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy sources on-site. Given the very limited opportunities in West Oxfordshire for large stand-alone renewable energy schemes, there is a strong need to maximise the opportunities to achieve embedded renewables, ie renewable energy generation within non-energy developments.

8.22 SE Plan Policy NRM11 suggests that, in advance of local targets being set, new developments of more than 10 dwellings or 1000m2 of non-residential floorspace should secure at least 10% of their energy from decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy sources. The CAG Study looked into the feasibility of introducing this ‘Merton-style’ policy. The consultants’ conclusion was that carbon reduction objectives of such a policy could be achieved more easily and effectively through the adoption of the Code for Sustainable Homes
(a national system for measuring the sustainability performance of new homes) and BREEAM requirements (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method – a similar construction standard for non-domestic buildings). More recently, the SE Partnership Board and the Energy Saving Trust have also advocated this approach.

8.23 Use of decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy is only one aspect of sustainable design and construction. A further advantage of using the Code/BREEAM is that wider sustainability issues can also be addressed, contributing to a range of policy objectives, such as ensuring high standards of water efficiency and the protection and enhancement of ecological features onsite.

8.24 The CAG Study highlights the need for an understanding of local feasibility and cost issues before setting specific district-wide Code/BREEAM levels and also justifying localised area-specific levels where appropriate.

8.25 Our preferred approach for the Core Strategy, following the recommendations in the CAG Study, is to use the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM. As a general principle, all developments will be expected to meet or exceed relevant national/regional minimum standards for sustainable construction. All allocated sites will be expected to exceed the minimum standards.

8.26 The use of the Code/BREEAM provides the opportunity to respond to specific sustainability pressures in the District through the use of different levels of elements within the standards. CAG suggested that for West Oxfordshire, where water scarcity, surface water run-off, ecology and the aim of achieving low carbon and renewable energy are the important issues, particular emphasis in achieving these elements could be incorporated into the Core Strategy policy. Before the exact level and detail is set out, consultation needs to be undertaken with developers and other key stakeholders, particularly given the current economic climate.

Refurbishment

8.27 The Government’s timetable for the implementation of the Code for Sustainable Homes means that from 2016 new homes will be zero carbon. But the refurbishment of existing stock also has a major part to play in meeting long term carbon reduction targets.

Combined Heat and Power (CHP)/District Heating (DH)

8.28 The CAG Study highlights the potential benefits of encouraging greater use of medium and large scale decentralised energy systems to reduce local CO$_2$ emissions. Such systems can either provide heat and power (CHP) or just heat (DH), the infrastructure for which can be installed at the same time as other services (water and drainage systems, etc), meaning that new developments offer an ideal opportunity for such systems. With further stretching electricity and heat targets likely to be introduced, CHP/DH schemes will become increasingly important in delivering renewable and low carbon energy in the District.

8.29 For CHP/DH to be viable there are three ‘rules of thumb’, based on dwelling density, scale of development and proximity of complementary heat load (particularly those with high heat loads such as schools, hospitals or businesses). For West Oxfordshire, CAG recommend that CHP/DH schemes should be appropriate within the strategic development sites. They advise that while specifying Code level 4 or higher for domestic development is likely to ensure that larger developments do incorporate CHP/DH, this is not necessarily the case with high BREEAM standards. In order for non-domestic development proposals to assess the feasibility of CHP/DH this will need to be a specific requirement.

8.30 Given the wide local benefits, CAG highlight the appropriateness of biomass CHP/DH for West Oxfordshire.
**Preferred Approach: Sustainable Design and Construction**

Encourage the use of CHP/DH\(^*\) where feasible:

- all strategic development sites should investigate the feasibility of incorporating CHP or DH, particularly the use of local wood fuel biomass
- all non-domestic developments above 1000m\(^2\) floorspace should include an assessment for CHP and DH, including in particular consideration of the use of local wood fuel biomass systems
- all residential developments in off-gas areas for 50 dwellings or more should include a feasibility assessment for CHP and DH, including wood fuel biomass systems.

Encourage higher standards of sustainability with particular emphasis placed upon water management and biodiversity:

- new dwellings will be expected to achieve at least Code for Sustainable Homes (or equivalent) Level 4 from 2013 and Code Level 6 from 2016
- on larger residential sites, where CHP/DH schemes are feasible, at least Code Level 4 will need to be achieved
- all non-domestic developments will be expected to achieve at least BREEAM ‘very good’ from 2013 and BREEAM ‘excellent’ from 2016
- all non-domestic developments on larger sites (of over 1000 m\(^2\) floorspace) will be expected to meet BREEAM ‘very good’ or equivalent with immediate effect upon adoption of Core Strategy.

Within strategic development sites specific elements/themes of the Code for Sustainable Homes/BREEAM will need to be achieved, relating to water consumption, surface water run-off and ecology. Minimum acceptable levels will be identified.

Proposals for the refurbishment or redevelopment of dwellings will be required to follow the Energy Saving Trust’s Best Practice Standards

Where developers cannot meet the above requirements, they will need to provide robust, open book accountancy evidence to demonstrate why it is not feasible, viable and deliverable.

\(^*\) CHP/DH - Combined Heat and Power and District Heating

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**Quality design**

8.31 A common theme running through the community strategies and the consultation responses so far, is the importance of the quality and characteristics that make West Oxfordshire special and distinctive - its landscapes, settlements and buildings. Good design can protect and enrich this character - it makes places special, attracts people to the area, can improve how places function, making them safer and secure, builds a sense of community, is life-affirming and forms a material legacy for future generations.

8.32 Good quality design has long been advocated by the Council, not only within areas of special recognition (e.g. the Cotswolds AONB and conservation areas) but throughout West Oxfordshire. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD was adopted in 2006, setting out the local design characteristics and promoting sustainable development. Whilst an appreciation of the existing historic context is essential when creating new development sympathetic to its surrounds, modern, innovative designs may positively enhance a traditional setting. Within a largely traditional context, it is essential for contemporary proposals to demonstrate exemplary design quality.

8.33 Achieving sustainable development, including the conservation of energy and resources, the preservation of the area’s tranquility and the reduction of pollution, is an important element of good design. New development should further these aims, considering such factors as building orientation, re-use of materials, insulation, solar shading, water conservation and management and innovative heating and power generation. The use of the Code for Sustainable Homes, the phased tightening of the Building Regulations and the introduction of the Building for Life national standards (devised by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and the Home Builders Federation) will help to achieve this.

8.34 The challenge for West Oxfordshire is to achieve:

- a high quality of design, incorporating sustainable construction techniques, using materials appropriate to the area,
- development of a scale and type that respects its site, improves the quality of the public realm, including reducing crime and fear of crime, and enhances the existing environment

The West Oxfordshire Design Guide elaborates upon the achievement of good design in the local context: [www.westoxon.gov.uk/designguide](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/designguide)
at the same time as meeting the development requirements for the District, set in the South East Plan, in particular, providing new homes, jobs and associated infrastructure.

8.35 Extensive central government advice on design already exists (eg in PPS1 and PPS3) and does not need repeating in the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy needs to draw out the particular elements most relevant to West Oxfordshire’s approach and to emphasise the role of the West Oxfordshire Design Guide and other detailed design guidance, such as the Cotswolds AONB Local Distinctive Guide, Conservation Area Appraisals and Preservation and Enhancement documents.

**Preferred Approach: Quality Design**

All new development will achieve a high quality, inclusive and sustainable design that respects and contributes to the local character, form and distinctiveness of the area and specifically addresses such factors as reducing the likelihood and fear of crime, improving the quality of the public realm, enhancing the local green infrastructure and preserving and enhancing the historic environment.

**Historic environment**

8.36 West Oxfordshire has a very large and particularly rich stock of historic assets as described in the Issues and Challenges section. These assets play a large part in defining the character of the District, the individuality of its settlements and link with the area’s tourism role, economic prosperity and the quality of life of those living here.

8.37 National guidance for protecting the historic environment is currently set out in PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) and PPG16 (Archaeology and Planning), both of which are under review. The Core Strategy will apply this guidance, along with regional planning policy, within the specific local context of West Oxfordshire. Overall, the approach will be to protect and enhance the built and historic heritage of the District. Fundamental to this is an understanding of the historic environment so as to ensure that any changes proposed respect the existing character and identity. The Council publishes Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Preservation and Enhancement documents and, in 2006, published the West Oxfordshire Design Guide to help with such understanding.

8.38 The best way to secure the upkeep of historic buildings and areas is to keep them in active, viable and appropriate use. Sustainable economic growth and conservation should be complementary. A particular challenge for the future will be adaptation to climate change and embracing new technologies without harming the special character of the District.

**Public realm and green infrastructure**

8.39 The condition of the public realm has a significant impact on the street scene and quality of life and is an important component of the visual, spatial and historic qualities that make an area special. Often no single authority or agency has control over – or responsibility for - the management of such areas.

8.40 The West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD sets out advice on improvements to the public realm – regular maintenance, long term management, need to respect and enhance the local distinctiveness and creation of a sense of place – are identified, along with detailed design guidance and examples specific to the district. The introduction of Public Art (usually created by visual artists and craftspeople for a specific site) can further enhance the public realm.

8.41 The public realm consists of both ‘hard’ (eg Burford High Street, Woodstock Market Square) and ‘soft’ landscapes (eg Church Green and Langel Common, Witney). Many of these areas perform a variety of functions. The multi-functionality of open space has recently been given emphasis, both through the SE Plan (Policies CC8, C5 and NRM7) and the publication, in July 2009, of the ‘South East Green Infrastructure Framework - From Policy into Practice’.

8.42 Green space, including areas not within the public realm, provide a number of benefits and help to deliver sustainable development and communities eg by helping to enhance biodiversity, contributing to water management, creating a sense of place, providing opportunities for exercise, active recreation and healthy living, enhancing image with economic and social benefits, and helping to adapt to climate change.

8.43 As a predominantly rural district, West Oxfordshire has a wide variety of green open space, ranging from amenity open space within housing estates, to Common Land, to river corridors, through to the ancient forest of Wychwood – a nature reserve. Most of these areas have been specifically identified and mapped eg on the West Oxfordshire Local
Plan 2011 Proposals Map, by the Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre (TVERC) such as in ‘Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire’, as part of a PPG17 Study for the District and as part of an open space study of the main towns in West Oxfordshire. All of these form part of the evidence base for the LDF.

8.44 Whilst there is a good knowledge of the physical distribution of the area’s existing green infrastructure assets, what is less well known is the condition, pressures/stresses’ and detailed characteristics of each site and how these sites may or may not link together as part of a network. Further work is required to analyse the network, identifying opportunities for improved management, restoration and strengthening and reinforcement through enhanced connectivity. Undertaking such a comprehensive study is unlikely to be feasible in the timescale for the publication of the Core Strategy. Priority will, therefore, be given to focusing work on those areas of greatest potential change, ie Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton (ensuring an accessible, green infrastructure network is treated as integral to the design and planning of new development), and where existing projects are already underway or emerging, eg the Lower Windrush Valley Project and Biodiversity Conservation Target Areas.

Preferred Approach: Green infrastructure
Protect and enhance the existing green infrastructure assets and create new multi-functional areas of green space where improvements to the network can be achieved (through extending areas and/or better management), particularly in areas of new development and/or where stakeholder/partnership projects already exist or are emerging.

Sport and recreation
8.45 Playing fields, country parks, sailing lakes, golf courses, allotments and the like, while primarily designed for formal and/or informal recreation purposes, all contribute to the District’s open space provision and fulfil the multi-functionality of green infrastructure. Recreational open space and built facilities, such as the Carterton Leisure Centre, are also fundamental to the quality of life of West Oxfordshire’s residents, contributing to community-life and bringing health and social benefits.

8.46 The Council’s PPG17 Study, published in October 2006, assessed the need, use, accessibility, number and quality of existing open space, indoor and outdoor sport and community recreational facilities in West Oxfordshire. The study found that, overall, the quantity of provision is considered to be adequate but that the quality is inconsistent across the District. For example, the quality of children’s play areas in Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton was identified as in need of improvement. Some new facilities have been provided since the study.

8.47 An Oxfordshire Play Strategy and Action Plan 2009/11 and Play Policy have recently been approved. These highlight the need for greater emphasis to be given to play, given the demonstrable contribution of play to improving health outcomes, community safety, educational outcomes, social inclusion, enriching cultural life and supporting community cohesion. In terms of public space and the development of the public realm, there is a need to consider the ‘playability’ of such areas, taking account of facilitating shared intergenerational use of space. Creating safe routes to play areas is crucial.

More information available online:
Oxfordshire Play Strategy and Action Plan 2009/11 and Play Policy:
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

8.48 A further study, in part updating the earlier PPG17 Study, is currently being undertaken into built leisure facilities within the District. Overall, the initial indications are that West Oxfordshire residents are significantly more active than those in most other areas of England but that the aim of even higher participation levels (23% of the District’s population is classed as obese), especially amongst young people, combined with further new homes, will result in greater demand and pressure on existing facilities. Making full use of existing facilities, such as schools and village halls, is important. There is a need to work in partnership with schools to make facilities available to the wider community by maximising the range, quality and effectiveness of joint use provision.
Preferred Approach: Sport and recreation

Existing sport and recreation facilities are to be protected. Through working with partners, for example Oxfordshire County Council (Education) and Nexus Community (Leisure Centres), the maximisation of use of existing provision and, wherever possible improved accessibility by walking and cycling, will be encouraged.

New development will need to provide new facilities to meet local needs.

Natural environment

8.52 A key characteristic of West Oxfordshire is the quality and diversity of its natural environment, including its landscape, biodiversity and natural resources. One of the biggest challenges for the Core Strategy is to protect, sustain and enhance the natural environment, while at the same time accommodating necessary development.

Landscape

8.53 West Oxfordshire has a predominantly rural, agricultural landscape with large country estates, including historic parks, and is renowned for its gentle scenic beauty, about a third of which has national recognition as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - part of the Cotswolds AONB.

8.54 Government advice on AONBs is contained in PPS7. This gives great weight to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and landscape, whilst supporting suitably located and designed development necessary to facilitate the economic and social well-being of the area and its communities. We will apply this advice, supported by the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan. The Cotswolds Conservation Board is currently highlighting the likely impacts of climate change and globalisation over the next 20 years on farming and forestry and, in turn, upon the character of the Cotswolds landscape. Change is inevitable but will need to be managed in order to ameliorate potentially adverse impacts.

Many of the impacts and associated recommendations for action, contained in the September 2009 study on Cotswolds farming and forestry, are equally applicable to the whole of West Oxfordshire. For more information visit: www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

8.55 The West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment describes the landscape characteristics of the District, giving guidance on landscape enhancement, planning and development.

More information available online:
West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment:
www.westoxon.gov.uk/landscapeassessment

Preferred Approach: Community facilities

The preferred strategy will protect existing community facilities.

New development will need to contribute towards new facilities where needed and/or make the best use of existing facilities.

New services and facilities to meet local needs will generally be permitted.

(See Infrastructure Preferred Approach).
Figure 2.1: Special Landscape Policy Areas
8.56 This, together with guidance in the West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD, Cotswolds Landscape Assessment and the more detailed appraisals of the landscape setting of the main towns undertaken to inform strategic site allocations, will be used to assess development proposals with potential landscape impacts.

8.57 In addition to more general landscape considerations, there are currently three areas in the District that are given special policy attention: the Lower Windrush Valley Project Area (an area of major landscape change associated with mineral extraction and after-uses, especially for recreation, tourism and nature conservation); the Windrush in Witney Project Area (a fundamental component of the town’s attractive character); and the Wychwood Forest Area (a project that aims to revive the landscape character and mix of habitats found in the area during the Middle Ages). It is intended that these three areas, together with the Cotswolds AONB, will continue to be identified for special landscape protection and enhancement (see Figure 2.1).

**Preferred Approach: Landscape**

The preferred strategy for the landscape of West Oxfordshire is

- to conserve and enhance the diverse landscape, protecting key features and ensuring new development respects and integrates into the character of the area
- to apply national policy guidance in PPS7 to the Cotswolds AONB, as well as guidance from the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan
- to give special attention to the landscape within the Lower Windrush Valley Project, the Windrush in Witney Project Area and the Wychwood Forest Area.

**Biodiversity**

8.58 The landscape and biodiversity of an area are interrelated. In the same way as West Oxfordshire has a rich and diverse landscape, so too does it contain a rich variety of habitats, supporting a wide range of wildlife. (In turn, these are also fundamentally connected to the geological diversity of the area.) There are 29 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in the District, 2 National Nature Reserves, 112 locally designated Local Wildlife Sites, 2 Local Nature Reserves, the internationally important Cassington Meadows Special Area of Conservation and significant numbers of ancient woodlands and legally protected species. About 4% of the District’s countryside falls within sites designated for their biodiversity or geological importance. However, the bulk of our wildlife lives outside nature reserves and specifically protected areas.

8.59 National policy promotes the protection of wildlife and the conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geodiversity. A strategic approach is advocated, giving recognition to the contributions made by sites, areas and features, individually and in combination. Networks of natural habitats provide a particularly valuable resource and need protection and, where possible, reinforcement and integration, not least because this will increase the opportunity for species and habitats to adapt to climate change. Government calls on local authorities and local communities to be proactive in identifying opportunities for habitat enhancement and creation.

8.60 The South East Plan identifies Areas of Strategic Opportunities (in West Oxfordshire the key strategic habitats are woodland and wetlands, especially the Upper Thames Tributaries) where positive action could be taken to expand the biodiversity resource of the region. Conservation bodies in Oxfordshire have taken this concept and devised Biodiversity Conservation Target Areas (see Figure 2.2). These are the most important areas for wildlife conservation in the County, where targeted conservation action, through maintenance, restoration and creation, will have the greatest benefit. In planning terms, they can be considered as areas of ecological constraint and areas of ecological opportunity. West Oxfordshire target areas include the Upper Windrush and Wychwood Forest.

8.61 In addition to the more strategic approach, there are relatively small measures that can be undertaken through the development process that cumulatively will bring benefits for biodiversity, including incorporating bird boxes and bat boxes and providing wildlife friendly landscapes, green walls, balconies and roofs. The Code for Sustainable Homes includes specific credits for addressing ecology in developments. We will encourage this, especially for larger development proposals (see earlier section on Sustainable Design and Construction).
Figure 2.2: Biodiversity Conservation Target Areas
A useful document, recently published by Oxfordshire County Council, BBOWT and TVERC – Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire - will help inform the Council’s approach to biodiversity. This document provides local information on protected and priority habitats and species and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, including Green Infrastructure.

**Preferred Approach: Biodiversity**

- protection of biodiversity in accordance with PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (including the Guide to Good Practice) and SE Plan Policy NRM5: Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity
- enhancement, creation and restoration of biodiversity and geological resources, in general, and within the Conservation Target Areas and areas of green infrastructure, in particular.

**Natural resources**

8.63 The prudent use of natural resources is an important principle of sustainable development. Natural resources include water, air, land, soil and mineral reserves.

8.64 The use of the Code for Sustainable Homes and the BREEAM Standards will ensure more consideration is given to the efficient use and management of natural resources, including waste, water and materials.

8.65 Following the summer floods of 2007 the need for water management is especially relevant for West Oxfordshire, not just associated with the issue of flood risk but equally water scarcity at times of drought. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for West Oxfordshire will be used to inform the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations DPD.

8.66 The SFRA, the SE Plan (Policy NRM4) and the West Oxfordshire Design Guide provide guidance on the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) - drainage systems that mimic natural patterns and can ease surface water run-off and help avoid soil erosion. The use of SuDS or other water retention and flood storage measures, will be required, unless there are proven practical or environmental reasons for not doing so.

**Preferred Approach: Natural resources**

The preferred strategy will require the efficient and prudent use and management of natural resources.

In terms of flood risk, the sequential approach advocated in PPS25 will be followed whereby Flood Risk Zone 2 and 3 (which have higher probability of flooding) will be avoided, unless there are no appropriate alternatives and flood risk can be satisfactorily addressed.

Unless there are proven practical or environmental reasons, SuDS or other water retention and flood storage measures will be required as part of any new development.
9.1 Witney is a vibrant and historic market town and the largest in West Oxfordshire with a population of about 26,000. It is the main service centre serving the employment, shopping, leisure and other needs of much of West Oxfordshire’s residents. The town has the best transport connections in the district context, although traffic congestion is a significant issue. Reflecting this role Witney has been the location for much of the District’s past housing and employment growth and its population has doubled in the last 30 years. The town continues to be the most sustainable location for further development although the following issues and challenges, identified from background evidence and through consultation, must be addressed.

Transport, accessibility and parking

9.2 Traffic congestion and air pollution in the historic central area is a key issue. Achievement of an additional river crossing has been a long term objective to help relieve congestion at Bridge Street. The County Highway Authority has identified the Cogges Link Road as the most effective scheme. Planning permission for this road was granted in 2009 however the scheme is subject to statutory procedures before construction can commence. In addition proposals for a new junction between the A40 and Downs Road are at an advanced stage with developer and public funding committed. Delivery of these highway schemes will continue to be a priority.

9.3 Land is also safeguarded for two other highway schemes - between Mill Street and Hailey Road (West End Link Phase 2) to provide a further river crossing and at the A40 Shores Green junction to the east of Witney to provide west facing slip roads. These schemes, if progressed, will help to relieve congestion in conjunction with the Cogges Link Road but are not in the County highway programme and do not have any funding allocated at present. The West End Link Phase 2 will be expected to be delivered if any further significant development occurs to the north of the town. These safeguarded schemes will need to be progressed with the utmost urgency in the event that the Cogges Link Road is not built.

9.4 Given the highway constraints in the town, there is a particular need to enhance pedestrian, cycle and public transport links and infrastructure. The management of parking is also part of the package to facilitate use of more sustainable modes of transport and to reduce car use for short journeys. The Council’s long standing position has been not to charge for parking to maintain the attractiveness of the town centre in relation to competitors. Car parking is managed through time restrictions - the effectiveness of which will be kept under review, particularly following the opening of Marriotts Walk town centre expansion.

Flooding

9.6 There have been several flood instances in the town and severe flooding occurred in July 2007. This was attributed to several causes but included over land flow and drainage issues as well as flooding from the River Windrush. Flood occurrence and severity is expected to increase with climate change and it is national policy that new development is directed away from natural floodplains and areas of high flood risk (the boundaries of these areas in Witney
have been revised). Any significant new development in the town will also need to ensure that adequate drainage and flood mitigation measures are implemented.

9.7 The Council has been working with the Environment Agency and other partners to identify and address flooding issues\(^1\). The need for significant storage ponds to the north of the town to mitigate flooding in the Hailey Road area has been identified although it is unlikely to gain funding through the Environment Agency.

**Market town character and setting**

9.8 Witney grew up as a valley settlement near crossing points of the River Windrush. The town retains its historic character and much of the central area of the town is within an extensive Conservation Area where there are many listed buildings lining the historic streets. The Conservation Area also includes Newland and the area surrounding Cogges Manor Farm, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. A Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Witney is nearing completion and the Conservation Area boundary is being revised. The related Conservation Area Preservation and Enhancement document will further inform actions to enhance the area.

9.9 Within Witney there are many important open spaces such as Church Green and Woodgreen which contribute to the town’s character. These open spaces will continue to be protected. Church Green, on the edge of the town centre, is surrounded by fine architecture and survives from the layout of the Bishop of Winchester’s planned town of the early 13th century. It is also a sensitive area where traffic and parking impinges significantly on its character. The Council will continue the policy approach to resist further commercial development which would impact upon the character of this area.

9.10 The landscape surrounding the town is a mix of valley floor, valley side and open ridge and is generally sensitive to new development\(^2\). Land to the north and east rises to form a prominent ridge which is a backdrop in many views to and from the town and where there are remnants of the ancient landscape of the Wychwood Forest. There are several villages in relatively close proximity to the edge of Witney including Hailey, Ducklington, and Curbridge whose separate identity should be protected.

9.11 The river Windrush and associated floodplain forms a significant green corridor close to the heart of Witney. It is an important part of the character of the town and historic setting of Cogges as well as being an ecological and recreational resource. A management strategy for the area was agreed by the Council in 2005 - the Windrush in Witney Project.

**Community infrastructure**

9.12 Significant investment on supporting community infrastructure will be needed to satisfactorily accommodate major new development. Existing primary schools are largely at capacity and further secondary school provision will also be needed. How future secondary education will be delivered in Witney is a key challenge. There are well-advanced proposals to redevelop the Abingdon and Witney College although these are now being reassessed following

\(^1\) Witney Flood Report May 2008

\(^2\) Witney Landscape Assessment 2007
withdrawal of Government funding. The need for new additional healthcare facilities is being kept under review by Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust.

9.13 The town’s leisure facilities are very well used and the main leisure centre has recently undergone some refurbishment. There is ongoing need for further investment in Witney’s built sports facilities and this is subject to current review through a West Oxfordshire Facilities Strategy. There is a need for further allotments – with a current waiting list of around 2 years. New residential development will need to make satisfactory provision of play space, playing pitches and facilities for young people, as well as general amenity space and provision for biodiversity.

**Business and employment**

9.14 Witney is the main economic centre in the District and its role as a centre for blanket manufacturing was important in the town’s expansion. Today the economy is diverse with a vibrant town centre, a range of leisure and tourist facilities and accommodation, several small employment sites throughout the town and large employment estates on the southern and western edges. The town retains a strong manufacturing and engineering presence, and the availability of good quality employment sites on the western side of the town has attracted significant investment, including some high technology manufacturers linked to the health care sector.

9.15 The retention of existing employment sites is significant to the supply of premises offering a range of employment locations. Some upgrading of existing employment premises is needed and this can be facilitated by the availability of new land, enabling businesses to move and expand. There is considerable potential for redevelopment of Station Lane employment estates in the medium to longer term. Relieving congestion and investment in the transport infrastructure is also necessary to support further economic growth. The delivery of the A40/Downs Road junction in particular is identified as a priority to support further employment development to the west of Witney.

9.16 Around 10ha of land remains available within the large employment area to the west of the town (including 2.3ha west of Downs Road, 1.4ha east of Downs Road and land with outstanding planning permission east of Downs Road). There are good prospects for these sites to be developed; this land will be retained in the strategy.

9.17 As the location to meet a significant part of the housing requirement, and where demand for employment premises is strongest, Witney requires a significant allocation of land to provide flexibility in the employment land supply and opportunities for inward investment in the longer term up to 2026. Land to the west of Witney has the best potential to accommodate significant employment development, contribute to the Oxfordshire high tech economy and where highway access will be improved through delivery of the proposed A40/Downs Road junction.

3 West Oxfordshire Economy Study 2007: www.westoxon.gov.uk/LDFappraisa

**Town centre and shopping**

9.18 Witney has a vibrant town centre which has remained buoyant during the current economic downturn; it retains much of its historic character as a market town. The recent Marriotts Walk town centre expansion has enhanced the shopping and leisure offer, providing a range of shops, restaurants and a cinema. An extension to the Woolgate Centre is also under construction.

9.19 Food shopping is well catered for with Sainsburys, Waitrose and Somerfield stores and a variety of smaller shops throughout the town. The recent opening of a Lidl supermarket and Marks and Spencer has complemented the food shopping offer.

9.20 In this context existing and planned development will meet Witney’s shopping needs in the short to medium term. Longer term needs will be kept under review. An area of potential for further shopping development and civic facilities has been identified south of Welch Way opposite the Marriotts Walk development and adjacent to the college redevelopment.

4 West Oxfordshire Retail Needs Assessment 2007: www.westoxon.gov.uk/LDFappraisa

9.21 Changes within the town centre following the opening of Marriotts Walk will need to be monitored. Through the review of the Conservation Area and opportunities for enhancement we will seek appropriate investment in the public realm to maintain the centre’s character and vibrancy. The town centre boundary and primary shopping frontage will be revised to include Marriotts Walk.
Meeting housing needs

9.22 Witney is the main area of housing need in the District with about 900 people on the waiting list for affordable housing. Further residential development in the town must provide a wide range of new homes, including affordable housing, as well as meet the needs of older people.

Further expansion

9.23 In order to meet the South East Plan housing figures, the preferred spatial strategy identifies provision for at least 3000 new homes in Witney between 2006 and 2026. About 1,500 homes have already been built or are committed (at 1 October 2009). There is only limited capacity to provide further housing within the existing built up area as there are no large previously developed sites remaining and in need of redevelopment. There is therefore a need for at least one major development site (of about 1000 dwellings in scale) to be identified on the fringe of Witney. A need has also been identified for the provision of additional land for business uses on the edge of the town.

9.24 Several strategic site options have been considered to the north, east, south and west of the town (an assessment of these options is available in the Witney Sustainability Appraisal).

9.25 Land to the west is identified as the most sustainable and deliverable option to meet housing and other needs during the next 10 years and received the most support through public consultation. Development to the west of the town is not dependent on construction of the Cogges Link Road, puts less pressure on the most sensitive areas of the highway network (Bridge Street and the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)), and with the incorporation of significant green infrastructure, will have less overall landscape impact. There will be good highway connections; construction of the A40/Downs Road junction is a prerequisite of further significant development in this area. Existing pedestrian and cycle routes and high frequency bus services serving the town centre and Oxford can be linked to new development in this area. Employment land on the western edge has proven attractiveness to businesses and is a good location to meet the longer term employment needs of the town. A large area of agricultural land is available for the development of a sustainable urban extension accommodating a mix of uses, including a range of housing, education and community facilities, employment and leisure development. A strategic development area is identified to include an urban extension and opportunities for further employment and leisure development within and adjoining the existing employment area.

9.26 Land to the north of Witney has potential to deliver additional housing in the longer term. This large area of farmland could accommodate a mix of uses including community facilities and is relatively accessible to the town centre. However, in the absence of the Cogges Link Road and/or the West End Link river crossing, development on the site would add an unacceptable level of traffic to the east of the town worsening congestion and air quality in the Bridge Street area and the AQMA. Any development in this area must also address the severe flooding problems, although there is potential to deliver a flood attenuation scheme to reduce flood risk in the Hailey Road corridor. The site is an area of high landscape quality and forms part of the physical gap between Witney and Hailey, but is less prominent in wider views compared to land to the east. This more localised landscape impact would need to be addressed as part of any new development through provision of a positive landscape framework to create a new town edge.

9.27 Land to the east and north east of Witney has been promoted for development by the landowner. Although these sites are relatively accessible to the town centre, land to the east is closely associated with implementation of the Cogges Link Road. Construction of this new distributor road would isolate much of the land on the eastern edge. These areas are constrained by their topography and landscape value, forming part of the prominent ridge around the east of the town. Potential for new housing here is very limited without significant adverse visual impacts.

9.28 Land to the south beyond the A40 and between the villages of Ducklington and Curbridge has been promoted as a possible strategic site option. The site surrounds the town’s sewage treatment works and abattoir. Development here would result in unsustainable urban sprawl, dependent on car travel and would create a poor level of residential amenity. It is not considered a sustainable option.
Vision and Preferred Strategy for Witney

Witney will provide an enhanced range of services and facilities with improved transport infrastructure, whilst maintaining its character and vibrancy as a market town. The town will offer a choice of well-designed housing which meets lifetime needs together with a network of green spaces linking with the surrounding countryside. There will be a diverse range of local employment which will reduce the necessity for commuting to nearby cities. The town centre will be vibrant, attractive, convenient and safe for all users with a wide range of retail and leisure activities on offer and will be well served by parking facilities and frequent bus services.

The strategy to deliver the vision for Witney includes:

• delivery of at least 3,000 new homes (of which 1,500 are already committed), including affordable housing and homes for the elderly

• expansion of employment opportunities in the town through the retention and modernisation of existing sites, the retention of remaining available employment land (approx 10ha) and the provision of a minimum of a further 10ha of employment land to the west of Witney to provide sufficient space for business expansion, relocation and inward investment.

• continuing to work with the County Highway Authority to deliver improvements to the highway infrastructure, with priority on delivering the Cogges Link Road and the A40/Downs Road junction

• enhancing pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure and managing car parking to reduce car use for short journeys

• avoiding development which will increase the risk of flooding and work with partners like the Environment Agency to deliver flood mitigation measures

• protection and enhancement of the market town character and setting of town including through the review of the Conservation Area, and continuing the existing policy approach to Church Green and the Windrush in Witney.

• ensuring that new development makes the appropriate and timely provision towards new education, health, green infrastructure and other community facilities.

• investment in the public realm to improve the vibrancy of the town centre as a whole

• review and extension of the town centre boundary and primary shopping frontage to include the Marriotts Walk development

• identification of an area of longer term potential for more shopping development to the south of Welch Way

• identification of a strategic area for development/redevelopment to the west (see below)

• keeping under review the need for a further strategic development site to the north of Witney.

West Witney Strategic Area for Development

This strategic area comprises three sub-areas:

a) land north of Range Road and east of Downs Road – primarily employment uses, including the development of remaining land and redevelopment/refurbishment of older buildings;

b) land west of Downs Road – leisure/recreation and employment development/redevelopment appropriate for the town fringe;

c) undeveloped land south of Range Road and east of Downs Road – to accommodate a comprehensive mixed use community to form a positive addition to Witney, including:

i. about 1,000 homes with a range of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including homes specifically for the elderly;

ii. new employment opportunities, including a minimum of 10 hectares of land primarily for business and general industrial uses;

iii. a primary school and provision for secondary education;

iv. local shopping, community, health and leisure facilities;

v. provision for green space, including allotments, public playing fields and associated changing room facilities;

vi. supporting transport infrastructure, including proposals to mitigate the impact of traffic associated with the development, and incorporating a comprehensive network for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport with links to adjoining areas;

vii. appropriate noise attenuation measures to mitigate traffic noise;

viii. measures to mitigate the impact of the development upon the environment, including the planting of new areas of woodland and the protection and enhancement of features of nature conservation and landscape value.

Proposals within this area will demonstrate use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings. Development will be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities. A new A40 junction at Downs Road (full movement) will be either completed or under construction no later than commencement of the first phase of the comprehensive mixed use development south of Range Road.
10.1 During the last 100 years Carterton has grown from an area of small holdings to the second largest town in West Oxfordshire with a population of about 15,000. Part of its rapid growth has been associated with the nearby airfield, now the country’s main RAF transport base (RAF Brize Norton). Military housing was built in the years after the Second World War, followed by extensive areas of private housing from the 1980’s to recent times. Housing was primarily built within the low density structure of the original settlement until the North East Carterton Development Area (Shilton Park) extended the town in recent years onto adjoining agricultural land.

10.2 The rate of house building in the town, with some major developments allowed on appeal, gave rise to concerns in the late 1980’s that little improvement was being achieved in the town’s infrastructure to meet the needs of new residents. Local employment opportunities (other than associated with the airbase), shopping and community/leisure facilities were poor. Local plan proposals emerged to secure planned expansion of the town together with commensurate infrastructure improvements. This led to the construction of some 1,500 homes at Shilton Park (with the remaining housing allocation and road link to the north of the town still to be built) together with:

- a new distributor road (Monahan Way) bypassing Brize Norton village and linking with the A40
- improved footpath and cycle routes and access to bus services
- new areas for employment development now partially occupied
- a leisure centre and new health centre
- a new primary school and neighbourhood centre
- new playing fields and pavilion
- a 20 hectare country park with adventure play ground.

10.3 RAF Brize Norton is an integral part of the local community. Its future has been secured through agreement to deliver a modern air-to-air-refuelling and strategic air transport service which will include replacement of the existing fleet of older aircraft, alongside transfer of personnel and aircraft from RAF Lyneham (due for closure in 2011/12). A new hanger and associated facilities are under construction south of Carterton Road. About 6,000 - 7,000 military and civilian personnel will be based at RAF Brize Norton with its expansion viewed as positive reinforcement of the local economy. A major benefit from the introduction of significantly quieter aircraft is the expected reduction in the noise footprint for the base. Carterton and surrounding villages are adversely affected by aircraft movement. However the airbase and level of activity will continue to reflect its major contribution to global activities.

**Carterton’s role and identity**

10.4 The image of this modern town has been dominated by the presence of the RAF airbase and associated housing estates. However with the introduction of new residential areas, new employment opportunities and community facilities, together with planned redevelopment of large areas of sub-standard MOD housing, the image of the town is greatly improved. Carterton itself has a strong and often independent community spirit. However the close proximity of Witney, the main service centre of the District, only a few miles to the east, is often perceived as a disadvantage to the promotion of Carterton.

10.5 Despite Carterton having air links to the world, the town is poorly related to the primary road network. Traffic has little alternative but to pass through nearby villages. However the route to the east and A40 has been significantly improved by the recent construction of Monahan Way. Although Carterton lies within the Travel to Work Area of Swindon to the south-west the connection by road is along country lanes, through villages and over narrow bridges across the Thames.

![Image of Kilkenny Lane Country Park - adventure play area](image-url)
Diversifying the local economy

10.6 Local jobs in Carterton have been traditionally linked with RAF Brize Norton or associated with businesses on the Carterton South Industrial Estate established by the District Council in the 1970’s. The 2001 Census revealed a high level of out-commuting with only 25% of residents working within the town although 50% did work within West Oxfordshire. New job opportunities have been created via the West Oxfordshire Business Park and more recently Ventura Park alongside Monahan Way. There is sufficient provision identified for the foreseeable future (West Oxfordshire Economy Study) but additional land may be required in the longer term, taking into account opportunities associated with the airbase and potential to redevelop and/or refurbish parts of the Carterton South Industrial Estate. Some additional low cost, small units for start-up firms would be beneficial.

Education and community infrastructure

10.9 Carterton has some spare capacity in its primary schools but fluctuating needs of the RAF necessitate some flexibility. There is a very active secondary school but it lacks sixth form facilities. Older pupils must travel to Witney or Burford. There is a general need for facilities to interest younger people. Leisure opportunities have received a major boost with the new country park and playground, the indoor swimming pool and gym as well as the recently opened Shilton Park Community Centre. However the second phase of the Leisure Centre to provide additional facilities remains unfunded.

Town centre vitality

10.7 The range and quality of shopping facilities has improved markedly in recent years. However considerable potential remains to further enhance the town centre. The adopted Local Plan identifies an area for redevelopment in the south western quarter of the town centre to accommodate new retail uses and ancillary town centre development, together with the pedestrianisation, where practicable, of two road sections near the central crossroads (Alvescot Road and Black Bourton Road). Closure of Black Bourton Road takes place each Thursday to accommodate the weekly market.

10.8 The District Council has been working with the local partnership, Carterton Fast Forward, and local landowners to deliver a stronger and more attractive shopping destination. With the modern Co-op food store, Somerfields, market stalls and range of small convenience shops, together with planned town centre development, including a new Aldi store, the main qualitative need is to further improve comparison shopping facilities (2007 Retail Assessment).

More information available online:
2007 Retail Assessment:
www.westoxon.gov.uk/LDFappraisal

Further expansion of Carterton

10.11 The recent development of Shilton Park has significantly expanded the built-up area of Carterton with corresponding population increase. About 360 additional homes remain to be built in the town, about 200 of which will be built on the northern edge to complete the local plan proposals for the Shilton Park Development Area. In addition a large area of Carterton will be rebuilt to meet the modern needs of RAF families although the number of additional homes is as yet unknown. Land south of Milestone Road adjoining the airbase may have potential to accommodate around 200 homes if future noise levels reduce to a satisfactory level. New homes will also continue to be built on smaller sites throughout the town although the modern housing estates only offer limited opportunities.

10.12 Despite the new affordable housing at Shilton Park there remain nearly 300 people on the waiting list for affordable accommodation within the town.

10.13 Carterton Town Council is keen to see further expansion of the town’s population and additional improvements in local infrastructure. However further physical expansion of the town boundary could further impact upon nearby villages and their setting, particularly Brize Norton and Shilton.
There are three potential options for further physical expansion of Carterton beyond existing site commitments - to the north beyond Kilkenny Lane Country Park, to the east adjoining Brize Norton village and to the west beyond the Shill Brook valley. The feasibility of these options for a new community is assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal which shows that further development to the north of the town is especially constrained by the rural road network, accessibility to services and proximity to the active limestone quarry. The current development plan strategy as set out in the adopted Local Plan is to:

• maintain a green buffer on the northern edge of which the new country park makes an important contribution

The District Council supports the Town Council in providing for further growth and improved infrastructure although how the longer term strategy for the town will be delivered through site specific proposals remains to be finalised.

Vision and Preferred Strategy for Carterton

Carterton will consolidate and strengthen its role as a relatively modern town meeting the daily needs of its residents and work force, including personnel at the country’s premier military transport airbase, RAF Brize Norton. Much of the older MOD housing will be replaced with new urban development which will complement Carterton’s enhanced role. The range of services and facilities in the town centre will expand, alongside further improvements in the quality of the built environment. Local employment opportunities will continue to increase.

The strategy to deliver the vision for Carterton includes:

• as a priority, redevelopment of existing sub-standard MOD housing and replacement by a high quality urban scheme with new homes which makes a positive contribution to the town
• continuing to liaise with the MOD and RAF to ensure that operations at RAF Brize Norton take into account the needs of local communities and visitors to the area
• a minimum of 1,500 new homes, including those already built since 2006, which will help widen the housing choice available in the area
• a strategic area for development on the northern edge (current local plan allocation) to include housing on land to the east and west of Swinbrook Road (about 200 homes), a new east-west road linking Shilton Road to the distributor road serving Shilton Park and new woodland planting on land to the east of Shilton Road
• an area of land south of Milestone Road identified to help meet future housing needs subject to meeting satisfactory conditions for noise sensitive development
• investigation of the development potential of land to the east and west of Carterton to meet future housing and other needs
• continuing to work with the highway authority, the town council and other partners to improve connections between Carterton and the primary road network
• continuing to improve conditions throughout the town for pedestrians and cyclists, including accessibility to bus services
• expansion of employment opportunities to meet local skills
• a stronger and more attractive town centre with new/refurbished retail opportunities, an enhanced market and improved parking areas
• provision of new education and community/leisure facilities
• continuing to improve the setting of the town in the wider landscape
• protection and enhancement of the biodiversity and leisure value of the Shill Brook Valley
11.1 Chipping Norton is the third largest town in West Oxfordshire with a population of about 6,500. It occupies a prominent hill-top position on the eastern edge of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within which most of the town is situated. Lying astride the 185m contour, Chipping Norton is one of the highest settlements of its size in southern England and offers extensive views to and from the surrounding countryside.

11.2 The Cotswold Gateway town of Chipping Norton (or Chippy as it is locally known) is a historic market town which gained prosperity and importance as a centre of the wool and tweed industries. This prosperity is much in evidence in the town’s listed buildings and Conservation Area which covers most of the central, northern and eastern areas of the town. A separate conservation area extends over open land to the south west of the town providing the setting for the landmark of Bliss Mill, the former tweed mill (Grade 2* listed building) now converted to flats.

11.3 Combined with a rich heritage the town continues to possess a strong and vibrant community supporting its own theatre with a wide programme of productions, a recently built leisure centre with indoor pool (alongside retaining the community run outdoor swimming pool), a golf course and numerous sports clubs and societies.

11.4 Surrounded by an extensive rural hinterland and being relatively remote from larger towns, Chipping Norton acts as a service centre for residents, workers and visitors. The town prides itself upon being a ‘working town’ with over 50% of its residents working within Chipping Norton (2001 Census). There are three well-used older employment estates on the western edge (including on part of the former railway line) and a modern business park to the east. The loss at the beginning of this century of the Parker Knoll furniture factory (over 400 jobs) was a bitter blow. Two hectares of the former factory site off London Road has been reserved for new businesses but implementation of the planning permission is awaited. The remainder of the site has been developed for market and affordable housing.

11.5 The setting and heritage of Chipping Norton limits sustainable development opportunities. The plateau to the east is the only land on the fringes of Chipping Norton which lies outside the AONB but here buildings and structures can be prominent in the wider landscape. This area has been the focus of more recent development, as well as pressures for larger scale urban extensions which have been debated and dismissed during previous local plan processes.
**Chipping Norton’s special character**

11.6 The town has maintained both its historic character and strong sense of place through gradual change to meet present day requirements. However, in recent years, local concern has increased about the impact of development pressures, especially from national developers and from intensification/redevelopment within existing residential areas of the town. A balance needs to be struck between accommodating some change to help maintain the vitality of the town and withstanding larger scale urban pressures. There is general consensus from public consultation that ‘modest growth’ is the most appropriate strategy - this is reflected in the Town Appraisals of 1991 and 2003.

**New affordable housing**

11.7 During the 10 year period 1996-2006 a total of 276 new homes were added to the town. In the three and a half years since then another 230 have been built, mainly on the redeveloped Parker Knoll site (of which 40% are affordable homes). Although there are estates of former Council housing and smaller properties of a lower price (compared with much of West Oxfordshire) there are some 200 people on the waiting list for affordable accommodation. Provision of additional affordable homes has proved difficult - the size of the town precludes the rural exception site approach used in the villages and the 15 dwelling site threshold in the Local Plan makes most new residential sites which come forward ineligible.

**Additional employment**

11.8 Alongside the need to protect and refurbish existing employment sites, there is a need for additional employment land/premises, primarily to accommodate small to medium sized businesses, including start-up opportunities (West Oxfordshire Economy Study). The establishment of an enterprise centre is being promoted which would offer a hub of varying types of workspace which could also facilitate local home working.

**Town centre vitality**

11.10 The town centre contains a variety of shops and services, including independent stores, as well as a weekly market. The town is well provided with pubs and restaurants and could increase its tourism potential. The 2007 Retail Assessment considered that, in qualitative terms, food store provision could be improved with some potential for the town to increase its market share within its local catchment area. However any additional provision that could be supported is likely to be small in scale. There are two medium-sized supermarkets (Co-op and Sainsbury – the latter taking over the previous Somerfield premises in mid-2009).

**Education and community infrastructure**

11.11 A new residential care home and community hospital are under construction on the local plan allocated site to the north of London Road. This will lead to new development opportunities within the town as premises owned by the County Council and healthcare organisations are vacated. A key site lies to the north of the town centre off Spring Street where the old hospital, ambulance station and care home will be redeveloped to meet the current needs of Chipping Norton. There is a particular need to improve library facilities and provide meeting places for both younger and older residents.

11.12 The two existing primary schools (both church schools) are currently either full (Catholic Holy Trinity) or are forecast to have limited capacity in future years (St Mary’s). A site for a new primary school will be reserved within the strategic development area on land south of London Road.
Vision and Preferred Strategy for Chipping Norton

Chipping Norton will strengthen its role as a centre of enterprise in the northern part of the District. It will be an economically and socially strong market town serving the needs of a large rural area. Its distinctive historic character and fine setting will be conserved at the same time as accommodating new development to meet identified needs.

The strategy to deliver the vision for Chipping Norton includes:

• conservation of the town’s landscape setting and heritage assets;
• working with the highway authority, the town council and other partners to reduce the impact of through traffic, especially lorries, upon the town centre and its air quality
• improved conditions throughout the town for pedestrians and cyclists, including accessibility to bus services
• a stronger town centre with new opportunities for retail and community facilities on land between High Street and Albion Street. The town centre boundary will be extended.
• management of public car parking areas to help support the town centre
• provision of new education and community facilities
• a minimum of 800 new homes, including those already built since 2006. New homes will make a significant contribution towards meeting local housing need, including the needs of older people.
• identification of a strategic area for development on the eastern edge covering land to the north and south of London Road:
  • north of London Road - community health care facilities, specialist housing and employment (approx 3 ha of new employment land)
  • the south of London Road - new employment opportunities on the remainder of the Parker Knoll site plus residential development and supporting facilities, including new primary school, open space and structural landscape areas on land to the south subject to achievement of satisfactory vehicular access from London Road. This area will provide about 200 new homes.
Outside the three main service centres the District contains a dispersed network of small market towns and villages. These rural areas are an attractive place to live and visit due to their high environmental quality. About one-third of the rural area is within the Cotswolds AONB, an area recognised nationally for its landscape quality, and there are many listed buildings, conservation areas and historic monuments. The countryside, including several rivers and many woodlands, is also a significant biodiversity resource with much of the rural area within Biodiversity Target Areas. Within this attractive setting are many individual communities and the key challenge for this strategy is to protect and enhance the natural and built environment assets whilst enabling the communities within the rural areas to thrive.

The overall strategy affects the rural areas in many ways as outlined in this document. The preferred spatial strategy identifies that most new development will be directed to those towns and villages with some services and facilities. In the small villages, with limited or no facilities, and the open countryside, development opportunities will be limited, primarily to the reuse of existing buildings, and to meet the needs, as appropriate, of people working in the countryside.

Several communities have identified specific needs through the development of town and parish plans and the Council will continue to work in partnership to support their development and implementation, including through the site allocations and development management process.

New housing provision

The preferred spatial strategy identifies the broad scale of new housing, incorporating homes for the elderly, to be delivered outside the three main service centres. These new dwellings will be built in the towns and villages (listed in Table A) through the site allocations development plan document as well as through the development management process.

The provision of affordable housing is a key priority in the rural areas. Up to 30% of all new affordable housing to be built will be in the smaller towns and villages outside of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. This provision will be delivered through site allocations, on qualifying sites through the development management process (currently as set out in the Local Plan and Affordable Housing SPD) in addition to rural exception sites.

Access to services

Access to services is an increasing challenge in the rural area. Public transport is limited and significant improvements in the frequency and coverage of bus services is unlikely to be financially viable without further significant public investment. The trend towards loss of rural shops and pubs and the centralisation of key services to towns and urban areas continues. There is however an increasing level of community involvement in the delivery of services and innovative ways of service provision are being developed such as the sharing of premises or demand responsive transport. Many services are becoming internet based. The strategy encourages the provision of new services and facilities to meet local needs and will continue to seek to resist the loss of local community facilities and services where they can remain viable.

A sustainable rural economy

West Oxfordshire has a thriving rural economy with many small businesses and almost a quarter of workers working from home. There is a diversity of employment sites and businesses throughout the rural area; their type is not dissimilar to urban areas being facilitated through the growth of telecommunications. The strategy will continue to enable the rural economy to diversify. It enables the provision of new small scale employment opportunities through, encouraging homeworking, the reuse of existing buildings and the provision of new premises in or next to the towns and villages where appropriate (linked in some cases to opportunities for new housing development). Opportunities for tourism will be encouraged where they respect and utilise the intrinsic countryside and heritage assets.

The strategy will continue to support the land based sector, a guardian and manager of the landscape, which itself is facing challenges through changes to farm payments and climate change. There is a continuing need to support the diversification of farm enterprises. We will also continue to work in partnership with the large estates, where a range of assets is managed, to develop sustainable estate management plans and support the diversification of estate economies.
Protecting and enhancing the distinctive environment

12.9 The rural areas contain a wealth of natural and built assets, vital to the character and distinctive nature of the rural communities. Development, through site allocations or the development management process, must respect this context by being appropriate in scale and design to the rural location, and avoiding the unacceptable increase of traffic on country lanes. Opportunities for enhancements to the environment will be realised including through new development, such as new uses to preserve historic buildings, and through working in partnership, such as the Wychwood Forest Project and Lower Windrush Valley Projects. The Biodiversity Target Area approach will also be applied.

12.10 Over the last fifty years West Oxfordshire has been a major producer of sharp sand and gravel, especially in the Lower Windrush Valley. Elsewhere in the District quarrying of rock takes place. Exploitation of these resources has had a major impact upon the quality of life of local communities and the environment in general. Although extensive areas of sand and gravel underlie the Upper Thames Valley and its tributaries, they form part of historically important and biodiversity rich areas. The opening up of any new areas for extraction must form part of a comprehensive and sustainable plan for mineral working and its after-use.

Vision and preferred strategy for the rural areas

The distinctive qualities of the smaller towns and villages will be protected. Services and facilities in these communities will be supported and strengthened through improved partnership working between the organisations involved and through more innovative practices. New affordable housing for local families and development specifically to meet the needs of the elderly will be delivered to help maintain the vibrancy of rural communities.

The strategy to deliver the rural vision includes:

- continued support for the preparation of town and parish plans and working in partnership to identify and address community needs
- directing most new development, including new homes and employment opportunities to the towns and villages where it is supported by and can help to sustain services and facilities.
- enabling innovative ways of providing community facilities and services whilst continuing to resist their loss
- delivering in the rural areas up to 30% of West Oxfordshire's new affordable housing, via market housing sites and also through rural exception sites
- new rural employment opportunities, supporting in particular homeworking, the small business sector, and tourism. Loss of existing employment sites will be resisted.
- supporting the land based sector through farm diversification, and the sustainable diversification of estate economies through estate management plans
- working with the County Minerals Planning Authority to ensure that, where new mineral working takes place, it forms part of a comprehensive approach for the mitigation of impact, landscape enhancement and appropriate after-use.
- ensuring development in the rural areas is well designed and appropriate in scale to the rural context.
- protection and enhancement wherever possible of the distinctive qualities of the natural and built environment.
Delivery of overall strategy for West Oxfordshire

Delivery of the preferred approach will take place in partnership with the many organisations that have an interest in the future of West Oxfordshire. Private development will be a major contributor. Decisions will take into account Core Strategy and relevant local plan policies. Additional allocations for non-strategic development sites, together with site specific policies, will be included in the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term (ABBREVIATION)</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing</td>
<td>Housing, usually managed by registered social landlords, provided to those who cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market. The most common forms include housing at discounted rent, or available to part buy part rent (i.e. shared ownership)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation</td>
<td>An area of land identified for a specific land use in a development plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)</td>
<td>An area with statutory national landscape designation, the primary purpose of which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. These areas represent the nation’s finest landscapes. AONBs are designated by Natural England.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>The diversity of plants and animal species in a given area or during a specific period of time, including their varying behaviour and interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomass</td>
<td>Usually takes the form of wood pellets and chips. In a biomass boiler these would be burned to produce heat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Research Establishment Environment Assessment Method (BREEAM)</td>
<td>A widely used environmental assessment method for buildings. BREEAM assesses buildings against set criteria and provides an overall score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownfield Land (Previously developed land)</td>
<td>Land which is or has been occupied by a permanent building or structures (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings). The definition can include the curtilage of the developed land e.g. a garden. Where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape the site may no longer be considered brownfield.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code For Sustainable Homes</td>
<td>Provides a comprehensive measure of sustainability of a new home by rating and certifying new homes against nine categories of sustainable design: energy/CO2, pollution, water, health and well-being, materials, management, surface water run-off, ecology and waste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Heat and Power (CHP)</td>
<td>The simultaneous generation of usable heat and power in a single process, thereby reducing wasted heat and putting to use heat that would normally be wasted to the atmosphere, rivers or sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Strategy (CS)</td>
<td>A strategy prepared by a Local Strategic Partnership to improve local quality of life and aspirations, under the Local Government Act 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Area</td>
<td>An area of special architectural or historic interest where development is strictly controlled so that its special character and qualities can be preserved or improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Strategy</td>
<td>A Development Plan Document setting out the long-term spatial vision and strategic objectives and policies which will apply to future development of a local authority area, having regard to the Community Strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralised Energy Supply</td>
<td>Energy supply from local renewable and local low-carbon sources (i.e. on-site and near-site but not remote off-site) usually on a relatively small scale. It is a broad term used to denote a diverse range of technologies, including micro-renewables, which can locally serve an individual building, development or wider community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralised and Renewable or Low-Carbon Energy</td>
<td>Decentralised renewable energy or decentralised low-carbon energy or a combination of decentralised renewable energy and decentralised low-carbon energy. Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and from biomass. Low-carbon technologies are those that can help reduce carbon emissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term (ABBREVIATION)</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Derelict Land</strong></td>
<td>Land no longer in active use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development Plan Document (DPD)</strong></td>
<td>Spatial planning documents prepared as part of the Local Development Framework. These are subject to independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate. The timetable for production of these documents is set out in the Local Development Scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Energy Efficiency</strong></td>
<td>Making the best or most efficient use of energy in order to achieve a given output of goods or services, and of comfort or convenience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flood Zone</strong></td>
<td>An area within which the flood risk is in a particular range, as defined in Planning Policy Statement 25 (Development and Flood Risk).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generic Development Control Policies</strong></td>
<td>A suite of criteria based policies which are required to ensure that all development within the area meets the spatial vision and objectives set out in the Core Strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Belt</strong></td>
<td>An area of land protected from development to prevent built up areas from merging, protect the character of towns and countryside and aid urban regeneration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Infrastructure (GI)</strong></td>
<td>Networks of multi-functional open space, including parks, gardens, outdoor sports facilities, amenity greenspace, allotments and river corridors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greenfield site</strong></td>
<td>Land that has not previously been developed or where the remains of any buildings, roads, uses etc have blended into the landscape since last used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing Association (HA)</strong></td>
<td>An independent, non profit organisation registered and regulated by Government bodies who provides and manages housing for rent and sale at discounted rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>Basic services necessary for development to take place, for example, roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education, health and recreation facilities as well as provision for amenity and biodiversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landscape Character</strong></td>
<td>The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Development Document (LDD)</strong></td>
<td>An individual document in the LDF. It can be a Development Plan Document (which forms part of the statutory development plan) and a Supplementary Planning Document (which does not form part of the statutory development plan). LDDs collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local planning authority’s area over a specified plan period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Development Framework (LDF)</strong></td>
<td>This is a non-statutory term used to describe a collection of documents, each with a distinctive role to perform, which includes all the local planning authority’s local development documents. An LDF is comprised of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, the Statement of Community Involvement, the Local Development Scheme and the Annual Monitoring Report. The use of a number of discrete documents rather than a single plan enables them to be updated individually, in response to changes in government guidance or changes in local circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Development Scheme (LDS)</strong></td>
<td>A programme which outlines how and when Development Plan Documents are to be prepared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)</strong></td>
<td>An overall partnership of people that brings together organisations from the public, private, community and voluntary sector within a local authority area, with the objective of improving people’s quality of life through partnership working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Wildlife Site of Nature Conservation Importance (LWS)</strong></td>
<td>Locally important sites of nature conservation adopted by local planning authorities for planning purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

West Oxfordshire Core Strategy Preferred Approach
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term (ABBREVIATION)</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mitigation</td>
<td>Taking action to reduce the impact of human activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Solar Heating</td>
<td>A solar heating system using a simple solar collector, building materials, or an architectural design to capture and store the sun’s heat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photovoltaic Cells</td>
<td>Conversion of solar radiation (the sun’s rays) to electricity by the effect of photons on the electrons in a solar cell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Policy Statement (PPS)</td>
<td>Previously known as PPGs (Planning Policy Guidance), these contain the Government’s planning policies on various topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals Map</td>
<td>Illustrates, on an Ordnance Survey based map, all the policies contained in Development Plan Documents together with any saved policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)</td>
<td>Prepared by the Regional Planning Body. It sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Social Landlord (RSL)</td>
<td>A body that manages affordable homes, both social rented and intermediate. Most housing associations are RSLs. A housing association must be registered with the Housing Corporation to be an RSL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Exceptions Site/Policy</td>
<td>A development plan policy may allow for sites to come forward within rural areas solely for affordable housing to meet local needs on land which would not otherwise be released for general market housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saved Policies</td>
<td>Transitional arrangements allowed for existing adopted plan policies to be saved for three years from September 2004 or from adoption (whichever date was later). After this, Local Authorities were required to save the parts of their Local Plan which are still relevant and do not repeat national or regional guidance. These policies are saved until they can be reasonably replaced within the Local Development Framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Ancient Monument</td>
<td>Nationally important monuments usually archaeological remains, that receive greater protection against inappropriate development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 106 Agreement</td>
<td>A legal agreement under section 106 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. They are legal agreements between a planning authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer, that ensure that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequential Test</td>
<td>A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types of location of land before others. For example, brownfield housing sites before greenfield sites, or town centre retail sites before out-of-centre sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</td>
<td>A site identified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) as an area of special (national) interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial Planning</td>
<td>Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. This will include policies which can impact on land use by influencing the demands on, or needs for, development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting or refusal of planning permission and which may be implemented by other means.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)</td>
<td>A document setting out how the Council intends to involve the general public in drawing up policies in the Local Development Framework and in major planning applications. The SCI is not a Development Plan Document but is subject to a statutory adoption process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term (ABBREVIATION)</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</td>
<td>An assessment of the potential impacts of policies and proposals on the environment, to include proposals for the mitigation of impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)</td>
<td>A study to identify and assess sites with potential for housing development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)</td>
<td>A Local Development Document, which contains further detail to supplement policies or proposals in a Development Plan Document. An SPD may be thematic or site-specific. These are subject to consultation but as they do not create new policy they are not subject to a public examination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</td>
<td>A Sustainability Appraisal is a means of appraising the impacts that today’s policies may have on the longer term. The appraisal involves considering the social, economic and environmental effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process. These appraisals are required for each development plan document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Development</td>
<td>The core principle underpinning planning. It is described as development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS)</td>
<td>An alternative to the traditional way of managing run-off from buildings and hard standings. They are designed to improve the rate and manner of absorption of water by hard and soft surfaces, in order to reduce the total amount, flow and rate of surface water that runs directly to rivers through storm water systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Development Plan</td>
<td>Comprises the RSS and statutory Local Development Documents contained within the Local Development Framework.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A more extensive list of planning terms is available at: [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)
We are happy to provide this information in other formats. Please contact us if this is required.