

Provisions within Plan that protect the International sites:

Core Objective 13: This objective seeks to 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.

Core Objective 15: This objective seeks to achieve improvements in water and air quality.

Overall strategy: Five key strands apply to all development, including a presumption in favour of sustainable development (also **Core Policy 1**) and locating development in the right places (also **Core Policy 2**), ensuring housing and jobs are provided where they are most needed, with good access to facilities, where car use can be reduced, important areas such as Green Belt and AONB protected and sensitive areas avoided.

Core Policy 4 – High Quality Design: High design quality is central to the strategy for West Oxfordshire. This includes enhancing local green infrastructure and its biodiversity, as well as the provision of attractive, safe and convenient amenity open space. Such provision will reduce the need for West Oxfordshire residents to travel to Oxford Meadows for recreational trips.

Core Policy 5 – Supporting infrastructure: This policy aims to ensure that all development will deliver or contribute towards the provision of appropriate supporting infrastructure, both strategic and non-strategic. Such infrastructure will include components of the green infrastructure network, such as playing fields, public open space and woodland, and provision of local employment and services and facilities, all of which should reduce the need for West Oxfordshire residents to travel eastwards past Oxford Meadows.

Chapter 7 - Environmental and Heritage Assets. Section on Biodiversity: footnote to paragraph 7.10 states:

The Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC), part of which is within West Oxfordshire's boundary, is designated by the European Commission as being of European importance for its biodiversity interest. A Habitat Regulations Assessment (*add weblink*) concluded that one of the key issues is the effect of air quality on the integrity of the SAC. Two key issues were, however, identified: air quality and recreational pressure. Further assessment of these issues will need to be made if more detailed proposals (for example through neighbourhood plans or a planning application) are likely to have a significant impact, in particular to ensure that there will not be any localised adverse effects resultant from construction or increased road trips within 200m of the European sites.

Core Policy 18 – Biodiversity: This policy seeks to protect the overall biodiversity of West Oxfordshire and to achieve a net gain, including giving sites of international nature conservation importance and nationally important sites of special scientific interest the highest level of protection from any development that

will have an adverse impact and requiring a Habitats Regulation Assessment to be undertaken of any development proposal that is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the Oxford Meadows SAC, particularly in relation to air quality and nitrogen deposition.

Core Policy 19 – Public Realm and Green Infrastructure: This policy seeks to protect and enhance the green infrastructure network within West Oxfordshire, including open space. The policy will help to protect Oxford Meadows SAC as it will lead to improvements in the green infrastructure within the District, such that residents will be able to enjoy green space close to where they live, rather than having to travel to Oxford Meadows to access natural green space.

Core Policy CS22 – Environmental Protection: This policy seeks to minimise pollution and risk to a level that provides a high standard of protection for health, environmental quality and amenity, including managing and improving air quality and protecting water bodies and groundwater resources, in terms of their quantity, quality and important ecological features they support.

Core Policy 27 – West Witney Strategic Development Area: This policy sets out the main elements of one of the strategic sites at Witney which is to include about 1000 homes, new employment opportunities (on at least 10ha), green space, allotments, public playing fields and woodland. Providing these uses all within the development area should reduce the need for residents to travel along the A40 and A34 and past Oxford Meadows.

Core Policy 28 – East Witney Strategic Development Area: This policy sets out the main elements of one of the strategic sites at Witney which is to include about 300 homes, green space, biodiversity enhancement and improved pedestrian and cyclist linkages to the town centre. These elements of the development should reduce the need for residents to travel along the A40 and A34 and past Oxford Meadows.

Core Policy 31 - East Carterton Strategic Development Area: This policy sets out the main elements of the strategic site at Carterton which is to include about 700 homes, local shopping, community and leisure facilities, green space and biodiversity enhancements, the extension of the Kilkenny Lane Country Park, allotments and improved pedestrian and cyclist linkages to adjoining areas. Providing these uses all within the development area should reduce the need for residents to travel along the A40 and A34 and past Oxford Meadows.