

**West Oxfordshire District Council
Draft Core Strategy
Summary of Responses from Town and Parish Councils and Meetings**

Responses were received from 24 parish councils/meetings. Summaries are grouped to reflect the five sub-areas used in the draft Core Strategy.

I. Witney Area

Crawley

- We understand the political need to appease the NIMBYs however the plan lacks ambition. Under the current economic circumstances we need to promote as much development in the near future as possible to help promote and sustain a healthy and vibrant local economy;
- The reduced housing numbers and cuts in funding will put undue pressure on the ability to deliver the necessary affordable housing and infrastructure;
- Reduced housing numbers will not deliver the West End Link which would take traffic from the north and east directly to Marriotts Walk. This road should be provided;
- Large strategic sites do little to promote opportunities for local people or business;
- No account has been taken of the impact of the West Witney strategic site upon Crawley. Development over the past 30 years in Witney has done nothing to provide another river crossing leaving Crawley as Witney's Northern Bypass. This will not change if the LDF is not changed. Crawley should be protected as we do not know of any village which has suffered a larger burden;
- The Planning Authority has done a 'magnificent job aesthetically in managing the huge growth in the district over the past 30 years' but nothing has been done to resolve the infrastructure problems of North Witney. This area now looks tired and run-down compared to the other areas of the town which have seen development.

Hailey

- Commented extensively in 2010. Pleased that views have been taken into account - general support for the housing strategy;
- Supports the decision not to include the North Witney site. Does not support building of the West End Link as this may simply re-direct congestion;
- Would like to see commitment to protecting separate identity of villages close to Witney added to Policy CS5;
- Supports the objective of creating more affordable housing and would be pleased to play a role taking appropriate schemes forward in Hailey;
- Welcomes schemes for improved public transport, in particular integrated bus and train schemes and timetabling;
- Supports the work of the Wychwood Project.

Minster Lovell

- Vision and strategy has been written with rose-tinted glasses;
- No mention of making improvements to the A40 – WODC should make strong recommendations to Oxfordshire County Council. Commuting to nearby cities will not be reduced through a 'diverse range of local employment' – yet more people will join the A40 queue and traffic through Minster Lovell will continue to increase (particularly HGVs);

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- Considers there should be no further residential development until improved infrastructure is in place, including dual carriageways from Asthall Barrow roundabout to Wolvercote and 4 way junction at Downs Road/A40;
- Not understood why such a high figure of future housing need (4,300 homes) is justified;
- Strongly objects to the strategy for Witney – the character of the area will be sacrificed with increased urban sprawl. It will further erode the green space between Minster Lovell and Witney. The village already suffers from light pollution from West Witney;
- Does not support further development at Carterton given plans to relocate personnel from RAF Lyneham. Similar concerns as for Witney - the Brize Norton Road will be a 'rat run'. If development confirmed west option is preferred allowing Brize Norton some protection from merging with Carterton;
- Considers development should be distributed and allocated to Woodstock and Chipping Norton – being protected at the expense of the Minster Lovell area. Woodstock has a good highway network;
- Supports affordable housing percentages in Policy CS10;
- Policy CS12 needs to give consideration to whether nearby settlements could actually cope with the increase in demand for its services from new sites for travelling communities;
- More emphasis and investment needed for flood alleviation schemes;
- Not enough emphasis on improving telecommunications – need for fast broadband service.

Witney

- Not mentioned under social housing is the need for more sheltered accommodation to help release larger properties for families.

2. Carterton Area**Alvescot (prepared by Richard Anstis)**

- There is no robust and current evidence to support the District-wide need for 4,300 houses and therefore the need for 1,600 houses around Carterton. Of the 2,800 houses forecast to be needed 2016-26, 15% is derived from Carterton and surrounds, totalling therefore no more than 420 houses needed for Carterton – not even enough for a viable strategic site;
- Suggests the most sustainable model for delivering 420 houses is dispersal through the existing settlements around the Carterton area, not through a strategic site, for which there is no proven need. There is no evidence that this has been tested;
- The North Carterton option has not been subject to public consultation or discernible assessment;
- The recent consultation is criticised for lack of information on the options;
- Further consultations on technical issues eg flooding, highways must be publically available for scrutiny;
- Alvescot Parish Council does not support any expansion of Carterton outside the settlement boundary. Development should only take place within Carterton boundaries with any remaining need satisfied by dispersal. The David Wilson Homes scheme is considered the least damaging (because of less land take) if there is a need to make an allocation;

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- West Carterton (Alvescot Downs) is considered deeply flawed, particularly because of increased traffic through and past local villages as well as through Carterton, extent of land take, lack of deliverability and feasibility of the surface water disposal strategy, including open balancing ponds which are likely to raise MoD concerns. It is argued that the east option better meets the criteria identified in the professional advice to Carterton Town Council.

Bampton

- No large scale developments are appropriate for Bampton – small windfall sites and small rural exception sites only;
- Concerned about the downstream flood risk from further development at Carterton. The bullet point referring to flood risk in Witney (Policy CS5) should be repeated in the Carterton Policy CS7;
- Promotion of public transport in rural areas must include increased availability, including evenings and weekends;
- New infrastructure should precede new developments.

Brize Norton

- Through well attended village meetings a clear mandate has been given to the Parish Council to object most strongly to any development to the east of Carterton;
- The stated requirement for 4,300 homes is questioned as well as the need for the 1,000 strategic development area at Carterton. It is considered that the Town Council aspiration of 20,000 population will be achieved without the strategic development;
- The proposed Carterton East development is contrary to existing policy and Core Strategy statements to ‘protect and enhance the individual form, character and identity of our towns and villages’ and to ‘retain a green buffer between Carterton and Brize Norton’. The proposal conflicts with WODC commitments given through the 2011 Local Plan and the planning of Shilton Park;
- As opportunities for highly paid employment in West Oxfordshire are low, residents are forced to commute elsewhere. Suggests that if strategy for large scale developments is pursued then locations are chosen near to railway links and ‘good’ road links;
- Local infrastructure will be grossly overloaded. Local roads are already suffering considerable degradation. Local doctors and dental surgeries are being overloaded. There is a serious lack of sixth form places. There will be insufficient fire fighting cover and the police are already overstretched. The risk of flooding downstream of any major development is constantly being underestimated;
- Building large estates will not solve the lack of affordable houses in the required locations;
- Considers that an exhaustive study has not been done to establish the extent of Brownfield sites that may become available;
- There is local concern that the proposed Downs Road junction and West Witney development will increase traffic through Brize Norton, Curbridge and Lew. No mention is made of completing the missing section of the A40 Link Road to connect with the Curbridge road – this link will be vital to carry the extra traffic generated.

Broadwell

- Overwhelmingly opposed to proposed expansion of Carterton;

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- A need for more housing at Carterton not clearly proven. Insufficient employment to merit a new influx of people;
- Shill Brook is the natural boundary to the west of Carterton. Carterton West will form a new isolated settlement;
- Flooding risk to villages downstream. Proposed holding ponds will pose a bird strike hazard for aircraft;
- Considers Carterton Town Council's decision to back the West option is irresponsible and prejudicial;
- Considers the consultation process whereby only the east and west options were consulted upon is legally flawed;
- If there is a genuine need for more houses then Carterton East, Carterton north and other infill options should be given serious consideration. Development to the east is a more cohesive option.

Carterton

- Looks forward to WODC support to help with a Neighbourhood Plan for the town;
- Supports the vision for the town. Carterton must grow if it is to strengthen its role as a service centre. Residents in neighbouring villages could also benefit significantly from expanding the range of services on offer;
- Witney is already close to capacity. Of the three service centres, Carterton is the one most able to cope with expansion. Strongly support the inclusion of a new strategic development area on the edge of Carterton for an additional 1,000 homes;
- Expects to see new development of high quality (including new MoD housing), to enhance the role and identity of Carterton and to address the current imbalance in types of housing. New trees should be planted to echo the tree lined roads that currently exist;
- Supports Carterton Policy CS7. The MoD should make a substantial contribution to recreation facilities, particularly the second phase of the leisure centre;
- Agrees that land to the north of the town is the least sustainable option – distance from town centre and a school with vacancies, proximity to Shilton village, the Football Club and quarry;
- Of the two options, east or west, the Town Council is of the view that on the grounds of long term sustainability and least impact on neighbouring parishes, it prefers the new strategic site to the west of the town. Development to the east will impact unreasonably upon Brize Norton, has limited space and offers no flexibility in the long term;
- Football pitches should be located at the northern edge to the west of the Football Club. Land for other pitches should be located alongside existing pitches off Monahan Way;
- Willow Meadows and Shilton should be linked in to improvements to Shill Brook valley;
- Wishes to see some A2/B1 employment included as part of the major new housing development. Additional B2 should be located on land south of Milestone Road blighted by noise;
- Remains committed to the development of a stronger and more attractive town centre – there is an urgent need to provide another major food store;

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- Notes that no primary and secondary frontages are defined in the town centre. Wishes to work with WODC to see if it is possible to develop a more proactive policy for promotion of more A1 retail;
- Remains committed to improved road links into Carterton, particularly to the A40.

Clanfield

- Strongly objects to the West Carterton option – fails to see how it will integrate with Carterton when it is so far from it. It will become a satellite destroying the rural countryside. There are no reliable limits to the spread of this site – it could spread further west over the old aerodrome which is bad planning. The intrinsic historical character of the area outside Carterton is small, ancient villages set amongst good farming land;
- West Carterton contravenes the WODC Local Plan and statements quoted from the Core Strategy;
- Concerned about the impact upon quality of life, increased risk of flooding and growth of traffic – traffic through Clanfield on the A4095 has increased by 57% in 5 years. Growth of Faringdon and RAF Brize Norton needs to be taken into account. The area needs time to adjust and absorb ‘the massive growth of RAF Brize Norton’;
- Carterton’s aim to achieve 20,000 population can be reached without this massive expansion.

Filkins and Broughton Poggs

- Two responses received – the more recent primarily commenting on the technical reports submitted by West Waddy for West Carterton;
- Opposed to the concept of any substantial expansion of Carterton on its western boundary. This would in effect be a new settlement which could then lead to development across the old Broadwell airfield. The Shill Brook is a natural boundary which should not be crossed;
- Major concerns are traffic and flooding from the development;
- Considers West option conflicts with 2005 Local Plan Inspector’s comments and the SHLAA technical assessment;
- There is no evidence that past growth has created a commercially successful town nor that it will happen in the future;
- Any possibility of development West of Carterton should be ruled out until the MoD estate is fully rebuilt and all the effects of planned growth at RAF Brize Norton assimilated. WODC accepts ‘with touching faith’ the RAF’s timescale for replacing noisy planes;
- Before any further consideration is given to the Carterton West option, independent studies should be commissioned of flooding and of the traffic impact of the proposed development and of transfer of RAF Lyneham personnel to RAF Brize Norton;
- Critical comments about the Council’s consultation process, West Waddy’s information and Carterton Town Council’s decisions;
- Supports the revised policy for the village as set out in Policy CS2.

Kencot

- Opposed to Carterton West development, principally because there is no proven need for additional housing on this scale at Carterton and because of traffic and flood risk concerns;
- If additional housing must be built, then modest expansion to the north of Carterton, together with some development to the east, would provide a solution to satisfy many concerns and provide a more unified form for Carterton town.

Langford

- Against the West Carterton expansion in particular – it is furthest from A40 and the airfield and most significantly reduces the ‘green belt’ between Carterton and the surrounding villages. Also likely to be the least suitable from a flood risk and available infrastructure perspective.
- Expansion of RAF Brize Norton and access to A40 makes areas to the North and East preferable;
- Minster Lovell/A40 junction and A40 itself should be improved.

Shilton

- A 15 page response drawing upon published Core Strategy supporting documents eg annual monitoring reports, landscape and traffic studies. Believes that the proposed strategy will not achieve the desire to rejuvenate Carterton but will fatally damage the surrounding villages of Shilton, Brize Norton and Alvescot;
- Housing strategy takes no account of the real ability of the rural/remaining areas of the district to absorb additional development. There is no evidence that windfall development would not continue to form a significant part of housing supply. Considers there are sound reasons why windfall sites should be taken into account which would lead to a reduction in the need for larger specific allocations to be made. There is a significant danger that more than 4,300 homes will be provided over the plan period;
- Carterton is less sustainable than other locations where a lesser provision for new housing proposed. If past development at Carterton did not achieve objectives then concerned that more development will continually be proposed here to seek improvements. Witney could accommodate more housing than is proposed for the town;
- Considers proposed distribution of housing across the District is unbalanced and will not achieve the Core Objectives. Sustainability Appraisal does not provide a sound basis for judgements to be made about the comparative merits of different locational strategies;
- West Carterton is not a ‘logical’ complement to existing development – its integration with the town would be problematic. It would adversely impact upon Shilton village and parish due to its size and spread northwards beyond the ridge seen from Shilton - adverse landscape impact, increased traffic impact upon the village and local roads, flood risk and increased light pollution. Existing development on this western edge of Carterton has been successfully integrated and presents a soft edge with minimal light pollution;
- Does not support Policy CS7 (strategy for Carterton) – the accommodation of a further 1,600 homes is not justified. The simple wish of the Town Council to continue to expand is not a sound planning reason to justify the development – the surrounding villages have an equal right to oppose it;

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- Local Plan Policy NE2 defines strategic gaps/buffer areas around Carterton. There is no explanation as to why these areas of open land to the east and west should no longer be regarded as of 'strategic value' – not altered simply because of the passage of time. The Core Strategy should have mandatory buffer zones/green belt around Carterton;
- Supports the removal of the previous northern option, objects to expansion of the David Wilson Homes development beyond the Shilton Road link and continues to have reservations about expanding recreation facilities. A limit to further development here is essential to the continuing separate identity of Shilton and retention of its rural character – recognised through its Conservation Area and the Shill Brook Conservation Target Area. Essential to control light pollution and retain dark starlit nights – the Shilton Park development has resulted in an intrusive glow over the skyline;
- Road network improvements in the area are required, even without further Carterton expansion - several schemes put forward, including B4020 improvements, a route to the south and to the west and westerly connection with the A40 at Minster Lovell.

3. Chipping Norton Area

Chipping Norton

- The Core Strategy quotes the vision of a 'vibrant, working town' but is proposing actions that seem inconsistent with its achievement. It is absolutely essential that local employment grows alongside building new homes. It is vital that the town centre remains lively and interesting;
- The main economic challenge for the town is to maintain a consistent homes/jobs balance. The strategy gives no indication of where the need for new jobs will be met. Starter units are needed – there are none available. Greystones is not mentioned. At Witney a specific figure of 3,000 new jobs is forecast;
- Last year in response to the Preferred Approach document the Town Council was happy to support a plan for 800 new homes, including a new Strategic Development Area, primarily because of the planning gain for local infrastructure and affordable housing delivery. The reduction to 400 will have serious detrimental consequences;
- Concerned about lack of clarity over primary school situation;
- Agrees with scrapping the single Strategic Area for development. Prefers to see smaller sites distributed around the town. Should not commit to the Tank Farm site when the future of the Police Station and the Telephone Exchange are uncertain;
- Local shopping needs a 'shot in the arm' – it is fragile. This is why plans for the Burgage Plots and the Castle View and Hospital site are so important. The increasing number of people who work out of town seems to have led to shopping out of town as well;
- Tourism in the town should be promoted;
- Traffic and parking remains the biggest problem for residents but no real solutions exist. An environmental weight restriction should be enforced. There should be a major incentive to develop cycling routes, walk to school and public transport. Bus congestion in West Street needs to be addressed. Substantial extra parking capacity is needed - a multi-storey car park is suggested.

Westcote (neighbouring parish meeting)

- The figure of 4,300 homes needs to be based on rigorous evidence. National circumstances have altered over the past two years;
- Better if further development was limited in Witney with Carterton chosen as good development here could improve its appearance and role;
- Further building at Chipping Norton would contravene AONB protection. It would be a shame if excessive development spoilt the character and life of this successful community – it is the only true working town left in this area of the North Cotswolds;
- Already aware of increased light pollution from the town;
- Single most important factor that would help promote the local economy is provision of fast Broadband.

4. Eynsham - Woodstock Area

Bladon

- Clear and well thought out proposals for Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton but less detailed on the impact for smaller villages, particularly with regards to traffic movement and control;
- New housing developments and increased mineral extraction will create a significant increase in traffic. Proposals must include mitigating measures. HGV traffic through Bladon is already of acute concern

Eynsham

- Broadly concurs with the Core Strategy but regrets it no longer contains the reasons why substantial development to the west of Eynsham is unacceptable (Preferred Approach document);
- Supports Policies CS1, CS4 (concentrates the majority of new housing in Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton), CS9, CS10, CS13, CS14, and CS15 – wishes to see the promotion of local jobs for local people to increase the sustainability of the village;
- Expresses some concern about the generality of the planning guidelines for rural service centres in Policy CS2 compared to the existing more specific local plan guidelines. Policy CS2 places considerable emphasis on specific site allocations – a detailed response is provided for the Eynsham sites considered in the SHLAA including a planning brief prepared for the residential use of the Spareacre Lane site.

Woodstock

- Considers development in the south east of Woodstock should be ruled out because of Local Plan Inspector's objections and because of strong and widespread local opposition;
- Development on the football club ground should be ruled out, irrespective of whether an alternative site for the club is found, as it is an essential unspoilt green area in the heart of Woodstock;
- Development on the Young's Garage Site will complete Woodstock's contribution to the District's housing strategy.

5. Burford – Charlbury Area

Burford

- The Core Strategy notes that Burford is an internationally famous Cotswold town but there is little that will sustain this important aspect of Burford life;
- Planned and sympathetic growth is needed to sustain the town. There is no spare land within Burford – a small development is needed within walking distance of the town centre to greatly benefit the local economy;
- 1600 extra houses at Carterton plus further growth at Witney will significantly increase traffic on Burford High Street which is damaging to the visitor economy and buildings;
- The area needs increased public transport to reduce dependence on the car and to reduce the number of the town's car parking spaces used by employees.

Churchill and Sarsden

- Notes the change in housing policy from the Local Plan Category A villages to the Core Strategy policy (CS2). There appears to be no argument in support of this change and no indication of how much housing Churchill is expected to contribute;
- New development must not simply be the outcome of random planning applications. It should be on the basis of a proper plan prepared by the Parish Council with its community under the powers of the Localism Bill.

Fifield

- Congratulations on a succinct, readable and understandable document;
- Parish Meetings should be explicitly mentioned;
- Lack of public transport is a major deprivation problem in rural areas. The Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan is a plan for motorists on car journeys;
- Lack of broadband is also a rural problem;
- Service cuts disproportionately affect rural areas. The loss of rural facilities should be given greater acknowledgement;
- Supports those areas concerned about flood risk;
- Conversion of several smaller homes into one larger property should be discouraged.

Ramsden

- Supportive of WODC's commitment to sustainability – equally important for development and extension of existing dwellings as for new development;
- Strongly supports free parking in Witney – must be ongoing in order to support rural communities and local businesses;
- Ongoing provision of local bus services is of paramount importance in delivering greater sustainability and in supporting rural communities.

Shipton-u-Wychwood

- The draft 'is a comprehensive and thoughtful piece of work and we are in sympathy with its main theme'. However appears to have been prepared in a policy vacuum and takes insufficient account of the fact that the necessary associated improvements in infrastructure (notably roads/A40) depend on decisions by other bodies at a time when funding will be especially restricted. The proposed Northern Gateway conflicts with WODC's plans and aspirations for Witney;

Summary of responses from town and parish councils and meetings

- Concerned that some of the general policy statements (many of which derived from the local plan and are supported) are not borne out in practice by individual decisions such as through the Uplands Planning Committee;
- Not opposed to further development and improvement/restoration of its housing stock, including social housing, to retain a diverse community mix but determined to prevent development which would detract from the village's rural character – gap between Shipton and Milton should be protected and given high priority;
- More emphasis should be given in Policy CS3 to improving biodiversity habitats – some recent actions eg unnecessary felling of roadside trees, considered to be directly contrary to the NERC Act 2006;
- Policy CS12 on travelling communities takes insufficient account of recent government announcements. Existing communities have rights as well as those of travelling communities;
- Policy CS15 should be strengthened to make clear that expansion of existing employment sites will only be allowed where it is appropriate and desirable;
- Renewable and low carbon energy development policy is too general. Planning permission should only be granted for eg fields of solar panels, if the local community receives some tangible and directly derived benefit from the development. Queries WODC's capacity or will to enforce sustainable development under Policies CS20 & 21;
- Insufficient priority has been given to the 'conservation of the area's natural beauty';
- A pro-active role is needed by WODC to promote next generation broadband, especially in the rural communities.