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Front cover: Key diagram (see Figure 4.1)
1.1. This document contains the Council’s strategy to help meet the challenges likely 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 strategy has been developed through two key documents published for consultation - the Core Strategy So Far (February 2009) and the Preferred Approach (February 2010). 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. In parallel with preparation of the Core Strategy, various options have been assessed against sustainability criteria, particularly development options of concentration and dispersal around the District and options for urban extensions to the main towns.

What is the Core Strategy?

1.4. The Core Strategy sets the strategic context for any other development plan documents which in turn must conform with the Core Strategy. 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 their review and any other LDF documents will be reassessed when the Core Strategy is finalised.

1.5. The West Oxfordshire Core Strategy sets out the key elements of the planning framework to guide public and private sector investment; it makes decisions about the amount and broad location of future development. It contains policies to manage change and to ensure that new development delivers high environmental quality. All decisions reflected in the Core Strategy have been informed by our evidence base (such as studies and local surveys and the sustainability appraisal process) alongside the consultation feedback from stakeholders and the local community.
1.6. The Coalition Government is bringing about changes to the development planning system including removal of the regional planning layer of decision-making. Responsibility for setting local housing targets will be devolved to the local planning authority and has informed the content of this document.

1.7. As the Core Strategy should cover at least 15 years from the date of adoption this Plan will cover the years from 1 April 2011 through to 2027/8.

The West Oxfordshire Local Development Framework

Important influences

1.8. The Core Strategy has been informed by on-going discussion 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). This is covered in more detail in the LDF Core Strategy Consultation Statement.

The documents prepared as part of the supporting evidence base, including responses to consultation, are available via the Council's website: [www.westoxon.gov.uk/LDFappraisal](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/LDFappraisal)
1.9. Other key influences have been:

- 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.
- Oxon Minerals and Waste LDF
- Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and planning guidance.
- The South East Regional Plan.
- 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 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 (27,000) and Carterton (16,000). Nearly 60% of the 81 parishes contain less than 500 residents.

2.2 The City of Oxford and its Green Belt lies to the east and is the focus for the District’s main transport connections. Major housing and employment growth is planned for Bicester and Didcot and at Swindon in the M4 corridor to the south. To the west is Cotswold District, primarily a rural area, and similar in character to West Oxfordshire. Shared management arrangements are in place between West Oxfordshire and Cotswold Districts. Figure 2.1 identifies West Oxfordshire in its wider setting.

2.3 The following table summarises the issues and challenges facing West Oxfordshire. The main challenge is to meet the needs of local communities whilst maintaining West Oxfordshire’s high environmental quality. Further information is available in other sections of this document and in supporting evidence, in the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal and in Shaping Futures (the Sustainable Community Strategy).

Figure 2.1 West Oxfordshire in its wider setting
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• High quality environment - landscape, built heritage and biodiversity</td>
<td>• Severe traffic congestion in Witney and on Oxford approach roads, particularly A40 east of Witney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Generally good place to live with a high quality of life</td>
<td>• Air pollution problems within Witney and Chipping Norton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong and articulate community groups</td>
<td>• Dependence upon rural road network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vibrant and expanding Witney town centre</td>
<td>• Limited public transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong and diverse local economy including many small businesses, specialisms in high-tech manufacturing and engineering plus RAF Brize Norton</td>
<td>• Limited opportunities for safe travel by foot or cycle outside main towns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relatively skilled workforce with no major skills gaps</td>
<td>• Towns not directly served by rail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relatively low unemployment</td>
<td>• Disturbance from activity at RAF Brize Norton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No significant areas of dereliction</td>
<td>• Increasing shortages of affordable housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Oxfordshire Cotswolds - important tourism sector with nationally important attractions</td>
<td>• Areas with poor access to services and facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Limited access to high speed broadband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Trend for loss/closure of rural services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Small pockets of rural poverty with lower wages for workers in West Oxon compared to those travelling to work elsewhere</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Generally limited or no spare capacity in existing schools</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• New development to help secure increased affordable housing provision as well as new supporting infrastructure, including green infrastructure</td>
<td>• Meeting the needs of local communities with access to services and facilities whilst maintaining West Oxfordshire's high environmental quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Achievement of a more self-contained local economy</td>
<td>• Provision of new housing to meet needs of smaller households and older population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Investment at RAF Brize Norton</td>
<td>• Delivery of an increased supply of affordable housing in an area of high house prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Capitalising on and contributing to the Oxfordshire high tech economy</td>
<td>• Reduction in our higher than average carbon footprint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improvements in internet and mobile phone technology</td>
<td>• Reducing dependence upon travel by private car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New sustainable construction methods and renewable energy schemes</td>
<td>• Long distance travel to nearby urban centres and London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Investment in town centres</td>
<td>• Pressures from growth centres in proximity to West Oxon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong tourism offer</td>
<td>• Climate change – extreme weather events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Biodiversity Conservation Target Areas</td>
<td>• Flood risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Biomass and woodland management</td>
<td>• Use of Greenfield land to meet development needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sustainable drainage schemes</td>
<td>• Satisfactorily accommodating and benefitting from the expansion of RAF Brize Norton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provision of new green infrastructure through after-use of mineral working</td>
<td>• Enhancement of retail offer in Carterton town centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Modernisation of older employment stock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Support for local agriculture and country estates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mitigating impact of sand and gravel extraction</td>
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</table>
3. Our vision and strategy for the future

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.

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.

Carterton will strengthen its role as a service centre 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. A choice of well-designed housing which meets lifetime needs will be available together with a network of green spaces linking with the surrounding countryside and continuing to provide a green buffer between Carterton and nearby villages. 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 and enhanced 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 older people will be delivered to help maintain the vibrancy of rural communities.
Our Core Objectives

The settlement strategy
- Provide new development, services and facilities of an appropriate scale and type and in locations which will help improve the quality of life of local communities and where the need to travel, particularly by car, can be minimised.
- Locate new residential development where it will best help to meet local housing needs.

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. For rural communities to be sustainable they must have affordable housing, good employment and access to services.

Meeting the specific housing needs of our communities
- Plan for an appropriate mix of new residential accommodation which provides a variety of sizes, types and affordability with special emphasis on the provision of homes for local people in housing need who cannot afford to buy or rent at market prices as well as homes to meet the varying needs of older people.

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.

Sustainable communities with access to services and facilities
- Ensure that land is not released for new development until the appropriate level of supporting infrastructure and facilities is secured.
- Promote opportunities for local travel to be made on foot, by cycle and by public transport.
- Achieve sustainable economic growth which improves the balance between housing and local jobs, provides a diversity of local employment opportunities, and flexibility to adapt to changing economic needs.
- Achieve a prosperous and sustainable tourism economy.

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.

Protecting our environment and reducing the impact from climate change
- Conserve and enhance the high environmental quality of West Oxfordshire with protection and promotion of its diverse landscape, biodiversity and geological conservation interests, and its local cultural, heritage and environmental assets.
- Reduce the causes of and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.
- Improve the sustainable design and construction of new development, including improving energy, water efficiency and water management.
- Ensure that new developments are located and designed to protect and enhance the individual form, character and identity of our towns and villages as well as contributing to the quality of life in West Oxfordshire.

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.
Our Strategy for West Oxfordshire

3.8. The overall strategy has been informed by our vision and core objectives for the future. It builds upon the foundations established in previous local plans. A key influence is the limited capacity of West Oxfordshire to sustainably accommodate further significant growth, at least for the foreseeable future. Our infrastructure is under pressure; there is little spare capacity in our schools, there are traffic congestion hotspots within Witney and around its only four way junction with the A40, and severe traffic congestion is a regular occurrence on the single carriageway A40 between Witney and Oxford.

3.9. Despite this situation there remains a need for additional housing, particularly affordable homes, further employment land to provide flexibility for the local economy and to help reduce out-commuting, and new community infrastructure.

3.10. The three larger towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton with the widest range of services and facilities will continue to accommodate residential and economic developments in accordance with the strategy and policies of this Plan. Elsewhere development will be more limited in scale. A priority is to continue to work with local communities to help address their own needs, especially in the rural areas.

3.11. Policy CS1 sets out the overall spatial strategy which reflects the settlement hierarchy established in earlier local plans and reassessed in more recent settlement sustainability reports.

Policy CS1:
Overall Spatial Strategy

New development that maintains and enhances the high quality of life in West Oxfordshire and addresses the social, economic and environmental challenges facing this area will be supported. It will be designed and located to minimise and adapt to climate change.

New residential development, economic development and supporting services will take place within and on the edge of the main service centres of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. Development elsewhere will be much more limited and will focus on meeting locally identified community and business needs, particularly to reinforce the role of rural service centres. Development in the open countryside, small villages and hamlets will be strictly controlled and limited to that which requires and is appropriate for a rural location and which respects the intrinsic character of the area.

Development which does not accord with the Core Strategy’s vision, objectives and policies will not be supported. 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 of ‘lean, clean, green’*;
- form a logical complement to the existing scale, pattern, character and context of the area;
- protect or enhance the setting of the town or village or rural landscape;
- not adversely affect existing amenity and/or important features and open areas;
- not eliminate existing uses or facilities to the detriment of the local community;
- provide for travel by means in addition to the private car;
- minimise traffic impact upon the local road network;
- not set an undesirable precedent for other sites where in equity development would be difficult to resist and where cumulatively the resultant scale of development would erode the character and environment of the area.

* see later climate change section (Our Environment and Sustainable Development)
### Policy CS2: Settlement Hierarchy

The location, scale and type of new development will be consistent with the following hierarchy of towns and villages:

| **Main service centres:** | The majority of new residential and economic development, together with supporting services, will be accommodated within and on the edge of these three service centres. Strategic development allocations are proposed. | New development will be permitted in the service centres and villages:  
   a) on sites specifically allocated in a development plan document for the proposed use;  
   b) on land within existing built-up areas of towns and villages;  
   c) on land adjoining a town or village where the proposed development would meet specific local needs that cannot be otherwise met. |
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<td>Carterton</td>
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<td>Chipping Norton</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Rural service centres:</strong></th>
<th>Suitable for development of an appropriate scale and type that would help reinforce the existing service centre role. This may include specific site allocations to be identified within or on the edge of some of these service centres.</th>
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<td>Bampton</td>
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<td>Long Hanborough</td>
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<td>Woodstock</td>
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<th><strong>Villages:</strong></th>
<th>Suitable for limited new development which respects the village character and local distinctiveness and would help maintain the vitality of these communities. Some sites within or on the edge of some of these villages may be specifically identified to help meet local needs.</th>
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<td>Alvescot</td>
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<td>Great Rollright</td>
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<td>Bladon</td>
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<td>Brize Norton</td>
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<td>Cassington</td>
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<td>Chadlington</td>
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<td>Churchill</td>
<td>Middle Barton</td>
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<td>Clanfield</td>
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<td>Combe</td>
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<td>Curbridge</td>
<td>North Leigh</td>
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<td>Ducklington</td>
<td>Over Norton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enstone</td>
<td>Shipton-u-Wychwood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Filkins &amp; Broughton Poggs</td>
<td>Standlake</td>
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<td>Finstock</td>
<td>Stanton Harcourt</td>
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<td>Tackley</td>
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<td>Wootton</td>
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| **Open countryside, small villages and hamlets:** | New development will be limited to that which requires and is appropriate for a rural location and which respects the intrinsic character of the area. Appropriate development will include:  
   • re-use of appropriate existing buildings, with preference given to employment, tourism and community uses  
   • new dwellings where there is an essential operational or other specific local need that cannot be met in any other way, including use of existing buildings. Any new homes provided (other than replacement dwellings) will be controlled by an occupancy condition linked to the operational need and/or to the ‘rural exception site’ approach for permanent affordable dwellings  
   • new accommodation proposed in accordance with policies specifically for travelling communities  
   • small-scale development which will remain ancillary to existing dwellings, such as to facilitate home-working  
   • proposals to support the effectiveness of existing businesses  
   • sustainable tourism development  
   • development which will make a positive contribution to farm and country estate diversification. (see Policies CS11-17 in particular). | |
| (all other villages not listed above – see Appendix 4) | | |
3.12. West Oxfordshire’s towns, villages and countryside have a distinctive character that is worthy of special protection. River valleys and wet meadows, historic parkland and ancient forest remnants, and undulating wolds landscape are important features. One third of the District has national protection through its inclusion within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

3.13. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide (adopted 2006) encourages a high standard of design and promotes new development which respects and fits in with local character. Although local oolitic limestone is the dominant building material, modern innovative designs and materials can be appropriate where exemplary design quality is demonstrated.

3.14. Later sections of this Plan specifically address our heritage assets and green infrastructure, along with standards for sustainable construction.

Policy CS3:
Design of new development

High design quality is central to the strategy for West Oxfordshire. New development should respect and contribute to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhance the character and quality of the surroundings and should:

- demonstrate high quality, inclusive and sustainable design with the provision of a safe, pleasant, convenient and interesting environment where the quality of the public realm is enhanced and the likelihood of crime and fear of crime is reduced; and
- not harm the use or enjoyment of land and buildings nearby including living conditions in residential properties; and
- demonstrate resilience to future climate change, particularly increasing temperatures and flood risk, and the use of water conservation and management measures; and
- preserve or enhance areas, buildings and features of historic, architectural and environmental importance, including unlisted vernacular buildings and habitats of biodiversity value; and
- enhance local green infrastructure and its biodiversity, including the provision of attractive, safe and convenient amenity open space commensurate with the scale and type of development, with play space where appropriate.

Designers of new development will be expected to provide supporting evidence for their design approach. They should have regard to more specific design advice contained in supplementary planning guidance covering the District. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide, Landscape Assessments, Conservation Area Appraisals and Cotswolds AONB guidance documents are key tools for interpreting local distinctiveness and informing high design quality.
Amount and distribution of housing

3.15. West Oxfordshire accommodated high levels of growth over the last 30 years, particularly as Witney was earmarked for expansion under earlier Structure Plan policy. However Structure Plans and their replacement Regional Plans will no longer be part of the future development plan system. In addition opportunities for substantial residential development have now been identified in more urban and more sustainable locations in nearby local authority areas.

3.16. The overall strategy seeks to deliver at least 4,300 additional homes. Some 1,200 homes are already committed - Witney (300), Carterton (300), Chipping Norton (150) and elsewhere (450).

3.17. The housing target has emerged from the process of balancing local needs, including natural population change, with the likely supply of deliverable sustainable locations for new homes in the foreseeable future. Only a small allowance has been made within this figure for future windfall sites yet to come forward and be built during the plan period.

3.18. This target is considered to be realistic taking into account current evidence and will be used to inform calculations of land supply. Most of the new homes are likely to be built on Greenfield sites.

3.19. The housing trajectory in Appendix 1 shows the likely delivery of 4,300 homes on an annual basis from 1 April 2011, with a pro-rata allowance to be applied for years after 1 April 2026 until such time as the strategy is reviewed.

Policy CS4:

Amount and distribution of housing

West Oxfordshire will provide 4,300 new homes between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2026, the majority of which will be accommodated in the three main service centres as follows:

**Witney** - 1,500 new homes to include a strategic development area to the west

**Carterton** - 1,600 new homes to include a new strategic development area

**Chipping Norton** - 400 new homes

At least 1,500 new affordable homes will be delivered, of which about 30% will be provided outside the three main service centres.

Development will be monitored to ensure that the overall strategy is being delivered. Sites will be brought forward through the development management process or, where necessary, through a separate development plan document. Sites for new housing in accordance with the overall strategy will be identified through partnership working with local communities and landowners, particularly through the use of parish or neighbourhood plans.

Key evidence

www.westoxon.gov.uk/LDFappraisal

- Settlement Sustainability Report
- Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
- Consultation responses
- West Oxfordshire demographic projections
4.1. The overall strategy has been applied at a more local level through five sub-areas drawn from landscape characteristics and local catchment areas for key services and facilities. These sub-areas are broadly defined on Figure 4.1. For each sub-area the overall strategy is first summarised and then some of the key defining features of the sub-area are identified. More detailed explanation can be found in the sections covering the main service centres of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton.

Witney sub-area

New homes, supporting facilities and additional employment opportunities to be focused on Witney with a mixed use strategic development area on its western edge. Highway schemes to reduce traffic and pollution in the historic core and to improve access to primary transport routes. Protection and enhancement of market town character and setting in the countryside, including the Windrush through Witney. New development in surrounding villages generally limited to meeting local community and business needs. Mitigation of impact from gravel extraction with biodiversity enhancement and countryside leisure opportunities in Lower Windrush Valley.

- Sub-area population of about 34,000 with most (27,000) living in West Oxfordshire's largest town and service centre, Witney - a major county growth area over the last 30 years but now lacking the infrastructure for further substantial growth. Surrounding villages linked with the town's services and facilities.
- Historic Witney associated with the former blanket industry and the Windrush valley - a source of major flooding in 2007 and of traffic congestion at the sole road crossing of the river within the town. Large area of sand and gravel extraction to the south of Witney.
- Major new retail and leisure development recently built within the town centre.
- Main employment estates to the west and to the south of Witney. Road links with Oxford and beyond severely affected by A40 congestion.

Carterton sub-area

New homes, supporting facilities and additional employment opportunities to be focused on Carterton with a strategic development area on its edge. The role of Carterton and RAF Brize Norton to be strengthened, to include replacement military accommodation, new employment opportunities and town centre improvements. New development in villages generally limited to meeting local community and business needs.

- The relatively modern Carterton, the second largest town in West Oxfordshire, has a population of about 16,000. A further 8,000 residents live outside the town in a scattering of villages, the largest being Bampton. This area is relatively remote from the strategic road network - the south-western fringe looks towards the Lechlade/Swindon area.
- Mainly low lying vale landscape rising to limestone uplands in the north. The Upper Thames valley is important for its quiet rural character, low-key leisure opportunities and biodiversity (Conservation Target Area and national and local nature reserves). Villages are particularly vulnerable to flooding. Rural road network with historic narrow bridges across the Thames.
- Activity at RAF Brize Norton impacts upon much of this area.
Chipping Norton sub-area

New homes, supporting facilities and additional employment opportunities to be focused on Chipping Norton. New development in villages generally limited to meeting local community and business needs. Conservation and enhancement of the area’s natural beauty. Sustainable tourism, farm and country estate diversification.

- Population of about 13,000 with half living in the hilltop town of Chipping Norton. The remainder live in a scattering of generally small villages and hamlets. Chipping Norton is the main centre although this is a relatively remote area which also looks to Banbury/Cherwell District for some services and facilities.
- An area of high limestone plateau (ironstone in the north-east), with river valleys designated for their biodiversity value (Conservation Target Areas). Several historic parks and gardens.
- Oxfordshire Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers the western part of the area.

Eynsham - Woodstock sub-area

New homes and jobs to be focused on the three rural service centres and larger villages. Protection of Oxford Green Belt. Improved access to and use of public transport. Promotion of tourism opportunities and rural diversification alongside protection of historic and community assets. Mitigation of impact from gravel extraction with biodiversity enhancement and countryside leisure opportunities in river valleys.

- Population of about 21,000 - about half living in the large villages of Eynsham and Long Hanborough and in the small historic town of Woodstock (rural service centres).
- Edge of Green Belt and closely associated with and affected by Oxford. Severe traffic congestion on all approach roads, especially A40. Historic narrow bridges cross the Thames.
- Important tourism role especially around Woodstock and the World Heritage Site of Blenheim Palace.
- River valleys of Thames, Lower Evenlode and Lower Windrush with Cherwell valley and Oxford canal on eastern edge. Extensive floodplain and sand and gravel excavation with the Standlake area particularly vulnerable to flooding. Biodiversity Conservation Target Areas designated in river valleys and country estates - Cassington Meadows of international importance.
- The Cotswold railway line runs along the Evenlode Valley with rural stations and halts linking the area to Oxford and London. The Oxford - Birmingham line lies on the eastern edge with a station at Tackley.

Burford - Charlbury sub-area

Development very limited in scale and generally steered to larger settlements. New market and affordable homes (including rural exception sites) and new small business opportunities. Conservation and enhancement of the area’s natural beauty. Sustainable tourism, farm and county estate diversification. Improved access to and use of the Cotswold railway line.

- Population of about 13,000 with a network of small to medium - sized villages, none larger than 3,000 residents. Burford and Charlbury designated as rural service centres. The Wychwood villages also act as a local hub. Burford is an internationally famous Cotswold town popular as a visitor destination.
- An area of limestone uplands bounded by the valleys of the Evenlode and Windrush and closely linked with Cotswold District to the west. This is the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Upper Windrush is rich in biodiversity and is designated a Conservation Target Area. Wychwood Forest (part National Nature Reserve) is the basis of an extensive Project Area to revive the landscape character and mix of habitats associated with this former royal hunting forest.
- The Cotswold railway line runs along the Evenlode Valley with rural stations and halts linking the area to Oxford and London.
Figure 4.1 West Oxfordshire Key Diagram and Sub-Areas
MAIN SERVICE CENTRES

Witney

4.2. Witney, a vibrant and historic market town, is the largest service centre, meeting many of the employment, shopping, leisure and other needs of most of West Oxfordshire’s residents. The town has the best road connections and bus services in the District context, although traffic congestion is a significant issue. Reflecting this role Witney has been the location for much of the past housing and employment growth and its population has more than doubled in the last 30 years to its present 27,000. The town continues to be the most sustainable location for further development although significant issues and challenges, identified from background evidence and through consultation, must be addressed.

Transport, accessibility and parking

4.3. Traffic congestion and air pollution in the historic central area is a key issue. The main need is to provide acceptable alternative routes for traffic to move within the town without passing through the central area and Bridge Street in particular (a designated Air Quality Management Area). Oxfordshire County Council has identified the Cogges Link Road as the most effective scheme. Planning permission for this new distributor road crossing the River Windrush on the eastern side of Witney 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. Delivery of these two highway schemes will continue to be a priority.

4.4. 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 further help to improve the local road network but no funding has been allocated. 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.

4.5. Given the highway constraints in the town, there is a particular need to enhance pedestrian, cycle and public transport links and related 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 as a retail and employment hub. Car parking is managed through time restrictions - the effectiveness of which is kept under review.
Flooding

4.6. There have been several flood instances in the Witney area and severe flooding of properties occurred in July 2007. The Council has been working with the Environment Agency and other partners to identify and address flooding issues. Any significant new development in the town will need to ensure that adequate drainage and flood mitigation measures are implemented.

Market town character and setting

4.7. Witney grew up as a valley settlement near crossing points of the River Windrush. The river and associated floodplain forms a significant green corridor that is an important part of the character of the town and historic setting 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. Local Plan policy also applies (WIT3 in particular).

4.8. Much of the central area with its many listed buildings and important open spaces is within a Conservation Area which extends across the Windrush to include Cogges Manor Farm to the east, a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

4.9. The landscape surrounding the town is a mix of valley floor, valley side and open ridge and is generally sensitive to new development. 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. Development intrusive in these views will be resisted. There are several villages in relatively close proximity to the edge of Witney including Hailey, Ducklington, and Curbridge whose separate identity will be protected.

Community infrastructure

4.10. 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. There are well-advanced proposals to redevelop the Abingdon and Witney College and for a new replacement medical centre at the nearby Windrush Health Centre.

4.11. 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. There is a specific 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

4.12. 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 range of shopping, 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. Further development in this area will help contribute to the Oxfordshire high tech economy as well as help to reduce commuting to the Oxford area.

4.13. 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.

4.14. Around 10ha of land remains available on several sites within the large employment area to the west of the town. As there are good prospects for this land to be developed, it will be retained in the strategy. This will be supplemented by an additional 10ha (minimum) of new employment land within the new community to be provided south of Range Road. This provision of employment land could provide in the region of 2,000 extra jobs in the town (around 3,000 when additional retail or other jobs are included).

**Town centre and shopping**

4.15. Witney is the primary shopping destination serving West Oxfordshire and beyond. With the historic Market Place and High Street at its core, the centre retains its market town character and has a large number of independent and national multiple retailers and service uses. Recent developments including the Marriott’s Walk town centre expansion and the extension to the Woolgate Centre have enhanced the shopping and leisure offer of the town. A primary shopping frontage, where the loss of shops will be resisted, is defined linking Marriott’s Walk and Woolgate, ensuring that the benefits of recent shopping development reinforce the role of the existing High Street and the town centre as a whole.

4.16. New town centre development should follow the town centre first approach. It should also seek to strengthen in particular the attractions of Marriott’s Walk, the Woolgate Centre and the High Street connector. Further significant expansion of the town centre is unlikely in the short to medium term. A potential longer term opportunity to accommodate town centre uses that cannot be met by organic growth within the town centre exists to the south of Welch Way opposite the Marriott’s Walk development.

4.17. The policy approach to retaining the character of Church Green will continue through resisting its commercialisation and the spread of the town centre (existing Local Plan Policy WIT1 applies).
Further expansion

4.18. Any further significant growth of Witney must take place on land adjoining the town as there is only limited capacity within the existing built up area\(^5\). 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).

4.19. 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), 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 with access to both east and west 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.
Policy CS5: Strategy for Witney

Proposals for development in Witney should be consistent with the strategy which includes:

- a strategic development area on the western side of town (see Policy CS6)
- delivery of at least 1,500 new homes, including affordable housing and homes for older people
- expansion of employment opportunities in the town through the retention and modernisation of existing sites, development of remaining available employment land and the provision of further employment land on the western edge of Witney to provide sufficient space for business expansion, relocation and inward investment
- continuing to work with Oxfordshire County Council to deliver improvements to the highway infrastructure, with priority on delivering the Cogges Link Road and the A40/Downs Road junction (all traffic movements)
- enhancing pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure together with managing car parking to reduce car use for short journeys
- avoiding development which will increase the risk of flooding and work with partners such as the Environment Agency to deliver flood mitigation measures
- protection and enhancement of the market town character and setting of town including the Windrush valley
- ensuring that new development makes appropriate and timely provision for new education, health, green infrastructure and other community facilities.
- new development and investment in the public realm to improve the vibrancy of the town centre as a whole
- identification of an area on the edge of the existing town centre with longer term potential for town centre uses (to the south of Welch Way).

Progress in the delivery of transport schemes will be monitored, with the need for alternative or additional schemes kept under review alongside the longer term development requirements of the town. If there is any need for expansion of Witney in areas other than to the west (see Policy CS6) this will be unacceptable in the absence of new transport infrastructure to increase the number of river crossings and reduce congestion in the Bridge Street area, satisfactory education infrastructure, appropriate flood alleviation measures and proposals which will meet local needs and successfully integrate new development into the existing town and its countryside setting.
Policy CS6:
West Witney Strategic Development Area

Proposals for development should be consistent with the following:

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. This area will be given priority in promotion of employment opportunities for small-medium sized businesses;

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

c) 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 older people;

ii. new employment opportunities to maximise job creation, including a minimum of 10 hectares of land primarily for business and general industrial uses with emphasis on high technology manufacturing. Priority will be given to the promotion of opportunities for larger employers;

iii. a primary school and provision for secondary education;

iv. local shopping, community 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 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 the 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, with priority given to early provision of a new A40 junction at Downs Road to accommodate all traffic movements.
Figure 4.3 Witney Town Centre

- Revised Town Centre Boundary
- Revised Primary Shopping Frontage
- College Redevelopment
- Potential Future Town Centre Expansion
- Windrush in Witney Policy Area
- Church Green Policy Area (existing Local Plan Policy to protect character)
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
4.20. 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 16,000. 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 this century the North East Carterton Development Area (Shilton Park) extended the town onto adjoining agricultural land.

4.21. 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. A new hanger and new residential accommodation has been built, although redevelopment of large areas of sub-standard MOD housing within Carterton is still to be implemented. About 6,000 – 7,000 military and civilian personnel will be based at RAF Brize Norton over the coming years. Although the expansion is viewed as a positive reinforcement of the local economy, the full implications on the area have yet to be fully identified. 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

4.22. 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, a new road link with the A40, and improved community and leisure facilities, the image of the town is now 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.

4.23. Despite Carterton having air links to the world, the town is relatively remote from the primary road network. Traffic has little alternative but to pass through nearby villages. 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.

Diversifying the local economy

4.24. 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 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.

**Town centre vitality**

4.25. Although a relatively small centre for a town of its size, the range and quality of shopping facilities and the overall town centre environment has improved markedly in recent years. Considerable potential remains to further enhance the town centre. The strategy continues to promote redevelopment in the south western quarter of the town centre to accommodate new retail uses and ancillary town centre development as proposed in the Local Plan. 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.

**Education and community infrastructure**

4.26. Carterton has spare capacity in its schools but fluctuating needs of the RAF necessitate some flexibility, particularly with the transfer of personnel from RAF Lyneham. There is a very active secondary school but it lacks sixth form facilities. Older pupils travel to schools at Witney or Burford. There is a general need for facilities within Carterton 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 new Carterton Community Centre. However the second phase of the Leisure Centre to provide additional facilities remains unfunded.

4.27. Despite its size Carterton lacks its own fire and ambulance facilities - relying on stations in the surrounding towns and villages. The town also lacks its own cemetery. The Town Council has been looking for additional burial space for many years, as well as land to accommodate additional allotments. The town boundaries are tightly drawn.

**Further expansion of Carterton**

4.28. Carterton Town Council is keen to see further expansion of the town’s population and additional improvements in local infrastructure. However any remaining development potential within the existing town boundary is limited. Any further significant expansion of the existing urban area could further impact upon nearby villages and their setting and is strongly resisted by the surrounding communities.
4.29. Three potential options for physical expansion of Carterton beyond existing site commitments have been assessed and consulted upon - to the north in the Kilkenny Lane area, to the east adjoining Brize Norton village and to the west beyond the Shill Brook valley. Development to the north was considered the least sustainable option.

4.30. The District Council supports the Town Council’s overall objective and has included provision for further growth within the overall strategy. The specific location(s) of any development outside the town boundary has yet to be confirmed and remains subject to further consultation with local communities and landowners, taking into account the operational needs of RAF Brize Norton.

Policy CS7: Strategy for Carterton
Proposals for development in Carterton should be consistent with the strategy which includes:

- as a priority, redevelopment of existing sub-standard MOD housing and replacement by high quality residential areas which make a positive contribution to the town
- satisfactorily accommodating the needs of RAF Brize Norton and of local communities and visitors
- delivery of at least 1,600 new homes within and on the fringe of Carterton, including affordable housing and homes for older people
- working 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 match local skills
- a stronger and more attractive town centre with new/refurbished retail opportunities, concentrated in the south western quarter
- provision of new community/leisure facilities
- maintaining a green buffer on the northern edge of Carterton and between Carterton and Brize Norton village
- protection and enhancement of the biodiversity and leisure value of the Shill Brook Valley.
Chipping Norton

4.31. 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.

4.32. 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.

4.33. 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.

4.34. 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 at the time of the 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 have 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.

Further development opportunities

4.35. 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.

4.36. Completion of a new residential care home and community hospital on land to the north of London Road 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 current needs. There is a particular need in the town to improve library facilities and to provide meeting places for both younger and older residents.
4.37. The potential for further limited development on the eastern side of the town was recognised in the Preferred Approach consultation document which proposed a Strategic Development Area to the north and south of London Road, to include the mixed use area allocated in the Local Plan. The District Council has now concluded that a strategic site should not be specifically identified at Chipping Norton, given that the scale of any further development will be limited by the lack of education capacity and acceptable vehicular access south of London Road. 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). This constrains the scale and type of further residential development. A new primary school is unlikely to be feasible.

4.38. 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.

4.39. About 500 new homes have been built during the last 15 years, with about a quarter of these on the redeveloped Parker Knoll site. A level of development not too dissimilar could be accommodated during the next 15 years, taking into account the likely contribution from small sites within the town but also constrained by available capacity in local schools.

4.40. Additional affordable homes are needed but this has proved difficult to deliver; the size of the town precludes the rural exception site approach used in the villages and the national site size threshold used in the Local Plan has made most new residential schemes that come forward ineligible to contribute to affordable housing.

4.41. 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.

Transport

4.42. Chipping Norton sits astride the crossing of the A44 and A361, with the heavily used lorry route to and from the Evesham area passing through the town centre. This has led to an Air Quality Management Area being designated along the town centre roads and extending along Banbury Road. An Action Plan was approved in October 2008 containing a range of measures aimed at improving air quality, primarily through reduction of HGV movements. The presence of heavy through traffic detracts from the quality of the town centre as a destination.
Town centre vitality

4.43. The town centre contains a variety of shops and services, pubs and restaurants as well as a weekly market. These facilities primarily serve the day to day needs of residents of the town and surrounding villages but also attract passing tourist trade. Shops, including independent small retailers, occupy historic buildings in the centre; High Street is designated as a primary shopping frontage to help preserve this rural market town’s character and vibrancy.

4.44. Proposals to improve food shopping in the town will be supported where they further enhance the viability of the town centre as a whole. An opportunity for new town centre development exists between the High Street and Albion Street although proposals must respect the historic burgage plots in this area and maintain good pedestrian access to the High Street. Within this area a scheme to expand the existing Co-op and adjacent car park was granted planning permission in October 2010 (subject to a legal agreement).

Policy CS8: Strategy for Chipping Norton

Proposals for development in Chipping Norton should be consistent with the strategy which includes:

- conservation and enhancement 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
- improving 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
- management of public car parking areas to help support the town centre
- expansion of employment opportunities to match local skills
- provision of new education and community facilities
- about 400 new homes including affordable housing and homes for older people
- priority will be given to reuse/redevelopment of the former health and older people’s accommodation off Spring Street.
- any future development on the fringes of Chipping Norton should
  - meet identified local needs
  - protect and enhance the setting of the town
  - be of a type and scale which does not place unacceptable pressure on local schools
  - not set a precedent for further development which would result in an unacceptable level of change to the character and environment of this historic town.
Type of new homes

5.1. New homes to meet the needs of smaller households, including an increasing number of older residents, are already adding more variety to the housing stock which traditionally has been dominated by larger detached and semi-detached family houses. New homes will include a layout that can easily be adapted to meet the needs of future occupants. The principles of Lifetime Homes are incorporated within the Codes for Sustainable Homes (see Policy CS21).

5.2. A wider choice of accommodation for older people is required with emphasis on provision of Extra Care housing together with improvement or redevelopment of some existing nursing homes. A challenging West Oxfordshire target of 940 Extra Care homes for the years up to 2031 has been set by the Oxfordshire County Council strategy to comprise a mixture of affordable and market sale units. There is a current need for around 500 units.

Affordable housing

5.3. 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. A target of about 1,500 additional affordable homes has been set for the 15 year period up to 2026.

5.4. The overall affordable housing need, high house prices and high land values (particularly in the rural areas), together with future constraints on available public funding, form the basis of the West Oxfordshire strategy where a contribution towards future affordable housing will be sought from all new additions to the stock of market housing. The main supply of new affordable homes is expected to be delivered from undeveloped land, particularly agricultural land and paddocks, where existing use value is low.

5.5. Although our priority 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. An equivalent financial contribution will be acceptable for small housing schemes of one or two dwellings (net).

5.6. 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.

5.7. As a guide, the Council is seeking an overall mix of affordable housing in the following proportions:

- about 45% aimed at single people or couples (without children);
- 40% family homes primarily of two and three bedroom houses with a small number of four bed homes;
- about 15% specialist housing for older people, including extra care accommodation.
5.8. The actual type of units, size and tenure on any individual scheme will be informed by current housing strategy and by the housing need to be met in the particular locality taking into account site constraints. There is a significantly greater need for rented accommodation compared to the various forms of intermediate housing – a ratio of 2:1 in favour of rented homes is generally sought.

5.9. 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 in response to new development plan policy.

5.10. Rural Exception Sites - A policy promoting affordable housing on exception sites has been in operation throughout West Oxfordshire (outside Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton) for over 20 years. The current approach will continue whereby affordable housing is provided to meet specific local needs on land which otherwise would not be released for residential development. Practical guidance has been published on scheme delivery in conjunction with the Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership (Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites).

Policy CS9:
Type of New Homes

A range of housing will provide choice in both type and location, with at least 50% of all new homes to be targeted at older people and newly forming households, primarily through the provision of two and three bedroom accommodation. New homes should be designed so they can be readily adapted to meet changing needs.

Provision will be made for at least 650 homes providing Extra Care. New Extra Care housing will be sought as an integral part of strategic development areas. Elsewhere opportunities for Extra Care will be sought in locations considered appropriate for such housing.

More information available online:
Affordable Housing SPD
www.westoxon.gov.uk/LDP
Policy CS10:  
Affordable Housing

Taking into account the housing needs of the area and subject to the economic viability of the specific development proposals, a contribution to affordable housing provision will be sought where a net gain of one or more dwellings is proposed.

Assessments of economic viability should assume nil housing grant. In circumstances where financial analysis of proposed developments clearly demonstrates that the level of affordable housing being sought would make a scheme unviable, a revised mix and type of housing will be considered. Where external funding is available it may be applied to schemes to increase the number or to change tenure or type of homes to meet priority needs.

On undeveloped sites at least 50% of the proposed dwellings should be affordable homes.

On other types of land:

- in Witney and Carterton at least 35% of proposed dwellings should be affordable homes
- elsewhere at least 40% of proposed dwellings should be affordable homes.

Affordable housing mix and tenure on each site will be responsive to identified local needs and site specific opportunities. Provision of new affordable housing will be expected to be made on site as an integral part of the overall development. However an equivalent financial contribution for the provision of affordable housing on other sites in West Oxfordshire in lieu of on-site provision may be appropriate if it can be demonstrated this would address local housing needs more effectively.

Policy CS11:  
Rural Exception Sites

West Oxfordshire District Council and its partners will work with Parish Councils, Registered Providers of affordable housing and local housing trusts to identify suitable sites for small scale affordable housing schemes to meet specific local housing needs which cannot be met in any other way. These sites will be well-related to the existing built-up areas of towns and villages. Where family homes are proposed priority will be given to locations within a reasonable walking distance of a primary school.

All new homes will remain affordable in perpetuity to people in housing need who have a local connection with the parish or appropriate adjoining parishes.
Accommodation for travelling communities

5.11. There is a national shortage of sites for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople. Satisfactory provision to meet their particular housing requirements will need to be made, otherwise unauthorised sites will occur that can create problems for these families (many of whom are already socially-excluded and have difficulty accessing employment, health care, education and other services), as well as the local settled community.

5.12. Local studies assessing the accommodation needs of travelling communities show that there is a clear need for additional permanent plots and pitches throughout Oxfordshire, including West Oxfordshire. New provision will come forward through Policy CS12 and through specific site identification, if required.

Policy CS12:
Travelling communities

New pitches/plots/sites for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople will be provided in accordance with identified needs by:

- safeguarding existing sites
- extending existing sites where appropriate
- bringing forward new sites if required, either through planning permission or through the development plan process.

New sites should meet the following criteria:

- be in or near existing settlements with access to local services and facilities, especially schools, shops and healthcare;
- be well located to the highway and public transport network, as well as having safe and convenient vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access;
- not to have adverse impact on environmental assets, particularly the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- not be located in areas at flood risk, i.e., in Flood Zones 2 and 3
- be designed in accordance with Government’s Good Practice guidance.

Key evidence:

**West Oxfordshire Local Plan (adopted 2006)**

- Existing site threshold of 2 dwellings (net) other than in four largest settlements where the site threshold is 15 dwellings.

**Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment 2007**

- Oxfordshire is a relatively cohesive housing market area. The vast majority of house moves are made within the County boundary with Oxford acting as an employment and retail focus. Overall numbers of inward migration are relatively low.
- The growth of smaller households and an ageing population are the defining demographic drivers.
- The housing market and local economy is generally robust. Detached properties and home ownership is dominant especially in rural areas where house prices can be very high in some parishes and where alternatives to home ownership are extremely limited.
- Overall demand for market housing is almost in balance with overall supply although there is a shortfall of housing for home ownership. Turnover of existing stock is declining with very low turnover in some rural areas.
- Most housing on the market is unaffordable to households with a single income.
- In West Oxfordshire there are 10 people on the waiting list for every affordable property that becomes available to let. Demand for affordable homes is forecast to grow at a substantial rate.

**West Oxfordshire Housing Needs Study 2008**

- There is a shortfall of smaller one and two bedroom properties in the market sector and both small and family units in the social sector. A level of about 60% of future delivery is suggested for smaller units.
- Total annual affordable housing need was assessed as 567 units in West Oxfordshire, after allowing for current rental re-let and shared ownership re-sale supply.
- A broad balance of 70% for social rent and 30% as intermediate market housing should be considered.
Needs Assessment for Travelling Showpeople (2008)

• This study was undertaken to assess the accommodation needs of travelling showpeople in Oxfordshire and to feed this information into the Partial Review of the South East Plan.

• A need for a significant increase in the number of plots over the next ten years on permanent authorised sites was identified. The detailed calculation of need for West Oxfordshire should be treated with caution but was identified as being in the region of 13 additional plots between 2008 and 2018.

Past and present housing delivery

• During the nine years from 1 April 2001 63% of all new homes built on unallocated sites were on sites of less than 10 dwellings. At 1 April 2010 77% of dwellings with permission (562 homes) were on unallocated sites of less than 10 dwellings.

• New affordable housing built in each of the four years from 1 April 2006 was 113, 186, 94 and 22 respectively. Of this supply 27 new homes were provided on rural exception sites. Additional affordable homes were provided through purchase of existing housing.

• At 1 April 2010 there were outstanding permissions for 100 affordable dwellings in total on six rural exception sites (two of these sites were under construction). In addition there were permissions for some 200 affordable homes on a variety of sites, of which about 85% were on S106 sites.

• There are nearly 100 authorised pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople, of which 19 pitches/plots were permitted in the four years 2006-2010.

A Framework for an Oxfordshire Extra Care Housing Strategy 2008

• Extra Care Housing is a type of housing, care and support that falls somewhere between traditional sheltered housing and residential care.

• A significant amount of existing residential care accommodation should be replaced with Extra Care Housing.

• There is an overall need for 7,832 units in Oxfordshire by 2025 with a continuous development requirement of approx 129 social rented units per annum from 2009 onwards.

Affordable Housing Viability Study 2009

• Three broad sub-markets identified with most of the District in the mid-range but with very high value covering the Burford area and a small area in the north of the District, and lower value covering Carterton and part of Witney.

• It is not the size of the site per se that causes difficulties with viability but the nature of the existing or alternative use.

• There is a strong argument for seeking affordable housing contributions from sites of less than 15 dwellings across the district given the high level of need for affordable housing. Small sites make an important contribution to housing land supply.

• Varying targets from 35% to 50% would be the most practical and realistic approach. A single target is inappropriate.

Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessment (GTAA) for the Thames Valley Region 2006

• GTAA was undertaken, in accordance with the Housing Act 2004, to provide an evidence base for the level of accommodation needs and a robust and transparent basis for translating this need into pitch provision.

• The GTAA fed into a Partial Review of the South East Plan.

• The assessment revealed a need for a significant increase in the number of pitches on permanent authorised sites within the Thames Valley. Although less reliable at a local level, the study put forward an indicative need for 12 additional permanent pitches for West Oxfordshire 2006-2011.
Non-residential buildings

6.1. There are many existing buildings, such as barns, mills, schools and chapels, throughout West Oxfordshire built in the vernacular style (using local building styles and materials). Such buildings are a key part of the character and history of settlements and of the wider landscape and many are listed for their architectural or historic interest. Many are no longer needed for their original purpose due to changing farming techniques, school and church closures. The best way to secure the upkeep of such buildings and their contribution to the character of the area is to keep them in active use. Re-using buildings also reduces the need for new build and creates the opportunity to provide unobtrusive economic activities, community facilities and housing, particularly in the rural areas.

6.2. In accordance with the spatial strategy for new development, conversion to residential use is more appropriate within towns and villages with services and facilities. Outside of the service centres and villages, priority will be given to re-use for employment, tourism or community uses where non-residential uses would be viable and suitable for the location.

6.3. Suitable buildings for re-use will generally be of substantial and permanent construction and the Council may require structural surveys to demonstrate buildings are capable of conversion. Ecological surveys are also likely to be required as many redundant buildings provide habitats for protected species such as Barn Owls or bats.

6.4. It is not the objective to prolong the life of buildings which are harmful to the high visual quality of the area or facilitate the excessive dispersal of development which could have an adverse impact on the character and tranquillity of rural areas. The visual impacts of a proposed building conversion (including light pollution at night), accessibility and traffic impacts, will need to be weighed alongside the contribution of the building to the character and architectural history of the area, or the potential for the building to meet local economic or social needs. In some cases a building may be so isolated and inaccessible, or harmful to the character of the surrounding area, that re-use is not appropriate, particularly in the Cotswolds AONB.

6.5. There are a large number of modern, mainly agricultural, buildings scattered throughout the District. Whilst necessary for modern agriculture, many detract from the visual quality of the countryside and their general re-use, particularly for business and employment use, could lead to a very dispersed pattern of development contrary to the spatial strategy. Opportunities for the re-use of non-vernacular buildings, particularly modern farm buildings, will therefore be limited to more sustainable locations and where they contribute to farm diversification.

6.6. If the principle of conversion is accepted it is important that detailed proposals respect or improve the original character of the building and its setting. Further guidance is available in the West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD.

Existing housing

6.7. Opportunities to provide sustainable new housing can be constrained, especially outside the towns, so it is important to protect the existing housing stock and its character at the same time as accommodating sympathetic change to meet residents’ needs. Loss of dwellings will only be supported where there is an overriding community benefit and/or the existing living accommodation is unsatisfactory.

6.8. Given the attraction of a rural home within commuting distance of London and more restrictive planning policies on new housing in small villages, hamlets and open countryside in particular, existing modest properties are invariably the subject of proposals for substantial extension or rebuild. A large country house is a traditional feature of our countryside however it is essential that the addition of substantial new buildings and associated activity creates a positive addition to the landscape and meets sustainability objectives in order to outweigh the loss of existing smaller homes. Replacement dwellings in small villages, hamlets or open countryside should be on a one for one basis only.

The West Oxfordshire Design Guide elaborates upon the achievement of good design in the local context: www.westoxon.gov.uk/designguide
Policy CS13: Re-use of Existing Buildings

The re-use of existing non-residential buildings will be supported where:

- the form and design of the building(s) are in keeping with the surroundings prior to conversion.
- the building(s) are capable of conversion to the proposed use without excessive alteration or extension and without removing features of architectural or nature conservation interest.
- the building(s) are suitably located for the scale and type of the proposed use, having regard to the level of accessibility to settlements, facilities and services and impact on the character and amenity of the area.

The re-use of non-vernacular buildings, including modern farm buildings, will only be allowed within or adjoining service centres or villages* or where it forms part of a farm diversification scheme unless the proposed re-use will address a specific local need which would not otherwise be met.

The conversion of a building to residential use will only be allowed in a small village* or in the open countryside where the building is not suitable or reasonably capable of re-use for employment, recreational or community uses, tourist accommodation or visitor facilities.

* as defined in Policy CS1

Policy CS14: Existing housing

Changes to existing housing will be managed to help maintain sustainable communities within a high quality environment in accordance with the following principles:

- the loss of existing dwellings to other uses will only be permitted where the dwelling does not provide satisfactory living accommodation or the proposed use will make a positive contribution to local services and facilities;
- alterations, extensions or sub-division of existing dwellings will respect the scale and character of the surrounding area and will not unacceptably affect the environment of people living in or visiting that area. Sub-division of existing dwellings in the open countryside and small villages will be limited to large properties where continued existence in residential use cannot be secured in any other way;
- new self-contained units of accommodation will be ancillary to the main dwelling where they are proposed to remain within the curtilage of an existing dwelling.

A new dwelling to replace an existing permanent dwelling which is not of historical or architectural value will be permitted provided the character and appearance of the surrounding area is not eroded. In open countryside any replacement dwelling should make a positive contribution to the area, particularly where more substantial new building(s) are proposed.
7.1. 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 will support vibrant communities in our towns and villages, a living and working countryside and is a means to help achieve our environmental objectives. The key challenge for West Oxfordshire is to deliver economic growth which is sustainable – economic growth which does not adversely impact upon the quality of our environment.

7.2. The Economy Study, Retail Needs Assessment and Town Centre Surveys identify the characteristics of our local economy and future challenges including:

• A diverse range of mainly small service based businesses, a significant manufacturing sector and particular specialisms in biomedical equipment manufacture and motorsport
• A growing tourism sector with a local strategy to increase the spend of visitors in addition to the volume
• A significant agricultural and land based sector facing challenges through changing markets, regulations, funding regimes and climate change
• Generally vibrant town centres where recent and emerging investment will meet short to medium term shopping needs, although there is a continuing risk of village shops and services closing.
• A range of business premises and locations, although many are ageing and there is a need for new land to provide flexibility for business expansion or inward investment
• An ageing population, low forecast increase in the future labour supply and low unemployment
• A high level of out-commuting to higher wage jobs, in strong competing centres nearby, leading to traffic congestion on major routes
• A likely deficiency of next generation broadband in the rural areas in the future
• Potential for spin off from the Oxford high tech economy and investment at RAF Brize Norton

Our economic objectives include:

• To achieve sustainable economic growth which improves the balance between housing and local jobs, provides a diversity of local employment opportunities, and flexibility to adapt to changing economic needs.
• To achieve a prosperous and sustainable tourism economy.
• To promote safe, vibrant and prosperous town centres and resist proposals that would damage their vitality and viability or adversely affect measures to improve the centres.
7.3. There are many parts of the Core Strategy which will contribute to achieving these objectives. Overall, the strategy seeks to support businesses in West Oxfordshire by retaining land for employment in sustainable locations and enabling businesses to grow and expand through a positive and flexible policy framework.

7.4. Although population projections suggest the number of workers in West Oxfordshire will increase little, if at all, over the plan period, there is potential to reduce commuting to other areas. As many people commute to higher skilled and higher paid jobs elsewhere, seeking higher skilled and higher value jobs close to where people live will help to reduce commuting. In addition, evidence\(^1\) indicates that additional employment land will be needed to provide flexibility for business expansion, relocation and inward investment opportunities.

7.5. The strategy makes provision for new land for business, focussed on the main towns where it can be best served by transport and communications infrastructure, and support a range of businesses including larger scale businesses and high technology sectors:

- In Witney available employment sites to the west of the town will be retained (approx 10ha) and complemented by a strategic allocation of new employment land to the west of the town (10ha minimum). With improved access to the A40 planned, this area has potential to attract and develop a cluster of high technology manufacturers in the healthcare sector.
- In Carterton around 7.5ha of employment land remains available and will be retained at Ventura Park and at West Oxon Business Park. With ongoing investment at RAF Brize Norton this will help to diversify and expand the employment base of the town.
- In Chipping Norton around 5ha of land available will be retained to provide for a range of employment with potential to more than make up for past job losses.

7.6. We also want vibrant town and village centres and to improve the strength and diversity of the rural economy. The overall Spatial Strategy provides opportunities for new business development, directing them to the services centres and villages, where there are also opportunities for new housing. The following policies provide further detail on our approach to shopping and other town centre development, the efficient use of existing employment sites, farm and country estate diversification and sustainable tourism development.

7.7. In addition, the Council will continue to work in partnership to seek to ensure businesses have the support, skills and infrastructure they need to grow sustainably.
Efficient use of existing employment sites

7.8. One of the key strengths of the West Oxfordshire economy is its diversity, both in terms of the types of businesses but also the locations and types of employment sites and business premises available in the main towns and rural areas. Diversity provides resilience during economic down turns and a range of employment opportunities at varied skill levels.

7.9. Employment sites are those with office-based, industrial and warehouse/storage uses (known as the B-use classes) but may also contain other employment generating uses. Employment uses do not include housing and care homes. Uses such as cafés, crèches, or trade counters, may improve the functionality and attractiveness of an employment site and help to facilitate the refurbishment and regeneration of premises. This will be supported although retail and leisure proposals on employment sites, unless ancillary, will need to consider the town centre first approach (See Policy CS18).

7.10. High residential land values mean that conversion or redevelopment of existing employment sites to housing is an economically attractive option. The loss of such sites would undermine the sustainability of rural communities and the economic diversity of West Oxfordshire. The Council will seek the retention of all employment sites where there is an ongoing prospect of continuing employment use.

7.11. In some cases however continuing employment use may not be economically viable or suitable. In such circumstances the Council will require robust evidence that continuing employment use has been fully tested before non-employment generating uses are permitted. In considering the loss of existing employment sites the Council will take account of prevailing economic conditions. During economic downturns the retention of employment sites to aid long term recovery will be important despite evidence of a lack of short term demand.

7.12. In limited circumstances non-employment generating uses may be allowed where they offer community benefits which cannot otherwise be achieved and outweigh the loss of economic activity.

7.13. In a changing economic climate businesses may need to expand or redevelop existing employment sites to meet their changing needs. This enables efficient and continued use to be made of existing employment sites. The scale of new business development permitted through business expansion or through the redevelopment will reflect the character of the area and access opportunities. In some circumstances where businesses have outgrown their site, the impacts on the environment and local community may not be acceptable and relocation to a larger, more accessible site will be the most appropriate solution.
Policy CS15: Existing employment sites

Employment sites are those which include employment generating uses, primarily office-based, industrial or storage and distribution activities. Community, leisure, or retail uses (such as cafes, crèches or trade counters) will be allowed on employment sites where the use is complementary and compatible to the functioning of the employment site and the local community, and conforms with town centre policy (see Policy CS18).

Proposals to improve the effectiveness of business operations on existing employment sites will be supported where commensurate with the scale and character of the area. This may include the redevelopment of sites, replacement buildings or the expansion of existing businesses.

Non-employment generating uses, including all housing related development, will only be allowed on established employment sites or on sites allocated in a development plan for employment development where:

• it can be demonstrated that the site or premises are not reasonably capable of being used or redeveloped for employment purposes; or
• the site or premises are considered unsuitable on amenity, environmental or highway safety grounds for employment uses; or
• substantial community benefits would be achieved by allowing alternative forms of development.

Farm diversification

7.14. Although employment in agriculture has declined, farming remains a major land user in West Oxfordshire and plays an essential role in shaping and maintaining the character of the countryside. The need to protect home food production is important to reduce food miles and profitable farming is also the most cost effective means of delivering environmental and landscape management benefits.

7.15. However, the diversification into non-agricultural activities can be vital to continuing viability of many farm businesses. The long term prospects of agriculture are reportedly good, although there is continual need to adapt to changing subsidy regimes, emerging markets, evolving environmental, hygiene and animal welfare standards and climate change.

7.16. The Council is generally supportive of well-conceived farm diversification schemes which secure long term benefits for farming and the local economy. Farm diversification schemes should be complementary to the agricultural operations, compatible and consistent in scale with a rural location and not result in the loss of amenity to local people or spoil the enjoyment of other users of the countryside. Farm diversification is not an opportunity for asset stripping to raise short term revenues. A farm business plan and management plan should accompany applications for diversification proposals, providing evidence to demonstrate compatibility and integration with the farm business.
7.17. Farm diversification should not result in the excessive expansion or encroachment of buildings in the countryside. Existing buildings should be reused where feasible. Where this is not possible new buildings should be within a group of existing farm buildings and designed and located so they can be integrated within the landscape.

7.18. Farm diversification may include setting up farm shops to sell homegrown and local produce. The acceptability of proposals for farm shops will need to be weighed up against any impact on existing village or town centre shops serving the local community. Conditions will be applied limiting the type of goods sold and proportion of externally sourced goods.

7.19. Country Estates manage a variety of natural, historic and cultural assets of importance locally, nationally or internationally, often in addition to a farming enterprise and contributing to the wider economy through providing business premises and tourism opportunities. These estates continue to seek to diversify their incomes in a similar way to farm diversification. The diversification of estate economies will be supported where it provides a sustainable approach to balancing economic activity with the conservation and enhancement of natural and built assets. This should be demonstrated through an estate management plan.

Policy CS16: Farm and Country Estate Diversification

Development proposals which make a positive contribution to farm or country estate diversification will be supported where they will be:

• operated as part of and add value to the core farm/estate business
• compatible and consistent in scale with the farm/estate operation and a countryside location

Where a diversification scheme is proposed, a farm or country estate business plan and management plan should show how the scheme would contribute to the ongoing viability of the farm business or country estate and the management of the built and natural environment. Priority will be given to the re-use (or replacement) of existing buildings to accommodate diversification proposals.

A sustainable tourism economy

7.20. Tourism is an important and growing economic sector in West Oxfordshire estimated to be worth over £200 million to the local economy each year. This reflects the area’s attractive countryside, the River Thames and its tributaries, historic Cotswold market towns and villages and a range of visitor attractions. Most of these attractions have a cultural or historic affinity with the area and its rural character.

7.21. Through the Oxfordshire Cotswolds brand, the local tourism strategy seeks to capitalise on West Oxfordshire’s inherent assets and promotes tourism development which complements and enhances them. The Council will continue the long held
approach seeking the optimum use of existing tourist facilities and encouraging generally small scale new tourist facilities and attractions which can be more easily assimilated into the landscape and local communities. Larger new attractions, which generate significant visitor numbers, are more appropriate in the main towns, where there are public transport opportunities, and traffic impact on rural roads can be minimised. Green Travel Plans and Visitor Management Plans may also be necessary.

7.22. For some facilities, such as hotels and restaurants, a town centre location will be most appropriate although other locations may be acceptable taking into account both the town centre first approach and specific locational and functional requirements.

7.23. Visitor-related facilities may offer benefits to existing local communities, such as supporting local food producers, shops and pubs or new recreational opportunities. Locating new visitor related development within or close to existing settlements will enable the potential wider community benefits to be realised whilst minimising the spread of development into the open countryside. In some cases tourism development in the open countryside may be justified if associated with a particular countryside attraction or a farm diversification scheme. Existing buildings should be utilised wherever possible although replacement buildings should be considered where this would result in a more sustainable development.

7.24. Where tourist accommodation is proposed in locations where new dwellings would not normally be permitted the Council will impose planning conditions or require legal agreements restricting buildings to holiday accommodation use.

7.25. The location, scale and design of any new development must be appropriate to the area and its environmental impact will be carefully assessed and weighed against any economic and community benefits. Tourism investment and visitor spending can support the management and conservation of historic and natural sites, local traditions, events and the distinctive features of the Cotswolds AONB and other designated areas. Tourism enterprises and visitors are encouraged to support practical conservation initiatives. The afteruse of former mineral workings in the Lower Windrush Valley may offer particular opportunities for leisure and tourism development. The Lower Windrush Valley Project was set up to co-ordinate such opportunities alongside achieving habitat creation and conservation.
Policy CS17: Sustainable Tourism

Tourism and leisure development which utilises and enriches the natural and built environment and existing attractions of West Oxfordshire to the benefit of visitors and local communities will be supported.

New tourist and visitor facilities will be located within or close to existing settlements and reuse existing buildings wherever possible. In the open countryside new tourism and visitor facilities may be justified where there is a functional linkage with a particular countryside attraction or to secure the diversification of a farm enterprise or Country Estate (see Policy CS16).

Subject to specific locational or functional requirements, the town centre first approach (see Policy CS18) will be applied to tourism and leisure development including hotels and conference facilities, theatres, museums, galleries, cinemas, restaurants, bars, pubs, nightclubs and more intensive sport and recreational uses.

Town centre strategy

7.26. The main town centres in West Oxfordshire are generally vibrant and our objective is to maintain and enhance their shopping and leisure offer to meet residents needs. Recent developments have further enhanced the role of Witney as the primary shopping and leisure destination. Chipping Norton and Carterton are important town centres in the north and south of the area providing a range of shops and services for the residents of these towns and their rural hinterlands.

7.27. These main centres are supported by a number of smaller town, village and neighbourhood shopping centres. The town centres of Burford and Woodstock have a relatively large number of shops and facilities for their size relating to their historic and tourist roles. The policy approach for these centres 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. Smaller centres, neighbourhood shopping parades and village shops continue to be important in meeting the day to day needs of residents. The Council will continue to resist the loss of shops and services through Policy CS27 (Infrastructure)

7.28. The Council will work in partnership to promote and enhance the attractiveness of all town centres addressing where possible issues of publicity, security, parking and accessibility, and improvements to the public realm.

7.29. Proposals for new shopping and town centre development must follow the ‘town centre first’ approach. The availability, suitability and viability of town centre sites to accommodate new town centre development should be fully explored, before edge of centre sites¹, and lastly, out-of-centre sites are considered. New town centre development should be in accessible locations and appropriate in nature and scale to the role of the centre where it is located. Developments which are likely to attract customers from a significantly wider area than the centre’s existing catchment may

¹ Edge of centre sites are generally considered within 300m of the town centre and with good pedestrian connections to the town centre.
be considered out of scale with the role of that centre and may be better located within or adjacent to a larger centre.

7.30. The impact of town centre development proposals on the vitality of existing town centres and planned measures to improve them should also be considered. Proposals which will have a negative impact on town centres will not be supported. Impact assessments will be required for significant proposals and will be expected to be proportionate to the scale and type of development proposed.

**Policy CS18: Town centres**

Town and village centres will be supported as the focus for shopping, leisure and services. Significant new shopping and other town centre development will follow the ‘town centre first’ approach, be in accessible locations and be of a scale in keeping with the role of that centre.

The town centre hierarchy is:

- Principal town centre – Witney
- Primary town centres – Carterton, Chipping Norton
- Town centres with a significant tourist role – Burford, Woodstock

Within the primary shopping frontages defined in Witney and Chipping Norton the loss of shops (A1 use) will be resisted. Other uses, such as restaurants or cafes, will only be allowed where they would complement and enhance the shopping offer of the defined shopping frontage.

In Burford and Woodstock the change of use of premises to shops or other town centre uses will only be permitted within the defined town centres unless the proposal provides an overriding community benefit which cannot be accommodated in the town centre.

**Key evidence**

- Economy Study (and subsequent updates)
- West Oxfordshire Tourism Strategy
- West Oxfordshire Local Plan
8.1. The Government emphasises the importance of the planning system in helping to achieve sustainable development and addressing environmental issues, in particular:

- mitigating the causes 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 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 and sustainable construction

8.3. 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.

8.4. Over the last 10 years or so the emphasis, nationally and locally, has been in 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 the approach adopted in this Core Strategy.

8.5. With emissions from buildings accounting for approximately 50% of CO$_2$ emissions in the UK (and West Oxfordshire having higher levels of domestic energy consumption per person than the South East average), 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 heat pumps). 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.

Addressing climate change - overall approach

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

Key considerations in addressing climate change include, in particular:

**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, decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy, including in particular, passive solar design, solar water heating, photovoltaics, heat pumps and biomass generated energy
- **Resources** - optimising energy, carbon and resource efficiency
- **Carbon sequestration** - promoting land uses that act as carbon sinks

**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, increasing flood storage to reduce run-off, reinstating naturally functioning floodplains and the use of energy crops eg Short Rotation Coppice (SRC) on flood prone areas
- **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
- **Biodiversity** - help wildlife adapt eg through improving habitat connectivity and by using SRC as ‘wildlife corridors’
Energy hierarchy

8.7. 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 volatility of the energy market reinforces the merits of this approach. A three-step hierarchy is to be used:

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

Renewable energy generation

8.8. There are opportunities for renewable energy technologies that generate electricity (wind, solar PV, small scale hydro) or heat (biomass, solar thermal, heat pumps) or both eg biomass/wood fuel Combined Heat and Power (CHP).

Stand-alone renewable energy development - strategic opportunities

8.9. West Oxfordshire’s high-valued landscape and historic environment impose significant constraints on large scale stand-alone renewable energy development. While in relation to wind development there may be some potential for larger, commercial, wind turbines, the development pattern is likely to be one of single turbines and small scale community-owned 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 – means each scheme will need a high level of testing. Single, small scale community turbines (eg connected through schools or village halls) may have an important role to play and offer the opportunity for community ‘buy-in’, whilst being less intrusive.

8.10. The level of environmental and technical constraints on wind power in the District, means that to achieve significant levels of renewable energy generation, the development of biomass as a fuel source will need to play a crucial role. Biomass might be used in small scale power stations or District Energy Schemes. Certainly biomass is a good, viable option for new build development (and existing buildings) where the necessary infrastructure such as underground pipework can be laid whilst major construction is underway. 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 expand the existing but small local wood fuel industry. Not only will this provide renewable, low carbon energy, there will also be local environmental and economic benefits. Further work is underway to stimulate demand and develop local, sustainable supply chains through a West Oxfordshire Wood Fuel Network.

Key evidence

• West Oxfordshire Local Plan (adopted 2006)
• West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD
• West Oxfordshire Climate Change Policy 2008-12
  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 and associated Action Plan.
• West Oxfordshire Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP)
  The LCLIP highlights how the District is likely to experience more extreme weather conditions.
• UKCP09 weather scenarios http://ukcp09.defra.gov.uk/
• CAG Consultants ‘Renewable energy and sustainable construction study’ - the CAG Study (2009)
Renewable energy development

8.11. All the main land-based renewable energy technologies appear, in principle, to be appropriate for West Oxfordshire. (For example, small-scale hydro, heat pumps, biomass boilers and solar panels.) Their potential local environmental, economic and community benefits will be important considerations.

8.12. When assessing applications for renewable/low carbon energy regard will be given to scale, design, location, technology type and cumulative impact. The aim will be to minimise adverse impacts on landscape, biodiversity, heritage assets, highways and residential amenity.

8.13. In the Cotswolds AONB small scale renewable energy development is encouraged both by the Council and by the Cotswolds Conservation Board. As a result of a specific assessment of wind development in the Cotswolds AONB, the Board’s definition of ‘small scale’ 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 tip of, approximately, 15-20m.

Policy CS19: Renewable and low carbon energy development

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

Renewable or low-carbon energy development should be located and designed to minimise any adverse impacts. In assessing proposals, consideration will be given to the following local issues:

- impacts on the landscape
- impacts on biodiversity
- opportunities for environmental enhancement
- impacts on the historic environment
- impacts on residential amenity
- impacts on aviation activities
- impacts on fuel/energy security
- highway safety
- potential benefits to host communities (including job creation and income generation).

Renewable energy as part of new development

8.14. Given the limited opportunities in West Oxfordshire for large stand-alone renewable energy schemes, there is a strong need to maximise the opportunities to incorporate decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy generation within non-energy developments. Planned tightening of the Building Regulations, with rising energy efficiency and carbon standards, means new development will be moving towards zero carbon from 2016. In the meantime, on larger developments, where the density, layout and mix of uses, plus economies of scale, generally make
decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources more feasible and viable, the approach adopted and justified for this area through the South East Plan will be used: ie 10% of the predicted energy demand for a proposed development is to be secured from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources.

8.15. A study into renewable energy in West Oxfordshire (the CAG Study) highlighted the potential benefits of encouraging greater use of medium and large scale decentralised energy systems to reduce local CO2 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 new developments offer an ideal opportunity for such systems. With stretching electricity and heat targets, CHP/DH schemes will become increasingly important in delivering renewable and low carbon energy in the District, especially within the strategic development sites identified in this Core Strategy. A feasibility assessment will be required for such sites (through the Master Planning/SPD process). Given the wide local benefits, the use of biomass CHP/DH will, in particular, need to be investigated.

Policy CS20:
Development design for renewable energy

New developments of 10 or more dwellings or 1000m$^2$ of non-residential floorspace should secure at least 10% of their energy from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources (including the use of Combined Heat and Power or District Heating where appropriate) unless, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, this is not feasible or viable.

The use of Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and District Heating (DH), especially biomass fuelled, will be encouraged in all developments.

A feasibility assessment for CHP/DH, including consideration of the use of local wood fuel biomass, will be required for:

- proposals on strategic development sites
- all non-domestic developments above 1000m$^2$ floorspace
- all residential developments in off-gas areas for 50 dwellings or more.

Sustainable construction

8.16. The Government wants local authorities to contribute to the move towards a low carbon economy, helping to meet ambitions to cut greenhouse gas emissions and secure more renewable energy. The CAG Study concluded that in West Oxfordshire these objectives can most easily and effectively be achieved 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).
8.17. While the Code/BREEAM should lead to the greater use of decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy, the big advantage of using the Code/BREEAM is that it also addresses the wider issues of sustainable design and construction, contributing to a range of policy objectives, such as ensuring high standards of water efficiency and the protection and enhancement of ecological features onsite.

8.18. As a general principle, all developments will be expected to meet or exceed relevant national minimum standards for sustainable construction. All sites allocated through the Core Strategy will be expected to exceed the minimum standards; for example, on these larger sites the potential to exploit renewable energy sources is greater, especially where CHP/DH can be used.

8.19. In 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 of the Code/BREEAM will be required. The use of local sustainability targets have been trialled since Summer 2010; these will be reviewed in the light of experience, government advice and the adoption of Policy CS21 and further local sustainable construction planning guidance will be published.

Policy CS21: Sustainable construction

All new development (including new buildings, conversions and the refurbishment of existing building stock) will be required to achieve high standards of sustainable design and construction and, in particular:

New dwellings will be expected to achieve at least Code for Sustainable Homes (or equivalent) Level 3 with immediate effect, Code Level 4 from 2013 and Code Level 6 from 2016
• on residential sites where CHP/DH schemes are feasible, at least Code Level 4 will need to be achieved with immediate effect
• 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 1000m2 floorspace) will be expected to meet BREEAM ‘very good’ or equivalent with immediate effect.

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.

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.
Natural resources

8.20. The prudent use of natural resources is an important principle of sustainable development which means, for example, ensuring greater efficiency in the use and management of resources, the reduction of pollution and waste, improvements to water and air quality, and the protection and enhancement of features of importance, including wildlife and landscapes. The use of the Code for Sustainable Homes and the BREEAM Standards will help address these issues; Policy CS22 will ensure explicit consideration is given to the efficient use and management of natural resources.

Water

8.21. The use of policies in this Core Strategy (eg on green infrastructure, biodiversity and sustainable construction) and adherence to national guidance and policy will assist in achieving the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and actions of the Thames River Basin Management Plan, including the requirement to protect and improve the status of water bodies, including their ecological value.

8.22. The River Thames and its tributaries contribute to the character of the District. After heavy rain many of these water courses flood. Flooding from surface water drainage, ground water and sewers also occurs.

8.23. In terms of development in flood risk areas, a sequential approach will be followed. Inappropriate development will not be allocated or permitted in flood risk zones 2 and 3 (which have higher probability of flooding), areas at risk of surface water flooding or areas with a history of groundwater flooding, or where it would increase flood risk elsewhere, unless there is over-riding need, an absence of suitable alternatives and flood risk can be satisfactorily addressed. All development at risk of flooding will require a Flood Risk Assessment.

8.24. The need for water management is especially relevant for West Oxfordshire, not just associated with the issue of flood risk (as exemplified by the summer floods of 2007) but equally water scarcity at times of drought. The District lies within an area of ‘serious’ water stress where there are limited water resources and yet a high and growing demand for water.

8.25. National advice, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 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 will be required as part of any new development.

Minerals

8.26. The Upper Thames Valley and its tributaries, particularly the Lower Windrush Valley, has been a major producer of sharp sand and gravel. Elsewhere in the District quarrying of rock takes place. Extensive areas of sand and gravel remain but, as a finite resource, it is essential these minerals are used efficiently, especially as, lying
within historically important and biodiversity rich areas, their exploitation has a major impact upon the quality of life of local communities and the environment in general. Increased emphasis must be placed upon more sustainable construction methods than use of primary land-won aggregates.

8.27. The future minerals strategy for Oxfordshire is being pursued by the County Council through its Minerals and Waste Development Framework. Mineral deposits are protected through identified safeguarding areas; here Oxfordshire County Council is consulted on development proposals which may prejudice future removal of minerals (see Figure 4.1 page 17).

Waste

8.28. There is a significant need for new recycling and composting facilities to reduce the quantities of waste disposed through landfill. Waste management facilities outside the two main landfill sites in the District (Dean Pit in the north and Dix Pit in the south) are expected to be small in scale providing local facilities only. Some new facilities may be satisfactorily accommodated on existing employment sites.

Policy CS22: Natural resources

All development proposals will be required to show consideration of the efficient and prudent use and management of natural resources, including:

- minimising risk of flooding
- making use of appropriate sustainable drainage systems
- making adequate provision for the recycling of waste
- using recycled and energy efficient materials
- minimising waste
- maximising passive solar heating, lighting, natural ventilation, energy and water efficiency and reuse of materials
- causing no deterioration and, where possible, achieving improvements in water or air quality.

Historic environment

8.29. The large and particularly rich stock of West Oxfordshire's heritage, archaeological and architectural assets, which includes the World Heritage Site of Blenheim Palace, plays a significant role in defining the character of the District and its historic environment, the individuality of its settlements and links with the area’s tourism role, economic prosperity and the quality of life of those living here. It is important, therefore, that these assets are protected, conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced. Our internationally and nationally designated assets will receive the highest level of protection.

8.30. The sustainable management of the District's historic environment needs to be based upon an understanding of its significance and vulnerability to change. Local assessments, appraisals and guidance assist in this understanding. Any development proposal needs to ensure it respects existing local character and identity.
For country estates, which in West Oxfordshire contain many heritage assets, the production of well researched and justified Estate Management Plans will provide an invaluable basis for the consideration of future proposals. The Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site Management Plan (2006) helps to ensure the conservation and preservation of its Outstanding Universal Value.

8.31. The best way to secure the upkeep of many heritage assets is to keep them in active, viable and appropriate use, consistent with their conservation. A particular challenge for the future will be adaptation to climate change and embracing new technologies without harming the special character of the District. (The Council has published guidance on ‘greening’ historic buildings)

Natural and healthy environment

Public realm and green infrastructure

8.32. The condition of the public realm (which includes areas as diverse as Burford High Street and Langel Common in Witney) 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, agency or owner has control over – or responsibility for – the management of such areas. Their maintenance and enhancement forms a fundamental aspect of good design (Policy CS3). Such areas can be further enhanced by the introduction of Public Art (usually created by visual artists and craftspeople for a specific site).

8.33. Many areas within the public realm perform a wide variety of functions. This multi-functionality of space occurs, especially with green space, for example 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. Protecting and enhancing these areas, and securing additional green infrastructure, helps to deliver sustainable development and communities.

8.34. As a predominantly rural district, it is not surprising that West Oxfordshire has a wide variety of green space, albeit not all publicly accessible. In order to achieve the widest range of linked environmental and social benefits, green infrastructure networks need to be planned and managed. This will be particularly important for those areas of greatest potential change, eg the main towns (where an accessible, green infrastructure network needs to be 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, the Chimney Meadows Living Landscape Project and Conservation Target Areas.

Key evidence

8.31. The best way to secure the upkeep of many heritage assets is to keep them in active, viable and appropriate use, consistent with their conservation. A particular challenge for the future will be adaptation to climate change and embracing new technologies without harming the special character of the District. (The Council has published guidance on ‘greening’ historic buildings)

Key evidence

- Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Preservation and Enhancement documents
- PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment
  - Overarching aim is that the historic environment and its heritage should be conserved and enjoyed
  - Should be seen as part of the delivery of sustainable development and economic viability
- Assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance
- West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011
- West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD

Key evidence

- West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD
  This 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 all identified, along with detailed design guidance and examples specific to the district.
- South East Green Infrastructure Framework - From Policy into Practice.
- West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011
- West Oxfordshire Open Space Strategy
- Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre (TVERC)
- Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire
- West Oxfordshire PPG17 Study
- Open space study of the main towns in West Oxfordshire
- Natural England database
Policy CS23: Green Infrastructure

The existing green infrastructure assets* of West Oxfordshire will be protected and enhanced and new multi-functional areas of green space will be created 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.

*Further guidance on green infrastructure will be published, including identifying opportunities for partnership working, strengthening and reinforcing networks, enhancing connectivity and achieving long term management.

Key evidence

- The West Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy and Action Plan and the West Oxfordshire Health and Well-being Strategy and Action Plan
  Both emphasise the importance of maintaining and improving the health and well-being of all residents in West Oxfordshire

- West Oxfordshire PPG17 Study
  This 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.

  These highlight the need for greater emphasis to be placed on 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.

- West Oxfordshire Built Leisure Facilities Study
  This study, in part updating the earlier PPG17 Study, has recently been undertaken. Overall, the indications are that West Oxfordshire residents are significantly more active than those in most other areas of England although 23% of the District’s population is classed as obese.

Sport, recreation and children’s play

8.35. Play parks, 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 and wellbeing of West Oxfordshire’s residents, contributing to community-life and bringing health and social benefits.

8.36. Local assessments of recreation provision show some inconsistency in the quantity and quality of facilities within West Oxfordshire. Given the aim of raising recreation participation levels, especially amongst young people, combined with a growing population, there is likely to be greater demand and pressure on existing facilities, giving added emphasis to the need for their retention. The general principle of protecting existing facilities is especially relevant for open spaces with recreational value in a built-up area, as new open space can be difficult to provide here and yet this is where demand is concentrated (see Policies CS23 and CS27).

8.37. Additional provision will need to be made, both through providing new facilities and maximising the use of existing ones, for example through making full use of facilities at schools and village halls, including facilitating shared intergenerational use. We will work in partnership with schools and other organisations to make facilities available to the wider community by maximising the range, quality and effectiveness of joint use provision.
Natural environment

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

Landscape

8.39. 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.

8.40. Conserving and enhancing the quality of our landscape - whilst supporting suitably located and designed development necessary to facilitate the economic and social well-being of the area and its communities - are important objectives. Within the Cotswolds great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, landscape and countryside, not just within the AONB but affecting its setting. Advice from the Cotswolds Conservation Board, including the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and Landscape Assessment, is invaluable.

8.41. The West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment describes the landscape characteristics of the district, giving guidance on landscape enhancement, planning and development. This, together with guidance in the West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD, the more detailed appraisals of the landscape setting of the main towns (undertaken to inform strategic site allocations) and the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS), will be used to assess development proposals with potential landscape impacts.

8.42. It is not just physical features which affect landscape character; large parts of rural West Oxfordshire are noted for their peace and tranquillity. Pollution, especially noise and light, can undermine this ‘unspoilt’ character. Any development should maintain or improve the existing level of tranquillity.

8.43. In addition to more general district-wide landscape considerations, there are three areas in West Oxfordshire 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). These three areas, together with the Cotswolds AONB, will continue to be identified for special landscape protection and enhancement (see Figure 8.2).

Policy CS24: Natural Environment

The quality and character of West Oxfordshire’s natural environment, its diversity and its local distinctiveness, will be conserved and enhanced, including its landscape, countryside and biodiversity.

New development must respect and, where possible, enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive features of the local landscape of the area.

When determining development proposals within or impacting upon the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, high priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the area’s natural beauty.

Special attention will be given to the landscape and biodiversity of the Lower Windrush Valley Project, the Windrush in Witney Project Area and the Wychwood Forest Area.

Key evidence

- West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011
- West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD
  Especially Chapter 2 on local characteristics and Chapter on biodiversity and landscape character.
- West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment 1998
- Carterton Landscape Assessment 2009
- Chipping Norton Landscape Assessment 2009
- Witney Landscape Assessment 2007
- Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)
- Lower Windrush Valley Project
- Windrush in Witney Project
- Wychwood Forest Project
- Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2008-2013
- Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statements (especially: Setting of the AONB; and Tranquillity and Dark Skies) and Landscape publications
Figure 8.1 Biodiversity Conservation Target Areas
8.44. The landscape and biodiversity of an area are inter-related. 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 and legally protected species. (In turn, these are also fundamentally connected to the geological diversity of the area.) About 4% of the District’s countryside falls within sites designated for their biodiversity or geological importance, including 29 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the internationally important Cassington Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC), part of the Oxford Meadows SAC. However, the bulk of our wildlife lives outside nature reserves and specifically protected areas.

8.46. The protection of West Oxfordshire’s wildlife and the conservation, enhancement and restoration of its biodiversity and geodiversity are promoted. 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.

8.47. Conservation bodies in Oxfordshire have assessed the county’s key strategic habitats and devised Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) (see Figure 8.1). These are the most important areas for wildlife conservation where targeted conservation action will have the greatest benefit. The main aim within CTAs is to restore biodiversity at a landscape-scale through maintenance, restoration and creation of Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats. In planning terms, they can be considered as potential areas of ecological constraint but, more particularly, as areas of ecological opportunity. West Oxfordshire target areas include the Upper Windrush and Wychwood Forest.

8.47. In addition to the more strategic approach to habitat enhancement and creation, 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 approach, especially for larger development proposals (see earlier section on Sustainable Construction).

Policy CS25: Biodiversity

The overall biodiversity of West Oxfordshire shall be protected and opportunities to achieve a net gain actively pursued, including:

- giving sites of international conservation importance the highest level of protection
- avoiding damage to nationally important sites of special scientific interest
- seeking to ensure that damage to local wildlife sites and locally important wildlife and geological sites is avoided
- avoiding damage to a site supporting a specially protected species

requiring all developments to mitigate any harm and to enhance the biodiversity of the site or the locality, especially within the Conservation Target Areas and areas of green infrastructure.

Key evidence

- PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation with Guide to Good Practice
- Biodiversity Action Plans
- Conservation Target Areas
- Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire (published by Oxfordshire County Council, BBOWT and TVERC) www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

This provides local information on protected and priority habitats and species and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, including Green Infrastructure.
Figure 8.2 Special Landscape Policy Areas

Key:
- Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Windrush in Witney Project Area
- Wychwood Project Area
- Lower Windrush Valley Project Area

West Oxfordshire District Boundary
9.1. 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 although a likely deficiency of next generation broadband in rural areas could impact upon future employment patterns.

9.2. Although national policy seeks to minimise the 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. Rail is not convenient for many residents as the towns and most villages are not directly served by railway lines or stations. The rural road network is a limiting factor on the scale of development that can be satisfactorily accommodated.

9.3. The District Council has very limited transport powers, primarily confined to car parking provision and its management. Close working with Oxfordshire County Council and the 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.

9.4. 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 nearby 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.

Roads and rail

9.5. The main transport routes are shown on the Key Diagram. Witney continues to be the main focus of new highway schemes reflecting past and continuing growth of the town (see the separate Witney section). New schemes will be pursued (subject to funding) where they can help bring about environmental benefits such as improvements to safety or air quality.

9.6. 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. 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.

9.7. The County Council has been developing its Access to Oxford project for delivery between 2013 and 2015 but this is currently on hold in the absence of Government funding. An important part of this project is aimed at reducing queuing on the A40 and A44 by tackling congestion to the north of Oxford and on the approaches to the main roundabouts, including Wolvercote and Cutteslowe. Key aspects of this will be intercepting more journeys by public transport and helping to improve journey time reliability.

9.8. 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. A weight restriction order is in operation. As a potential solution to the current situation, Oxfordshire County Council has been investigating a new river crossing and approach roads away from the present bridge.

9.9. All potential transport schemes for the medium to longer term are being reviewed through the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2030.

9.10. Welcome improvements to the Cotswold railway 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 and increase capacity. Proposals to increase the effectiveness of local stations will be pursued as and when funding comes forward, such as extension of platforms, improved parking facilities and bus connections. New platforms are proposed for Charlbury and Ascott during 2011.
Alternative means of travel

9.11. Opportunities for increased walking, cycling and use of bus services will be promoted. This is a fundamental component of the latest Oxfordshire Transport Plan (LTP3). Improvements 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.

9.12. West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural area where access to frequent bus services is currently 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 en route. Oxfordshire Rural Community Council continues to support rural community transport.

9.13. A reasonable amount of available car parking space is seen as part of the continued viability of our town centres and main employment areas. We shall continue to balance car parking requirements at destinations with the need to promote alternative means of travel wherever possible and feasible. Requirements for travel plans will be informed by the scale and likely impact of development proposals.

Policy CS26:
Transport and movement

Priority will be given to locating new development in areas with convenient access to a reasonable range of services and facilities and where the need to travel by private car, particularly where it would add to traffic congestion around Oxford, can be minimised.

West Oxfordshire District Council will work with the highway authority, local councils and other organisations, including the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, bus and rail operators, 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
- promote use of public transport services, cycling and walking through improved supporting infrastructure and information
- secure appropriate improvements to the road network to help reduce congestion and accommodate the safe movement of people and goods whilst minimising adverse impacts on the environment
- secure traffic management and environmental improvement schemes to help improve the attractiveness of the area and quality of life, especially air quality and safety for all residents and visitors
- promote improvement and extension of electronic communications to support local businesses and services and help reduce the need to travel.

Design solutions will improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and will minimise the impact of both parked and moving vehicles upon the local environment.

Proposals for new developments that have significant transport implications either in themselves or with other proposals will be required to include a transport assessment. Travel plans should form part of development proposals that potentially will attract large numbers of traffic movements.
10.1. The provision of adequate and timely infrastructure is an essential part of the delivery of sustainable development. The definition of infrastructure covers a wide range of physical, social, community and green supporting services and facilities including transport, recreation, health and education, utilities such as broadband, water and sewerage, and space for flood control, recreation, amenity and biodiversity. Green infrastructure is specifically covered in the earlier environment section (see Policy CS23).

10.2. 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 an existing beneficial 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.

10.3. 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, although some services remain increasingly centred upon Oxford. However there is local concern about yet further growth particularly as some of the long-standing infrastructure needs of the town, notably transport, remain to be addressed. 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.

10.4. The District Council has a very small capital budget and is not a major landowner. The social housing stock has been transferred to Cottsway Housing. Delivery of new infrastructure has always been a partnership approach with other organisations (such as health, social care and recreation providers) and developers. Oxfordshire County Council is an essential provider of services, most notably transport, education and care.

10.5. 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.

10.6. 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.
10.7. 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 in response to Government proposals through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

10.8. During 2009/10 all Oxfordshire local authorities worked together with the Government’s Homes and Communities Agency to produce a Local Investment Plan (LIP). The Agency has provided significant funding to help deliver development schemes across the country. The Oxfordshire LIP forms the basis of Appendix 2 which gives further detail on delivery of supporting infrastructure.

Policy CS27:
Infrastructure

Infrastructure to support existing and new communities will be delivered by working with relevant organisations and prospective developers to:

• retain and strengthen existing local services and facilities, including improved flexibility in the way they are used and accessed on foot and by cycle;

• ensure that appropriate supporting infrastructure will be available to meet the needs of new development;

• address 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 services and facilities will only be supported where it can be clearly shown that appropriate alternative local provision of at least equivalent suitability and accessibility, particularly by foot, will remain or that the existing use is no longer required or viable and is incapable of being made viable or adapted for other local community uses.
Projected housing completions to deliver 4,300 new homes 2011 - 2026
Overview of strategic development sites and supporting infrastructure
(The following does not address local infrastructure improvements such as traffic management schemes, waste management/recycling centres, new/improved village halls, additional allotments and open space etc)

See also the Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan [http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/OxfordshireLocalInvestmentPlan.pdf]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Development (where)</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Delivery (how)</th>
<th>Key delivery partners (who)</th>
<th>Critical Dependencies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Witney/North Curbridge Strategic Development Area (mixed use urban extension plus employment/leisure development)</td>
<td>2011-2021</td>
<td>Through strategic allocation and implementation of planning permissions</td>
<td>Developers/agents Key public bodies, including West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and Witney Town Council Registered Housing Providers</td>
<td>Delivery of new A40 junction and school provision critical to phasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carterton and RAF Brize Norton development and redevelopment</td>
<td>2011-2026</td>
<td>Through MOD/private development and implementation of planning permissions</td>
<td>Developers/agents MOD/RAF Thames Water Environment Agency Key public bodies, including WODC, OCC &amp; Carterton Town Council Carterton Fast Forward</td>
<td>Timing and impact of MOD/RAF development upon local infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carterton Strategic Development Area (expansion to east or west)</td>
<td>2016-2026</td>
<td>Through strategic allocation and implementation of planning permissions</td>
<td>Developers/agents Key public bodies, including WODC, OCC &amp; Carterton Town Council Carterton Fast Forward Registered Housing Providers Thames Water Environment Agency</td>
<td>Delivery of new primary school Vehicular access to land beyond Shill Brook Valley if west option selected Provision of satisfactory sewerage and flood prevention schemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting infrastructure</td>
<td>When (timescale)</td>
<td>Delivery / funding (how)</td>
<td>Who (key delivery partners)</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cogges Link Road river crossing, Witney</td>
<td>2011-2014</td>
<td>Cost about £18m with about £9m available from S106 funding</td>
<td>OCC Landowners</td>
<td>Provides alternative route to town centre and Bridge Street AQMA. Planning permission granted but construction dependent upon outcome of CPO Inquiry and other statutory procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A40/Downs Road junction, Witney</td>
<td>2011-2016</td>
<td>Cost up to about £15m depending upon final junction design Developer funding</td>
<td>Developers/agents OCC/WODC</td>
<td>Local Plan proposal linked with West Witney SDA. An all movements junction is required to fully meet the needs of the Witney area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town centre development and enhancement – Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton</td>
<td>2011-2026</td>
<td>Through planning permissions for new development plus street enhancement schemes.</td>
<td>Key public bodies including OCC, WODC Town Councils Bus and taxi operators Town centre landowners and developers</td>
<td>Land assembly to deliver town centre redevelopment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional education provision, focused on Witney and Carterton</td>
<td>2011-2021</td>
<td>Primarily through developer funding.</td>
<td>OCC/WODC Developers</td>
<td>Witney - new primary and secondary provision. Carterton - new primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New healthcare facilities at Witney and Chipping Norton</td>
<td>2010-2016</td>
<td>Through Oxon Primary Care Trust (PCT) funding</td>
<td>PCT WODC/OCC</td>
<td>Both schemes have planning permission with the Chipping Norton development recently completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New college facilities at Witney</td>
<td>2011-2016</td>
<td>Through college funding and revised planning permissions.</td>
<td>Abingdon &amp; Witney College WODC</td>
<td>A revised scheme is being pursued. (Government funding withdrawn for original scheme which had commenced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shilton Road Link, Carterton</td>
<td>2011-2016</td>
<td>Through developer funding as an integral part of new housing development.</td>
<td>David Wilson Homes WODC/OCC</td>
<td>Outline planning permission granted (subject to S106)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carterton Leisure Centre (Phase 2)</td>
<td>2016-2026</td>
<td>Cost about £1.5m+ Potential for some developer funding.</td>
<td>WODC Carterton Town Council Developers in the Carterton area</td>
<td>Scheme has planning permission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting infrastructure</td>
<td>When (timescale)</td>
<td>Delivery / funding (how)</td>
<td>Who (key delivery partners)</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotswold Line improvements</td>
<td>2010-2015</td>
<td>Cost about £70m Through national/rail operator funding and any necessary planning permissions.</td>
<td>National Rail/First Great Western OCC/WODC</td>
<td>Redoubling 20 miles of track is underway – completion due summer 2011. Station improvements needed but funding to be secured eg for longer platforms, better car parking provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other transport schemes identified through LTP3</td>
<td>2016-2030</td>
<td>Through transport grants and developer funding</td>
<td>OCC/WODC</td>
<td>Local Transport Plan to be finalised by April 2011.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Infrastructure (strategic)</td>
<td>2011-2026</td>
<td>Through landowner/developer funding plus any available grant funding</td>
<td>Key public bodies including WODC, OCC &amp; town/parish councils Developers/landowners Natural England, Wildlife Trusts &amp; Environment Agency</td>
<td>Provision of enhanced/additional open space. Enhancement of biodiversity conservation target areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement water reservoir at Tank Farm, Chipping Norton</td>
<td>2011-2016</td>
<td>Thames Water Business Plan</td>
<td>Thames Water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upgrades to sewerage treatment works/main sewers</td>
<td>2011-2026</td>
<td>Through Thames Water investment and developer funding.</td>
<td>Thames Water WODC Developers/landowners</td>
<td>Improvements required, mainly at Witney and Carterton, to accommodate further development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West End Link river crossing, Witney</td>
<td>No timescale</td>
<td>As an integral part of any longer term major development in Witney to north of River Windrush (not a Core Strategy allocated site)</td>
<td>Developers/agents OCC/WODC Environment Agency</td>
<td>Safeguarded scheme if required in future. No detailed design or costing. Within an area of high flood risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A40 Shores Green junction (west slips), Witney</td>
<td>No timescale</td>
<td>Some developer funding possible.</td>
<td>Oxfordshire County Council Landowners</td>
<td>Safeguarded scheme for additional A40 access if required in future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Delivery and monitoring of Core Strategy

The satisfactory implementation of policy and progress against local targets will be assessed through the LDF Annual Monitoring Report and reports to the County and District Strategic Partnerships together with Oxfordshire County Council monitoring reports on the Local Transport Plan.

### The Settlement Strategy

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Delivery Core Policies</th>
<th>Delivery Partners</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| CS1 & CS2 (overall spatial strategy) | Oxfordshire County Council Developers and local landowners through the development management process Registered Housing Providers & Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Thames Water | Net additional dwellings built:  
• each year  
• spatial distribution by settlement hierarchy and sub-area, including urban/rural split  
• source including developed land, allocations and previously unidentified sites  
• density of new residential development |
| CS4 - CS8 (housing targets and main service centre strategy) |  | Future housing supply including 5 year land supply calculation:  
• total supply and annual addition to supply through planning permission  
• spatial distribution by settlement hierarchy and sub-area  
• source including developed land, allocations and previously unidentified sites  
• derelict/vacant land and premises available for development or reuse  
• trend rate of lapsed permissions |
| CS13 & CS14 (use of existing buildings) |  | Additional employment floorspace built and total number of jobs:  
• each year  
• by Use Class  
• spatial distribution by settlement hierarchy and sub-area  
• source including developed land, allocations and previously unidentified sites |
|  |  | Future supply of employment floorspace:  
• total supply and annual addition to supply through planning permission  
• by Use Class  
• spatial distribution by settlement hierarchy and sub-area  
• source including developed land, allocations and previously unidentified sites |
## Meeting the specific housing needs of our communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery Core Policies</th>
<th>Delivery Partners</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| CS4 (housing targets)  | Developers and local landowners  
Registered Housing Providers & HCA  
Oxfordshire County Council | Number and type of new affordable homes delivered and with outstanding permission:  
• annual completions  
• type and tenure mix  
• spatial provision - by settlement hierarchy and sub-area  
• size and type of site eg allocated/previosuly unidentified, RSL site, rural exception site  
• number of homes provided without social grant  
• house price trends and lower quartile price to lower quartile income ratio  
• households on the housing register and number of relents each year | |
| CS9 - CS12 (type of new homes, affordable housing and Travelling Communities) | | |

Type of new market homes delivered and remaining to be built:  
• conversion, sub-division or new build  
• type eg flat, house  
• number of extra care and other homes specifically for older people  
• development size eg single dwelling, sites less than 10 units etc  
• size by number of bedrooms

Net additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches provided.

## Sustainable communities with access to services and facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery Core Policies</th>
<th>Delivery Partners</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| CS15 - CS18 (employment, tourism and town centres)  
CS23 (green infrastructure)  
CS26 - CS27 (transport and infrastructure) | Oxfordshire County Council  
Oxfordshire Rural Community Council  
Parish Councils  
Developers and local landowners  
Network Rail and First Great Western | Consumer response to new development  
Delivery of required infrastructure improvements  
Changes in urban and rural services  
Amount of development accessible to key services by means other than the car  
New retail, leisure and community development by type and location  
Loss of existing employment land  
Unemployment rate and changes in economic activity rate  
Value of tourist activity to local economy | |
## Protecting our environment and reducing the impact from climate change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery Core Policies</th>
<th>Delivery Partners</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| CS19 - CS26 (renewable/low carbon schemes, sustainable construction, green infrastructure, natural environment, resources and biodiversity) | Thames Valley Energy Environment Agency<br>Oxfordshire County Council<br>Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre<br>Local Wildlife Trust<br>English Heritage | Flood protection:  
• new schemes
• properties at risk of flooding
• development using SUDs

Changes in area and quality of designated biodiversity sites

Renewable energy schemes permitted

Use of Code for Sustainable Homes & BREEAM standards

Listed Buildings at risk

Pollution levels in AQMAs |
## Small villages and hamlets

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Village</th>
<th>Village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ascott-under-Wychwood</td>
<td>Grafton</td>
<td>Rousham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthall</td>
<td>Great Tew</td>
<td>Salford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asthall Leigh</td>
<td>Hardwick</td>
<td>Sandford St Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bablock Hythe</td>
<td>Heythrop</td>
<td>Sarsden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnard Gate</td>
<td>High Cogges</td>
<td>Shifford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Bourton</td>
<td>Holwell</td>
<td>Shilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bould</td>
<td>Idbury</td>
<td>Shorthampton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradwell Village</td>
<td>Kelmscott</td>
<td>Signet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadwell</td>
<td>Kencot</td>
<td>South Leigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruern</td>
<td>Kiddington</td>
<td>Spelsbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chastleton (incl Chastleton Glebe)</td>
<td>Langley</td>
<td>Steeple Barton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilson</td>
<td>Ledwell</td>
<td>Swerford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chimney</td>
<td>Lew</td>
<td>Swinbrook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church Enstone</td>
<td>Lidstone</td>
<td>Taston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church Hanborough</td>
<td>Little Clanfield</td>
<td>Taynton</td>
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<td>Cleveley</td>
<td>Little Faringdon</td>
<td>Upper Milton</td>
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<td>Cornwell</td>
<td>Little Rollright</td>
<td>Upton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cote</td>
<td>Little Tew</td>
<td>Walcot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crawley</td>
<td>Lyneham</td>
<td>Westcot Barton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>Old Minster Lovell</td>
<td>Weald</td>
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<td>Delly End</td>
<td>Moreton</td>
<td>Westwell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dunthrop</td>
<td>Mount Skippett</td>
<td>Whistlow</td>
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<tr>
<td>East End</td>
<td>Newbridge</td>
<td>Whiteoak Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fawler</td>
<td>New Yatt</td>
<td>Widford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Assarts</td>
<td>Northmoor</td>
<td>Wilcote</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifield</td>
<td>Old Chalford</td>
<td>Woodleys</td>
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<td>Fordwells</td>
<td>Over Kiddington</td>
<td>Worsham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foscot</td>
<td>Poffley End</td>
<td>Worton (Nether and Over)</td>
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<td>Fulwell</td>
<td>Radcot</td>
<td>Yelford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gagingwell</td>
<td>Radford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glympton</td>
<td>Ramsden</td>
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</table>
Local Plan policies due to be replaced by Core Strategy policies

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<tr>
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<th>Policy subject</th>
<th>Replacement Core Policy</th>
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<tr>
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<td>CS1,CS2,CS3, CS14,CS22</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Cotswolds area of outstanding natural beauty</td>
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<td>NE11</td>
<td>Water quality</td>
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<td>NE12</td>
<td>Renewable energy</td>
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<td>NE13</td>
<td>Biodiversity conservation</td>
<td>CS25</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sites of nature conservation or geological importance</td>
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<td>NE15</td>
<td>Protected species</td>
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<td>T1</td>
<td>Traffic generation</td>
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<tr>
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<td>T3</td>
<td>Public transport infrastructure</td>
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<td>T6</td>
<td>Traffic management</td>
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<tr>
<td>H2</td>
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<td>CS1,CS2,CS3,CS14</td>
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<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Range and type of residential accommodation</td>
<td>CS3,CS9</td>
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<td>Villages</td>
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<td>Shopping facilities for the local community</td>
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<td>Retention of local shops and/or post offices</td>
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<td>TLC1</td>
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<td>Use of existing buildings</td>
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<td>Existing outdoor recreational space</td>
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<td>TLC12</td>
<td>Protection of existing community services and facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal 8</td>
<td>North Curbridge development area, Witney</td>
<td>CS5,CS6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal 9</td>
<td>Employment land, Downs Road, Witney</td>
<td>CS5,CS6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal 11</td>
<td>A40 junction at Downs Road, Witney</td>
<td>CS5,CS6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term (ABBREVIATION)</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing</td>
<td>Housing, usually managed by registered providers, available 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>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)</td>
<td>The 1995 Environment Act requires an AQMA to be designated where it is likely that the objectives set out in the Air Quality Regulations will not be met. There are two AQMAs in West Oxfordshire.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation</td>
<td>An area of land identified for a specific land use in a development plan.</td>
<td></td>
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<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>
<td></td>
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<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>
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</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>
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<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>
<td></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 gardens, agricultural or forestry buildings). Where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape the site may no longer be considered brownfield.</td>
<td></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>
<td></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>
<td></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>
<td></td>
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<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>
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</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>
<td></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>
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<tr>
<td>Term (ABBREVIATION)</td>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>Derelict Land</td>
<td>Land no longer in active use.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Development Plan Document (DPD)</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>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy Efficiency</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>
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<tr>
<td>Extra Care Housing</td>
<td>Extra Care Housing is a type of housing, care and support that falls somewhere between traditional sheltered housing and residential care.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flood Zone</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>
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<tr>
<td>Green Belt</td>
<td>An area of land protected from urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open - to prevent built up areas from merging, to protect the character of towns and countryside and to aid urban regeneration.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Green Infrastructure (GI)</td>
<td>Networks of multi-functional open space, including parks, gardens, outdoor sports facilities, amenity greenspace, allotments and river corridors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greenfield site</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>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Association (HA)</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>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</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>
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<tr>
<td>Intermediate housing</td>
<td>Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent but below market price or rents and meets the criteria for affordable housing. Social rents are determined through the national rent regime.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landscape Character</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>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lifetime Homes</td>
<td>Design features applied to new homes to support the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Development Document (LDD)</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>
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<tr>
<td>Term (ABBREVIATION)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Development Framework (LDF)</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 comprises 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>
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<tr>
<td>Local Development Scheme (LDS)</td>
<td>A programme which outlines how and when Development Plan Documents are to be prepared.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Investment Plan (LIP)</td>
<td>A document that outlines and integrates the strategic infrastructure proposals of local authorities and their partners that support planned housing and economic growth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)</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>
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<tr>
<td>Local Wildlife Site of Nature Conservation Importance (LWS)</td>
<td>Locally important sites of nature conservation adopted by local planning authorities for planning purposes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mitigation</td>
<td>Taking action to reduce the impact of human activity.</td>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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. RSSs are due to be abolished by the Government in 2011.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registered Providers</td>
<td>A body that manages affordable homes, both social rented and intermediate. Most housing associations are Registered Providers.</td>
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<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>
<td></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>
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<tr>
<td>Scheduled Ancient Monument</td>
<td>Nationally important monuments usually archaeological remains, that receive greater protection against inappropriate development.</td>
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<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>
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<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>
<td></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>
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</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>
<td></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>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)</td>
<td>A study to identify and assess sites with potential for housing development.</td>
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<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>
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</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>
<td></td>
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<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>
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</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>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Development Plan</td>
<td>Currently comprises the RSS and statutory Local Development Documents contained within the Local Development Framework.</td>
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</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.