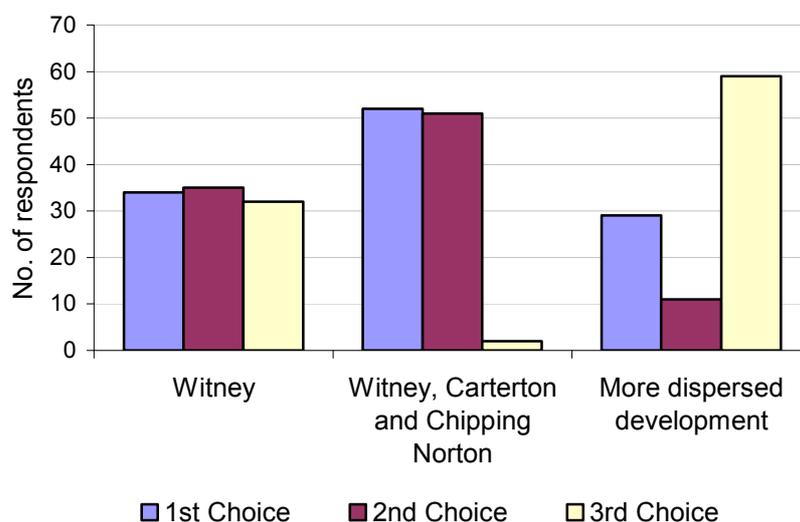


West Oxfordshire Core Strategy - Issues and Options Consultation Summary

Broad options for future distribution of growth

Q. Rank the following broad options in order of preference (note – many respondents did not answer this question)



	1st Choice		2nd Choice		3rd Choice	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Witney	34	30%	35	36%	32	34%
2. Witney, Carterton & Chipping Norton	52	45%	51	53%	2	2%
3. More dispersed development	29	25%	11	11%	59	63%
	115	100%	97	100%	93	100%

Consultee	Comments
Carterton Town Council	Selected option 2. Carterton needs increased population to attract improved retail. There is some infrastructure already in place. Accepts that some new build is needed in smaller towns and villages to ensure sustainability.
Chipping Norton Town Council	Selected option 3.
Highways Agency	No option selected. Locating development in existing centres will lessen impact on the local road network. Development located in Witney will have least impact on the Strategic Road Network due to the A40 directly feeding into Oxford City. Concerned about development north of Oxford - increased trips on the A44 will impact on A34 congestion.
Oxfordshire County Council	Selected option 1 & 2. The Draft South East Plan proposes that the focus for development should be in urban areas

	with good access to jobs, housing, retail & other services. Whether Cogges Link and A40 Downs Road junction are successfully delivered may have a bearing on how much further growth Witney can accommodate at present.
Thames Water	It is easier to provide infrastructure for a small number of larger clearly defined sites than a small number of less well defined ones. Would prefer options that concentrate development in larger towns i.e. Witney, than more dispersed villages. We do not support residential development adjacent to Sewage Treatment Works.
Defence Estates	A preference for concentrating development at Witney, Chipping Norton and Carterton as this aligns most closely with the MOD's long term plans for RAF Brize Norton.
Environment Agency	No particular preference between the suggested options for housing distribution, however, the south of Witney is constrained by flood risk and development should be steered away from the flood plain.
Burford Town Council	A preference for more dispersed development 'to keep smaller towns and settlements viable and to prevent them from becoming entirely retirement/dormitory communities – they need both housing and small scale employment opportunities.'
Witney Town Council	Selected option 3. Concerned that Witney is in danger of becoming over developed, spoiling its historical character. Its infrastructure has not been developed in line with development over last 20 years. Extensive development of Witney could add to potential future flooding risk.

Q. What are the main reasons for your preference of options for the future direction of growth and is there an alternative option for the distribution of growth that you wish to suggest?

Summary of key issues raised in comments:

Infrastructure – Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Thames Water emphasised that their infrastructure is easiest to provide to a small number of larger sites than dispersed to a large number of smaller, less defined ones. Thames Water emphasised that early delivery of adequate water and sewerage infrastructure is essential. The PCT highlighted one benefit of concentrating development as being the opportunity for the co-location of services across organisations/providers as a means of reducing social isolation, and aiding in the viability of delivering services to a wider population. The majority of Parish Councils were in favour of locating highest growth towards the service centres where services are already available, although Fawler Parish Council noted that Witney alone can not absorb all future development and that it should be distributed between the three main centres to allow an organic population increase and prevent concentrated problems in the future. The Eynsham Society also cautioned against concentrating development solely at Witney as it would place even more strain on the congested A40.

Reconsideration of settlement hierarchy – Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance felt that a re-design of the settlement hierarchy based on accessibility to services/facilities, public space, public transport – not solely on population – to a new categorisation of major service centres, minor service centres, large and small villages, would lead to reclassification of villages and aid in the distribution of growth across the district.

Coalescence of villages – Several Parish Councils emphasised the need for preserving the nucleus of towns and villages, maintaining the open countryside between settlements and preventing the coalescence of villages and loss of individual settlements. Growth of main centres should not encroach on existing settlements.

Balance - Several residents cautioned against precluding development from rural settlements in order to prevent further loss of services, facilities and infrastructure in these areas. It was raised that the three options for growth do not address the required distribution of development between Central Oxfordshire and the rest of the district. A split between these two areas was thought to provide an appropriate framework for addressing issues such as affordable housing in rural villages.

Employment growth - Clanfield Parish Council noted that some villages could absorb small scale employment development.

Q. Are there any specific changes you would like to see to the Council's existing strategy for location of new development?

Summary of key issues raised in comments:

Growth in the villages – Revision of the strategy for a slightly higher level of sympathetic development in villages, in order to spread the development 'load', particularly to areas with good transport links (Kingham, Hanborough and Woodstock), was supported by a number of Parish Councils. Development should be encouraged where residents do not have to rely on the car. Bampton Parish Council noted that there should not be a distinction made between smaller villages (Group A) and small villages and hamlets – small scale housing development should be considered for all, considered on merit. The Councillor for Aston, Standlake and Stanton Harcourt considered that policy which provides scope for flexibility and imaginative interpretation is needed, and that most Group B villages can absorb small affordable/market housing developments for 6 – 8 units.

Growth in larger service centres – Several Parish Councils and residents felt that allowing more development in larger service centres on appropriate land would achieve greater dispersal.

Enstone Airfield – Resident support, from outside Enstone Parish, was expressed for consideration of Enstone Airfield as a site for major growth due, in part, to its distance from other main centres. Lomond Holdings emphasised the potential for the airfield to provide a site for further industrial and employment growth that would be less detrimental than on a Greenfield site. Concern was expressed that without a positive policy response to this issue, rural employment sites like Enstone Airfield are in danger of stagnation and decline.

Brownfield Sites – Brize Norton Parish Council supports development on brownfield sites, but requested that the designation of such areas should be better defined.

Greenfield Sites – Stanton Harcourt Parish Council emphasised the need for an even spread of development and does not necessarily oppose Greenfield development –

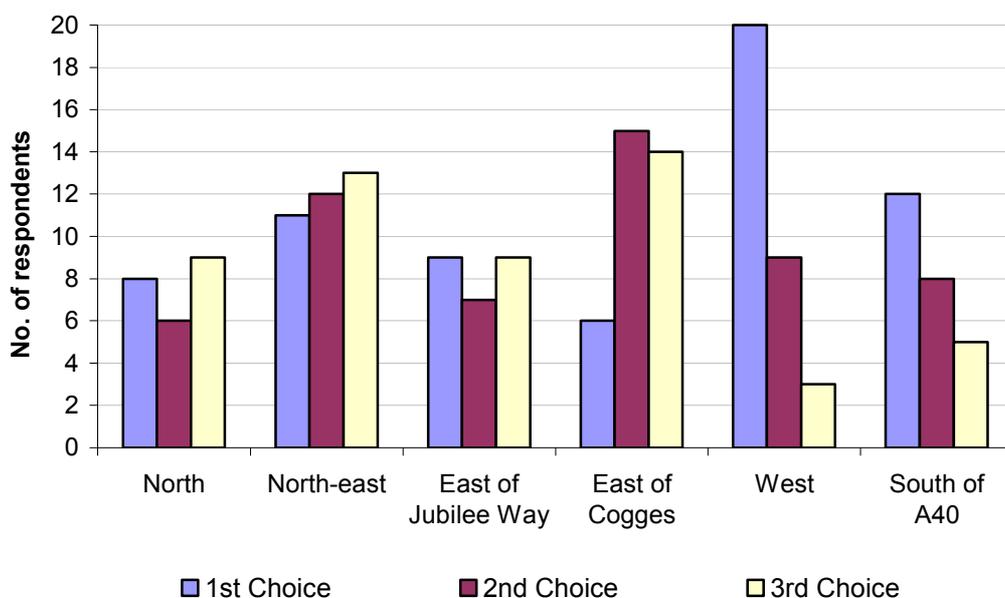
this should be balanced against development in flood risk areas that can decrease natural drainage and ground water absorption.

Infrastructure – Several Parish Councils and residents highlighted the need to consider the opportunity for dual use of community facilities (ie local schools/churches as an alternative to villages halls) and that this should have a bearing when making policy decisions on local access to services and facilities.

Eynsham – The Eynsham Society expressed concern about any further development in the village, which it felt has absorbed a disproportionate share of new housing during the last forty years. It opposed development to the west of Eynsham, where there is no natural boundary and emphasised that the natural boundaries to the north, east and south should be respected.

Development sprawl – Several Parish Councils and residents felt that policy is required to clearly establish define buffer zones/ greenbelts between towns and villages to avoid development sprawl and protect the character of rural settlements.

Q. If Witney should need to expand outwards which broad direction would you prefer? (note – many respondents did not answer this question)



	1st Choice		2nd Choice		3rd Choice	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
North (land between Hailey Road and New Yatt Road)	8	12%	6	11%	9	17%
North-east (land between New Yatt Road and Woodstock Road)	11	17%	12	21%	13	25%
East of Jubilee Way	9	14%	7	12%	9	17%
East of Cogges	6	9%	15	26%	14	26%
West (Downs Road area)	20	30%	9	16%	3	6%
South of A40 (west of Ducklington)	12	18%	8	14%	5	9%
	66	100%	57	100%	53	100%

Consultee	Comments
Environment Agency	No preference but area to the south of Witney is constrained by flood risk and development should be steered away from the flood plain.
Oxfordshire County Council	No selection at this stage. Further transport work is required.
Witney Town Council	Selected 'west & south of the A40'. During 2007 areas in the vicinity of first four options were subject to flooding. Town Council feels strongly about further development in these areas.

Summary of key issues raised in comments:

Road Infrastructure – This was a major consideration of the appropriateness of development at all locations across Witney. It was felt by a local Councillor that North and North East Witney lacked sufficient infrastructure to support development and this was echoed by Ramsden Parish Council who felt that, without a West End Link Road and bridge, development to the north should not be supported. Access to the A40 was raised by both Finstock Parish Council and individual District Councillors as key for a development area. Finstock Parish Council emphasised that as West Oxfordshire is a large area, Chipping Norton should be considered on par with Witney, rather than focussing all development at Witney.

Current planning policy

Q. Should the Council continue with its current affordable housing planning policy approach as set out in the adopted Local Plan and are there any changes which would help deliver more affordable housing?

Consultee	Comments
Burford Town Council	Supports current approach but felt that West Oxfordshire District Council should take a more stringent approach to enforcement of current policy.
Witney Town Council	Identified Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton as areas with greatest need, but noted that there is a need for a higher ratio of affordable to market priced homes in appropriate villages.
Defence Estates	MOD provides accommodation to service personnel, some of whom are afforded key worker status, therefore it is felt that the MOD should not be required to provide affordable housing when delivering service families accommodation.

Summary of key issues raised in comments:

Market housing – It was noted that allowing a small number of market houses to be developed along side affordable homes in villages would offer enough incentive to encourage landowners to release land for affordable housing.

Agricultural land value – Concern was expressed that without sufficient incentive for land owners to achieve a good price for agricultural land, which has increased in value, the lack of land released for affordable housing will continue to stifle the speed of delivery.

Community Land Trusts – The model of community land trusts should be piloted then rolled out as a means to deliver long term affordability with flexibility for intermediate house owners. These encourage local communities to get involved in the solution of providing local affordable housing.

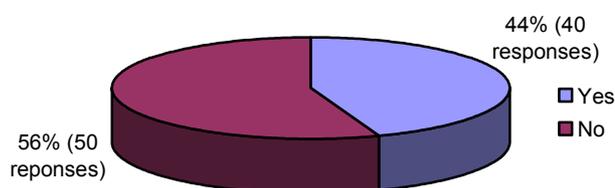
Key Workers – Ramsden Parish Council noted that there should be a change in emphasis away from preference of local people only for housing need and towards key workers – who need to be clearly defined.

Criteria for rural exception sites – Cornbury Park Estate recommended that the criteria for assessing rural exception sites should be re-examined – particularly with respect to the location and scale of potential rural exception sites. The Councillor for Aston, Standlake and Stanton Harcourt also noted that policies on rural exception sites are too restrictive and are not working.

Other service centres – the Councillor for Burford, Fulbrook and Taynton highlighted that increased emphasis is needed on delivery of affordable housing in ‘other service centres’ to try to maintain or lower the average population age.

Q. Should housing sites be allocated in the villages for affordable housing only?

Consultee	Comments
South East Regional Assembly	A consistency of approach to affordable housing provision is required between that in the Cotswold AONB and in the adjoining Cotswold District
Burford Town Council	Yes, this is required to maintain an equal balance of age and income in the locality.



Summary of key issues raised in comments:

Design – It was felt that if affordable housing development was strictly in keeping with local vernacular and if strict covenants to maintain the design quality were

adhered to, then affordable housing sites in villages should be identified. It was felt that design of affordable housing developments could encourage pride in a local area.

Market/affordable housing split – Several consultees felt that market housing delivered alongside affordable housing was required to avoid elements of stigma associated with affordable housing. On balance Minster Lovell Parish Council that this approach should be taken for larger, medium sized villages while in smaller villages land should be prioritised for affordable housing only.

Scale – There was some reservation as to how affordable housing development may integrate with the local community. Bampton Parish Council recommended that development of no more than 6 – 8 affordable homes would be successful.

Viability – Developer, Fairview New Homes Ltd, recommended that WODC should conduct its own district wide financial viability assessment for affordable housing, taking into account risks to delivery and drawing on informed assessments of the likely levels of finance availability for affordable housing.

Q. Are there any particular types of accommodation, especially for younger or older people, that we need to provide more of?

Consultee	Comments
Defence Estates	To note that the MOD has specific housing requirements and that these are in addition to the housing targets for West Oxfordshire. This is of direct relevance to the redevelopment of existing MOD housing, and should be recognised in the Core Strategy.
Witney Town Council	Would like to see more purpose built accommodation provided for the disabled and the elderly which is affordable. There has been a significant amount of apartments built recently which have saturated the market for the young, single and first time buyers – this has changed the character of the town distinctly, resulting, perhaps, in an increasing demand for family homes.

Summary of key issues raised in comments:

Eco-friendly homes - Stanton Harcourt Parish Council and the Witney Woodland Volunteers both noted a requirement for eco-friendly house building – perhaps subject to a Council Tax rebate.

Flexibility and range – Flexible design in houses to allow for ‘life time homes’ was requested, as were flats, maisonettes, starter cottages, extra-care housing for the elderly, bungalows, small houses for young families and large houses for larger established families.

Sites for Gypsies and Travellers and travelling showpeople

Q. Can you suggest any new sites that would be suitable to accommodate either Gypsy and Traveller families, or travelling showpeople?

Summary of key issues raised in comments:

Extension of existing sites – It was considered inadvisable to extend existing sites as these have become stabilised and integrated to a certain extent.

Integrated approach – It was felt that the current approach to identifying sites was adhoc – this needed to be more coherent.. The Cotswolds AONB Board would like to engage with WODC to set criteria for the consideration of such sites.

Minster Lovell – Support was expressed by local residents for the site at Minster Lovell, which was considered to be well run site. It was felt that no further sites in the area could offer the potential for the same quality as the existing site in this area. Minster Lovell Parish Council echoed this sentiment.

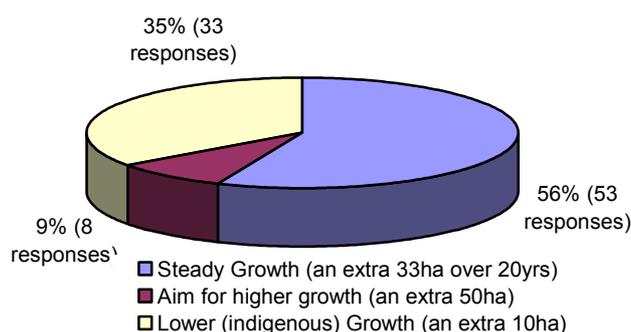
New sites – It was considered that new sites should be official, council owned, and located closer to major conurbations with better infrastructure

Alternative approach – It was raised by one respondent that sites that have been considered unsustainable in the past, such as Shilton aerodrome, whilst not ideal, may be the only way that the needs of travellers can be squared with the objections of the settled population.

Areas for potential sites: The Beeches at Chipping Norton, Cuckoo Wood Farm, Eynsham Road, Freeland.

Jobs and employment

Q. Which strategic option should be pursued?



Consultee	Comments
Carterton Town Council	Selected 'Aim for higher growth'. We need to ensure local employment opportunities if there is to be sustainable growth
Chipping Norton Town Council	Selected 'steady growth'. Steady growth is required in order to regain the balance between housing and employment

Oxfordshire County Council	Selected 'lower growth' due to the current congestion issues on the A40 and in Witney. Lower growth should be pursued until these issues have been resolved, or at least a firm implementation programme has been identified.
SEEDA	Prefers steady employment growth in the District
Witney Town Council	Selected 'steady growth'. The Town Council strongly supports the provision of more smaller managed office units, medium sized high quality offices and small low cost starter industrial units.

Summary of key issues raised in comments:

Balance – Achieving a better balance between jobs and labour supply/housing was raised as a key issue by many respondents. Pressure on labour supply and housing which could increase commuting, was a reason cited by some for the lack of support for Higher Growth. Others suggested Higher Growth should be pursued to help support and diversify the economy to reduce commuting. Achieving a better balance was also noted as being an issue for all Oxfordshire (and other surrounding) Districts and the strategy should have regard to wider sub-regional strategies for meeting the jobs and housing needs so as to ensure long distance commuting is not unnecessarily increased. Retaining existing employment sites was also cited to help maintain the balance.

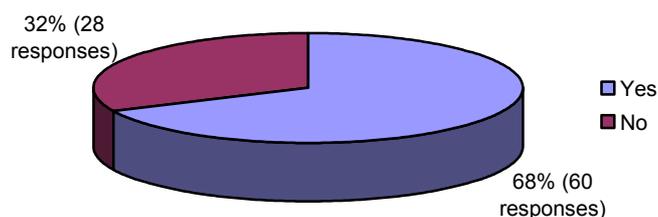
Flexibility – The ability to be able to respond to the market and enable flexibility was noted by some. There was some concern that lower growth would unnecessarily constrain the economy. Others noted that there are existing allocations and premises currently lying vacant. One response noted the need to make a distinction between employment growth and the need for new land. Some growth may occur organically such as through intensification on existing sites.

Infrastructure – The need to improve transport infrastructure before further development was highlighted as a key reason to pursue lower growth. Others suggested spreading employment growth between centres to relieve pressure on Witney.

Continuation of a reasonably successful approach to date – Some respondents commented that Steady Growth strategy should be pursued as it reflects the current approach which has been reasonably successful to date.

Rural Diversification

Q. Should a more flexible approach be applied which may allow the provision of small new employment sites in smaller villages to support rural diversification?



Summary of key issues raised in comments:

Vitality of rural communities – Those in support of a more flexible approach in smaller villages commented that it would improve the self sufficiency, resilience and vitality of such communities, promote social inclusion and reduce commuting. Others commented that there was already enough employment and a resurgence of the rural economy through agriculture, food production, leisure and recreation needs to be taken into account. Many also suggested encouraging employment in villages with affordable housing provision.

Traffic and congestion – There was some concern that employment sites in smaller villages would increase traffic and congestion on local roads. Some commented that such businesses do not employ local people and therefore increase commuting. Others (including OCC) suggested it should be considered on a case by case basis and regulated to ensure traffic problems are not created as they expand.

Access to services– Some commented that employment sites should be located near larger centres to benefit from services and infrastructure or give preference to villages with good access to public transport.

Rural character – There was some concern expressed that such employment sites could spoil the rural feel of villages. Others suggested that the approach should continue restricting development to the conversion of existing buildings only to protect the character of villages.

Town centres and shopping

Q. Please suggest any development needs which should be planned for in or adjoining the main town centres over and above present proposals?

With several town centre proposals already planned and limited identified need¹ for further retail development within West Oxfordshire up to 2016, the Issues and Option Consultation paper asked for suggestions for any development needs to be planned for over an above existing proposals.

Consultee	Comments
Carterton Town Council	Continue to support the expansion of the town centre so that Carterton can be a viable

¹ West Oxfordshire Retail Needs Assessment 2007

	alternative to Witney for some comparison goods.
Witney Town Council	Consider current proposals are sufficient and road infrastructure and parking facilities do not lend themselves to further expansion of the town centre. Retail provision (supermarket, retail outlet or car showroom) to the west of the town is also suggested and reflected in some residents' comments.
Chipping Norton Town Council	Note that if the town is to grow then greater retail possibilities and further services should be provided in the town centre but an out of town supermarket is not supported.
Oxfordshire County Council	Whilst strengthening facilities in Witney would help reduce travelling into Oxford some improvement in other centres may be appropriate.

The key issues raised in comments are summarised as:

Transport - More parking and better transport links, including a Park & Ride into Witney and Oxford was a common theme in comments particularly in relation to Witney. More car parking in Woodstock was also suggested.

Retail and Public Realm - Retaining and encouraging independent local shops was a common issue raised along with the provision of more places for farmers markets and the sale of local produce. Comments also advocated retaining the market town feel and character and investment in the public realm.

Tourism and leisure facilities

Q. Are there any tourist or leisure facilities which should be provided in the District and where?

The key issues raised in comments are summarised as:

Scale - Some residents commented that District was well served with tourism and leisure facilities (except youth facilities) and the need to avoid inappropriate large scale tourism development – better to concentrate on small scale initiatives.

Other residents commented that the more popular tourist villages need suitable facilities – car parks, notice boards and toilets. Toilet facilities at Minster Lovell were suggested and more car parking at Burford.

Community Woodland - More provision of community woodlands was suggested by several respondents to provide recreation and an energy source, and several suggested better access to the Wychwood Forest and 'estates' in general.

Accommodation - More quality accommodation was suggested to cater for the increase in tourism that the Cotswolds provide and increased campsites

Provision for the Elderly - Comments suggested that the needs of older people should be recognised

Accessibility - The Parish Council and residents of Tackley expressed support for the Oxford Canal Leisure Development and Tourist Trail. Comments expressed support for development of the Cotswolds Line.

Windrush Valley - Comments advocated further promotion of the Windrush Valley including greater access to former mineral extraction sites for a mix of activities (walking, cycling, boating and camping).

Finstock Heath - The Cornbury Estate suggest that Finstock Heath could be a suitable site for tourism development

Recreation Facilities - Witney Youth Council commented that more sports facilities should be included in new developments

Specific opportunities for the district's main centres were identified as:-

Witney

- Witney Town Council is keen to improve facilities and hopes that this may be enabled by developer funding. The Town Council supports development which enhances its own facilities to the west of the town and makes provision for an outdoor athletics track. The Town Council noted that there was a 2 year (100 people) allotment waiting list. The Town Council supports the provision of hotels in or near to the town.
- Other specific comments for Witney included the lack of a tourist trail linking Cogges Museum, Palace and Church and also providing more information on the Witney Blanket Industry. In addition comments suggested the improved use of Cogges Farm as a viable leisure facility linked to the Windrush Valley and the need for a better standard of hotels and restaurants.
- Comments suggested that Witney Leisure Centre is getting past its 'sell by date' and future development should provide funds for a new leisure facility and to ensure privately built facilities are available for the community (such as those associated with schools).

Chipping Norton

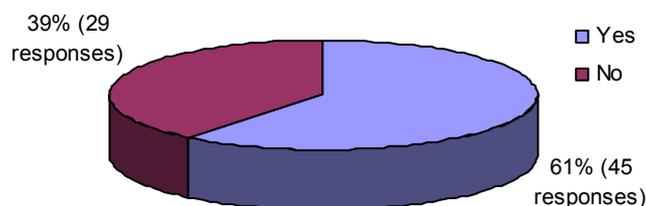
- Chipping Norton Town Council noted that the town no longer has a Visitor Information Centre and also that the town was short of good overnight accommodation.
- Others also commented that the Visitor Information Centre should be restored and that the town needs a heritage centre, museum, new library and new youth facilities.

Carterton

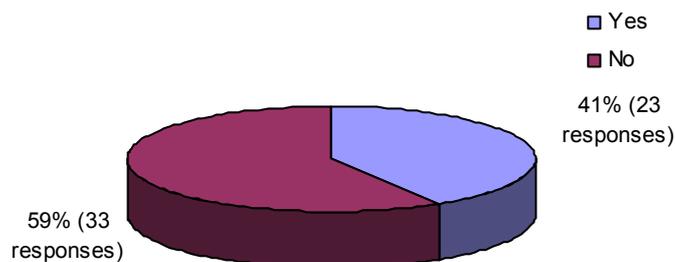
- Carterton Town Council noted that Phase 2 of the Carterton Leisure Centre should be provided.
- Others suggested that an athletics track or stadium should be provided.

Transport infrastructure

Q. Do you support the provision of one or more park and ride sites to serve Witney?



Q. Do you consider town centre car parks can be better/differently managed to serve the community's needs?



Consultee	Comment
Witney Town Council	Supports a strategy to encourage alternative modes of travel but also Cogges Link, WEL2, and A40 Downs Road Junction, a bus lane on, and dualling of, the A40, a park and ride serving Oxford at West Witney with a new bus depot – moving the site from Corn Street. The Town Council is pleased that parking remains free and appreciates the revenue implications of this.
Chipping Norton Town Council	Requests that the level of bus services should be expanded. Air Quality issues and the associated impact of lorry movements need to be addressed. A bus station (such as on New Street car park) would help reduce emissions and congestion. A residents parking scheme should be pursued.
Highways Agency	Concerned about impact of traffic from

development sites on the Pear Tree Interchange, north of Oxford on the A44.

Summary of key issues raised in comments-

Car parking: free car parking is noted to be important for encouraging use of town centres in the district by shoppers and tourists, supporting economic vitality and viability. There was some opposition to free car parking by some consultees who believe that car parking charges are one means of dealing with congestion, and that free car parking discourages people to come to town centres by non-car means. One recommendation was not to charge for the first hour of parking and charge for the remainder of the stay. A request was made for patrolling of car parking to improve compliance.

Railways: There needs to be greater parking provision at smaller stations such as Finstock (Fawler Parish Council) and Charlbury (Cornbury Estate). The reinstatement/ development of rail links and dualling of the Cotswolds line was requested.

Park and Ride development opportunities at Witney: There was some support for a park and ride at Witney as an option for providing out of centre long stay parking , specifically to the north and west. East Witney Land Consortium also proposes a park and ride. Some opposition to the concept of park and ride was expressed, stating that more local buses would be one of many other better solutions to reducing traffic volumes. A park and ride on the A40, but only with bus priority measures, was noted as an option for consideration as was a park and ride at Eynsham and a service between Long Hanborough and Witney.

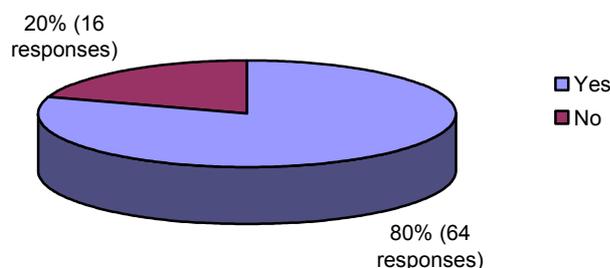
Bypasses/ suggested infrastructure improvements:

- Standlake bypass
- Sutton bypass
- Chipping Norton bypass (to remove heavy transport off the A44)
- Woodstock bypass
- Progress a direct connection of A40 to A34
- West facing slips at Minster Lovell
- Improved traffic management at Station Lane, Witney
- Shores Green should be considered with or without delivery of Cogges Link
- New bridge at Swinbrook
- Link from Asthall Barrow round about on A40 to Carterton/near Football Club
- Full dualling of the A40

Accessibility: expansion of the pedestrian and cycle network giving access to towns and villages from rural sites as well as improvements to bus services (day and night) to villages. Increased disabled parking is requested and safe routes for push chair and wheel chair access in rural areas.

Protecting our environment and reducing the impact of climate change

Q. Should funding be sought from new development where possible and be targeted to secure improvements within the identified biodiversity target areas?



Consultee	Comment
Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance	The Core Strategy (or an SPD) should include thresholds for developer contributions.
Natural England	Developers should have to allocate a proportion of land for development of community woodland for both recreation and fuel. The creation of continuous networks of accessible green infrastructure to support biodiversity, recreational, educational opportunities and economic development should be key. The Council, however, will need to consider both individual and collective contributions of proposed development sites to deliver this objective.
Oxfordshire County Council	A significant contribution to meeting BAP targets should come from developers – and this should aid WODC to use development to meet its obligations in the NERC Act 2006, South East Plan (NRM4), PPS9, and Habitat Regulations.

Q. Is there anything in particular that the Council should be doing more of, through its planning powers, to conserve the District's natural and built environment and its biodiversity?

Consultee	Comment
Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance	Funding should be sought from developers only if development will have a direct impact on the target area. The Council should investigate other means of funding biodiversity target areas, rather than relying solely on developer contributions.

Oxfordshire County Council	Accessibility to connected and permeable greenspace to ensure biodiversity protection is key, together with protection of the integrity/quality of existing/ potential biodiversity value.

Summary of key issues raised in comments-

Opportunities for expansion/preservation – The extension of Wychwood Forest was thought to be of potential biodiversity benefit, together with the development/preservation of a corridor between Cornbury and Ditchley Parks and Blenheim palace. Concern was raised regarding development on or near floodplains as this is a unique habitat which deserved preservation.

Community woodlands – Witney Woodland Volunteers together with several residents raised the need for land for, and development of, community woodlands across the district and specifically around Witney, cared for by, and for the benefit of the community. A policy should be written that provides a long term plan to surround Witney with a buffer zone of accessible, continuous, woodland/open space. New woodlands should also be utilised according to the Forestry Commission's principle for multi-purpose forestry. Accessibility to ancient woodland and other wider green and open spaces were also highlighted as a priority, as was further amenity tree planting.

Developer contributions – Developer concerns about the impact of required contributions on the viability of development were expressed. It was felt that these should only be sought if in accordance with Circular 05/2005 (Developer Contributions).

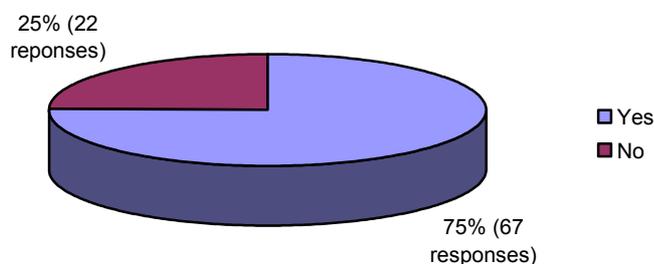
Monitoring and enforcement – Minster Lovell Parish Council highlighted the need for more stringent planning enforcement, through improved powers of enforcement and adherence to planning conditions. Conservation efforts were also considered inadequate.

Flooding – Bampton Environmental Watch Group requested the need for studies to determine implications of development for floodrisk and its environmental implications.

Enstone Airfield – The Enstone Uplands and District Conservation Trust requested that WODC produce a plan to provide a development framework for the area.

Climate Change

Q. Should higher standards of sustainable design and construction be applied to new developments in West Oxfordshire?



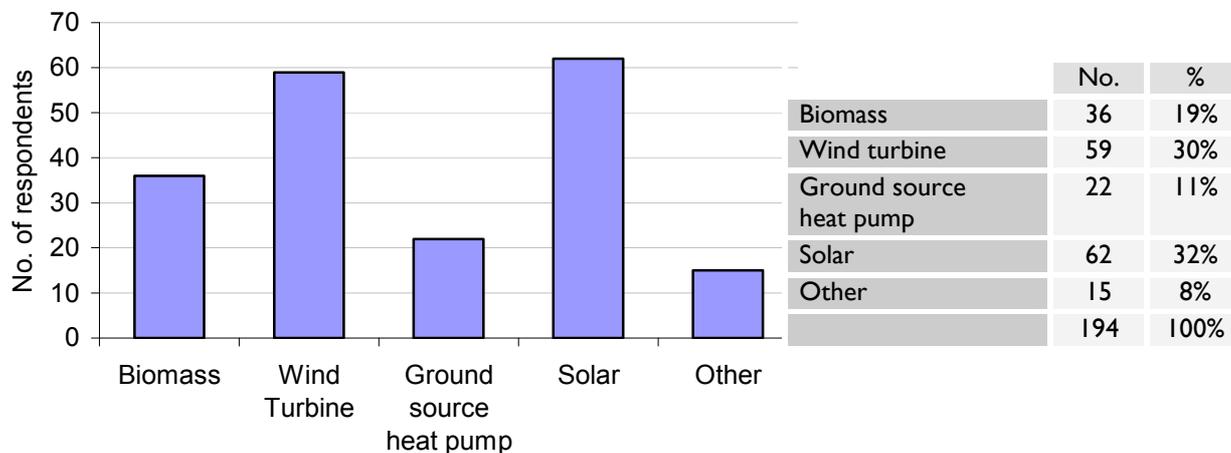
Consultee	Comment
Thames Water	To prevent over abstraction, sewer flooding and pollution of the wider environment, policy should seek early infrastructure delivery. With regard to flooding, future policy should acknowledge that essential utility infrastructure is often located in the floodplain.
Thames Valley Police	Secured by design principles must be robustly applied to all developments, including through Code for Sustainable Homes which recognises that designing out crime is part of sustainable design and construction.
Home Builders Federation	Concerned about the impact of imposing higher standards of design and construction on development viability, and in turn, negatively impacting on deliverability.

Summary of key issues raised in comments-

Viability – Several developers requested a caveat to policy stating that any policy requesting a percentage of renewable energy generation is subject to tests of viability and suitability (in terms of location and design).

Decentralised, renewable and low-carbon energy generation

Q. Which particular sources of renewable and low-carbon energy should be promoted in West Oxfordshire?

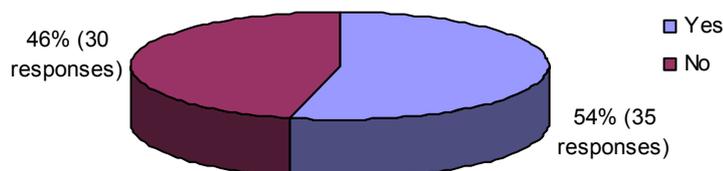


Consultee	Comments
Oxfordshire County Council	Supports general promotion of renewable energy production rather than specific technology. Different technologies are appropriate in different circumstances therefore setting a minimum requirement for renewable technology and allowing the market to decide what technologies are pursued would be the preferred option.

Summary of key issues raised in comments:

Renewable energy options - Ground source heat pumps were identified as one method which could contribute effectively to meeting such targets, as in Germany and Scandinavia. Opportunities for hydro-electricity and woodfuel/biomass heating systems, particularly for public buildings, were supported. Photo-voltaic roof tiles/cells were considered an opportunity to easily integrate renewable technology into new buildings and wind power should be considered at the initial phase of development and design.

Q. Should specific areas be identified in West Oxfordshire for renewable and low-carbon energy generation?



Consultee	Comments
Oxfordshire County Council	Yes, although this is dependant on the site location and an assessment of which sources of renewable/low carbon energy is most appropriate.
Home Builders Federation	Support identification of specific areas for decentralised energy provision as it would allow developers to estimate in advance the likely cost associated with integrating this into the provision of development or the cost of any associated S106 obligation. A fixed target should not be adopted. Emphasis should be on identifying the most effective form of energy for a given locality and consideration given to the future maintenance and repair costs for future residents.
Witney Town Council	Requested that any sites for renewable energy generation be located away from areas which may prove controversial due to their amenity impacts ie not in the vicinity of industrial or residential areas.

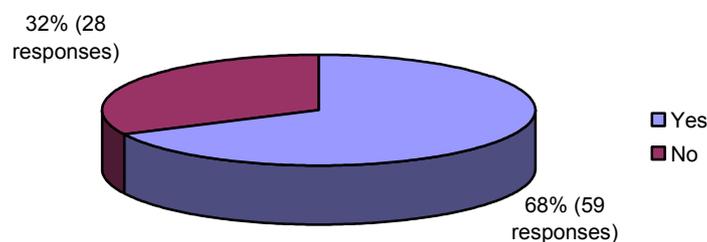
Summary of key issues raised in comments-

Conservation of rural areas – Bampton Environmental Watch Group emphasised that any site chosen should be carefully considered in terms of its impact on the countryside.

Landfill sites – Development sited in close proximity to a landfill could be ideal locations for ground source heat pumps and biomass energy generation.

Biomass – Sites for biomass production should be focussed in areas where soil quality does not support food crops.

Q. Should a target be set for the generation of on-site renewable energy in new development?



Consultee	Comments
Oxfordshire County Council	Yes – cited Oxford City Council as best practice for developing policy requiring 20% renewable energy on new developments, supported by Natural Resource Impact Assessment.
Defence Estates Safeguarding	No objection to targets but policy would need to establish that wind energy allocations will not compromise MOD safeguarding requirements. Allocations of solar energy via photo-voltaics and proximity to MOD aerodromes should take account of the potential solar panels to reflect light/dazzle aircrew.
Thames Water	Yes – supports realistic targets for renewable energy but requires a policy preventing development on the flood plain.

Summary of key issues raised in the comments:

General support - Several respondents expressed support for setting a target for the generation of onsite renewable energy on new development, particularly in affordable housing development – namely as a means of increasing sustainable energy opportunities within the district and reducing reliance on finite energy resources.

Additional measures - It was felt by some that a target for renewable energy generation would not go far enough to ensuring maximum reduction in carbon footprint, that such a target should be complemented by policy securing high insulation and passive solar energy through design and construction.

Water – Water conservation measures within new developments were also considered an important priority which should be embedded in policy, such as the use of grey water recycling, reed bed waste water management and control of run off through sustainable urban drainage systems of other means.

Opposition – Opponents to a set local target felt that as there is central government policy on this that there was no need for replicating it at local level, whilst others felt

that a policy which supported the principles of energy efficiency in development is underpinned by the targets contained in national Building Regulations, and therefore a policy with a flexible approach with scope for development to respond to its context would be preferable. One opponent felt that targets can lead to misleading recording of data and an imbalance of resources, and that any target would need rapid revision. Concern was also expressed regarding the increased cost of implementing renewable energy generation projects and that this may be passed onto purchasers, making housing less affordable.

Embodied energy – It was felt by some that policy should impose a large percentage reduction in carbon emissions rather than adding renewable energy targets, allowing new developments to reduce the energy that they produce rather than generate their own, therefore lowering embodied energy.

Retrofit and implementation – It was also noted by one respondent that policy is needed that encourages the retrofit/implementation of renewable energy technology on existing built form if the carbon footprint of West Oxfordshire is to be reduced to its greatest potential.

General Comments

A number of general comments were raised alongside responses to specific questions in the Core Strategy Issues and Options Questionnaire. These covered a wide range of issues and these are presented below:

Community Safety

Thames Valley Police – ‘The Core Strategy needs to explicitly identify community infrastructure (of which police facilities are part) under the issue of ‘Improving Accessibility to Services and Facilities’, in addition to employment, leisure, tourism and transport. A broader definition of infrastructure should be provided to include community safety which is part of delivering new development that is sustainable. The Core Strategy must signal clearly that the growth of towns and villages must be matched by a commensurate increase in essential infrastructure, including community infrastructure, as relying on Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy are likely to be inadequate for supply the level of provision needed.’

Infrastructure

South East England Regional Assembly – ‘The Core Strategy will need to identify what infrastructure, including transport infrastructure, is required to support the strategy, when it is required and how it will be delivered. The split between social rented and intermediate housing should be developed based on the results of housing need assessment and demand. This should also address the needs with specialist requirements including elderly and disabled people and to any requirement for extra care.’

Rail Infrastructure

Hanborough Parish Council – ‘Hanborough Station attracts commuters from a wide area, with a result that parking is insufficient. Any increase in development would make this situation worse.’

Tackley Parish Council –‘Maintain a strategy which encourages the continuation of the Oxford Canal Line (Tackley Station) and the Cotswold Line.’

Delivery of Green Infrastructure

Natural England: ‘create continuous networks of accessible green infrastructure, which will support biodiversity, recreational and educational opportunities and economic development. The Council will need to consider the individual and collective contributions of proposed development sites in delivering these objectives.’

Development and Affordable Housing in the Cotswold AONB

Cotswold AONB Board: ‘A specific policy should be included in the Core Strategy to deal with the Cotswold AONB that requires all planning matters to start from the premise that the conservation and enhancement of its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage will have priority over other considerations. The Board would be opposed to a policy which attempts to treat all landscape within the District within the same policy if that in any way dilutes the principles which should apply to the AONB. The Board would also urge the Council to adopt a very constrained policy with respect to open market housing outside the market towns. The possibility of obtaining consent for such houses results in landowners not wishing to make land available for affordable housing at lower prices.’

Enstone Airfield

Enstone Uplands and District Conservation Trust (ENCON): ‘The absence of a plan for Enstone Airfield means that there is no benchmark against which planning applications can be determined. This has resulted in Planning Applications being considered on an individual basis against very generalised policies rather than a comprehensive planning framework for Enstone airfield. As a result developments on the airfield have resulted in environment problems. The only way to improve the position is to have an overall planning framework for the airfield, as suggested in the Core Strategy.’

Youth Perspectives

Witney Youth Council: ‘Witney is a brilliant place to live, more people mean more houses, which is good but don’t build houses if you are not going to build new roads and infrastructure to support it. There should be more sports facilities included in developments, especially for teenagers. If more houses are built there should be more green spaces within these areas.’

Shopping

The Mid-Counties Co-operative Society (agent): ‘The LDF should state fully clearly that the Strategy is to focus new retail development in town centres. The Society agrees that there is no need for an additional large food store in the District before 2016 The Council should note that there is now considerable interest in developing small convenience stores which can form part of district centres in areas of new housing or in housing areas poorly served at present. These stores offer considerable sustainability benefits and the LDF should recognise the opportunity they offer.’

Economy Growth

Resident (Long Hanborough) ... 'it is desirable to distribute centres of economic activity as widely as possible even with the main focus of development being Witney and the surrounding areas of Eynsham, Bladon, Long Hanborough, North Leigh etc ... therefore the economic potential of Carterton (and more doubtfully) Chipping Norton might be pursued.'

Resource Management

Resident (Witney) ... 'I feel that the Core Strategy should be consistent with/or contain , contingency plans for a severe weather event, a flu pandemic and a severe oil shortage ... we should expect the era of cheap energy, in particular oil, to be over in the next few decades, if not sooner, and should plan for this now. The best defence against the above is to develop local capability and resources.'

Thames Water: 'With regard to natural resources we would like the Core Strategy to set out the measures we intend to carry out to meet water demand from 2010 to 2035, as set out in our draft Water Resources Management Plan. The Core Strategy should note the preferred location for the proposed Upper Thames Reservoir (although located in the Vale of White Horse district). There should also be policy support for the requirement for additional sewerage sludge management capacity in the District during the LDF plan period....Carterton catchment has been listed as a growth catchment within our next business plan and will therefore benefit from network upgrades between 2010 and 2015, as will Witney.'

Historic Estates

Cornbury Estate: 'The Cornbury Estate is concerned that the current planning policies ... which largely link development proposals to settlement patterns, do not recognise the unique circumstances of Estates, which by their nature consist of a diverse spread of small villages and hamlets, farmsteads and isolated structures set in a rural landscape. Hence permissible development policy is currently very limited... The Cornbury Estate ... requests that consideration be given in the LDF to the specific recognition of historic Estates in the district and request the formulation of a Policy which would facilitate appropriate sustainable development in accordance with PPS7.'

Food Production and Agricultural Use of Land

Resident (Ramsden) 'Greenfield sites should be examined very closely given the need to grow food locally. Agricultural and horticultural potential should be professionally assessed before building is allowed. If the soil/location is poor, that will certainly favour growing trees for forestry and amenity.'

RAF Brize Norton

MOD/Defence Estates: '...welcome the inclusion of a policy in the Core Strategy that recognises RAF Brize Norton as a Core MOD site.'

Burford, Fulbrook, Taynton Parish Council: 'concern about the detrimental effect of Brize Norton airfield on tourism due to increased overflying and activity. Tourism and heritage are important attractions in much of the district.'

Leisure and Culture

Theatres Trust: 'The Core Strategy Issues and Options paper does not contain any reference to cultural activities which should be included within the Leisure and Tourism section together with open space, sport and leisure activities but with particular reference to visitor attractions.'

Placemaking

Resident (Eynsham) 'there needs to be consideration given to the capacity of settlements to absorb change with weight given to 'place making' (including density and urban form) in the analysis. At present it seems to be going to be based on adhoc site allocation'.