

# **Joint Statement of Common Ground**

**between**

**Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council**

**Submission Draft (Regulation 19) Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042**

**July 2025**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1. National planning policy emphasises the importance of local planning authorities working collaboratively on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries. Such matters may include the provision of new homes, jobs and infrastructure.
- 1.2. Such joint working should be captured in a statement of common ground which is essentially a written record of the strategic matters that are being addressed and explaining where effective co-operation is happening throughout the plan-making process.
- 1.3. A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) forms part of the evidence base needed to demonstrate that local planning authorities have complied with the Duty to Co-operate when local plans are considered at examination.
- 1.4. The Councils party to this Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) recognise the value of an on-going working relationship for positively prepared local plans.
- 1.5. All the Oxfordshire Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have engaged with Cherwell in the production of this statement and are signatories to it.

## **2 Purpose and scope of this Statement of Common Ground**

- 2.1. This joint Statement of Common Ground has been prepared specifically in relation to Cherwell District Council's Regulation 19 submission draft Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042. It is made between Cherwell District Council and all the other Oxfordshire LPAs.
- 2.2. The SOCG has been prepared by Cherwell officers, discussed at the Oxfordshire Planning Policy Officers Group (OPPO) and has been agreed by respective senior officers from each of the Councils.

2.3. OPPO comprises the planning policy manager (or equivalent) from each Council and meets regularly, every month or every other month, to discuss various issues relating to plan-making, including strategic matters of cross boundary importance. Various other mechanisms for cooperation also exist, including regular partnership meetings and forums as set out in Cherwell District Council's Interim Duty to Co-operate Statement of Compliance published December 2024.

2.4. This joint statement has been prepared and agreed by the following parties (listed in alphabetical order):

- Cherwell District Council
- Oxford City Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Vale of White Horse District Council
- West Oxfordshire District Council

### **3 THE DUTY TO CO-OPERATE**

3.1 All parties agree that Cherwell District Council has met its statutory Duty to Co-operate requirements as set out in section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### **4 KEY STRATEGIC MATTERS**

4.1 This SoCG focuses on the following key strategic cross-boundary matters for the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042:

- Housing need and supply
- Gypsy and Traveller needs
- Employment and jobs needed
- Natural environment
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation

4.2 For each strategic matter, there is a statement on where the parties agree. Where there are areas of disagreement or where additional information is available, an outline of the current position then follows.

#### **Housing Need and supply**

4.3 The parties agree the following:

- The assessment of housing need is a strategically important matter which has important cross-boundary implications for local plan-making, in particular the provision of an appropriate number and type of new homes;

- Housing need is an unconstrained assessment of the number of homes needed in an area and is the first step in deciding how many homes to plan for;
- To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning practice guidance;
- In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for;
- Strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period;
- In the context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies;
- An assessment of land availability identifies a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period and is an important source of evidence to inform plan-making and decision-taking;
- Cherwell District Council can provide for all of its identified housing requirement within its boundaries and therefore does not have any unmet housing need;
- Cherwell's proposed submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan meets the transitional arrangements set out in paragraph 234(a) of the December 2024 NPPF.

### **Cherwell's Current Position**

- 4.4 Cherwell published its proposed submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan under the transitional arrangements set out in paragraph 234(a) of the December 2024 NPPF. Pursuant to paragraph 235, this means that the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 will be examined under the December 2023 version of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.5 Cherwell's local housing need figure, calculated in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance published on 12 December 2024, is 1118 dwellings per year. The housing requirement in the Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan is 911

dwellings per year which is 81.5% of its December 2024 housing need figure. This requirement includes 200 dwellings per annum to meet Oxford's unmet housing need to 2042.

#### *Oxford's Unmet Need*

- 4.6 On 26 September 2016, the Oxfordshire Growth Board (now the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee) considered a report summarising the output of countywide work in the interests of assisting Oxford with its unmet housing need. The Growth Board decided on an apportionment of 14,850 homes to the district and city councils. Cherwell District was asked to consider the accommodation of 4,400 homes in addition to its existing Local Plan commitments and the countywide apportionment was embedded in a Memorandum of Cooperation signed by five of the six Oxfordshire Councils in 2016.
- 4.7 The Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 adopted in 2020, subsequently made provision for the delivery of these 4,400 homes on six sites in the south of the district. Whilst progress is being made on these sites, no homes have yet been delivered to meet Oxford's needs.
- 4.8 Following the withdrawal of the Oxford Local Plan 2040 in January 2025, the most up to date position on Oxford's housing need is the new NPPF and the new standard method. The most up to date position on Oxford's unmet need is provided by its adopted Local Plan (2016 – 2036). This Plan was informed by a roll-forward of a 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment to 2018. The Oxford Local Plan identifies a target of some 1,400 homes per annum to meet its needs to 2036. Of these the City would provide 567 dwellings per annum between 2021 and 2036; a total of approximately 8,500 homes. The City are now progressing a new Local Plan which will cover the period 2022 – 2042. This Plan is being prepared in accordance with the requirements of the current NPPF. Applying the current standard method figure, as required by the NPPF, the emerging Oxford Local Plan will need to provide for a housing need of 1087 homes per annum. This is a total of at least 21,740 homes over the Plan period, which the City will be unable to meet in full.
- 4.9 There therefore remains, in Cherwell's view, Oxford unmet housing need to be met to 2042, although the exact quantum has yet to be established. Cherwell is therefore planning to carry forward its intention to deliver the 4,400 homes by saving the relevant adopted site allocation policies from the Partial Review plan, having considered the City's probable local housing need assessed using the standard method.

#### *Gypsy and Traveller Needs*

- 4.10 The parties agree that:

- The jointly commissioned December 2024 Oxfordshire – wide Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Showperson and Boat Dweller Accommodation Assessment assesses these communities' needs across the County to 2042.

- Cherwell District Council can provide for all of its identified gypsy and traveller needs within its boundaries and therefore does not have any unmet need.
- No other Oxfordshire LPA has requested that Cherwell meet any of their gypsy and traveller needs.

## Employment & Jobs Needed

4.11 The parties agree the following:

- Strategic policy-making authorities need to prepare a robust evidence base to understand and therefore help create the conditions for business to invest, expand and adapt.
- The Oxfordshire Strategic Vision<sup>1</sup> aims to:
  - Support diverse, accessible employment, generating a highly productive and inclusive economy based on our world-class research, innovation and technology; and
  - Embrace innovation based on our technology sectors and knowledge intensive activity, and develop new innovative solutions for working, earning, mobility, health care, resource management, sustainable design and improved public services.
- The employment needs identified in the Cherwell Local Plan Review are evidenced by the Cherwell Employment Needs Assessment and its subsequent updates. These identified needs can all be met within Cherwell.
- No other Oxfordshire LPA has requested that Cherwell meet any of their employment needs.

## Natural Environment

4.12 The parties agree the following:

- The Oxfordshire Strategic Vision aims to
  - ‘Facilitate environmental improvements and make efficient use of Oxfordshire’s natural resources and land’;
  - ‘Enhance and expand access to the county’s internationally significant historic environment and cultural and heritage assets’; and
  - ‘Expect high-quality development which will have a positive impact on communities in terms of design, energy and water efficiency and public realm, utilises low-impact building and construction methods and

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<sup>1</sup> [A Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire](#) (May 2021)

materials, and is properly supported by the necessary infrastructure including excellent digital connectivity. Everything we build or design in Oxfordshire will be fit for purpose in the world of 2050, respond to different circumstances, contribute to Oxfordshire's sense of distinctiveness and rich variety, and support connected communities'.

- All of the parties are members of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership.
- All the parties have a statutory role and are working collaboratively with the County Council to produce the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- The Parties have engaged constructively in the preparation of their respective Habitats Regulations Assessments to seek alignment of methodology to help determine the potential cumulative effects of growth from our local plans.
- There is no available Oxfordshire-wide transport model which could be used to test all Oxfordshire Plans. Consequently, all parties have worked together to develop an agreed joint approach to assessing the in-combination air quality impacts of planned growth on the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation. Each party has engaged with Natural England and all parties are committed to continued effective engagement going forward.

## Climate Change Mitigation & Adaption

### 4.13 The parties agree the following:

- Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles which the National Planning Policy Framework expects to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking;
- Oxfordshire Strategic Vision's climate aims are:
  - to have achieved carbon neutral status, and be accelerating towards a carbon negative future, removing more carbon than it emits each year. Energy production will be sustainable; and
  - to be clean and green, placing the county at the leading edge of UK and global de-carbonisation efforts by maximising all opportunities to significantly reduce Oxfordshire's carbon footprint, and increasing natural capital across the county.
- All parties engaged with the 2021 Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PAZCO) which examined how Oxfordshire could sustain momentum towards achieving net zero emissions goals.

- All parties are positively engaging with Local Area Energy Planning in Oxfordshire.

The provision of infrastructure, including health, education, utilities, flood risk and strategic sustainable transport links.

4.14 The parties agree the following:

- Effective co-operation enables strategic policy-making authorities and infrastructure providers to establish strategic cross-boundary infrastructure requirements.
- The Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) was commissioned by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership in 2017. Involving the county's six local authorities and Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, its intention was to help prioritise infrastructure requirements, projects and investments, to inform Local Plans to 2040 and beyond. The OxIS Stage 1 Report was produced in March 2022 and provides a strategic framework for the Oxfordshire Local Authorities, as well as key strategic partners, to support the prioritisation of proposed infrastructure scheme investment and to identify potential delivery and funding opportunities to 2040.
- All parties are positively engaging in the latest (2025) Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy project (OXIS)
- An Oxfordshire Health Impact Assessment Toolkit was approved by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership in January 2021 for use by all six Oxfordshire Local Authorities. A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a tool used to identify the health impacts of a plan or project and to develop recommendations to maximise the positive impacts and minimise the negative impacts, while maintaining a focus on addressing health inequalities. By bringing such health considerations to the fore, HIAs add value to the planning process.
- Up until the end of 2024 all parties regularly attended an Oxfordshire based Healthy Place Shaping working group led by the County Council's Public Health Team.

**Signed on behalf of Cherwell District Council:**



**Christina Cherry**

**Planning Policy, Conservation & Design Manager**

**Date: 28 July 2025**

**Signed on behalf of Oxford City Council**



**Name: Rachel Williams**

**Title: Planning Policy and Place Manager**

**Date: 21.07.25**

**Signed on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council**



**Name: Tim Oruye**

**Title: Head of Policy and Programmes**

**Date: 21 July 2025**

**Signed on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council**

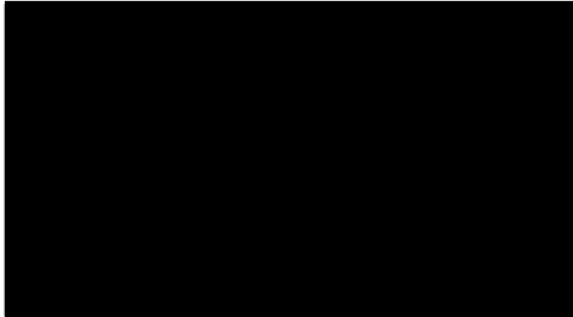


**Name: Tim Oruye**

**Title: Head of Policy and Programmes**

**Date: 21 July 2025**

**Signed on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council**



**Name: Andrew Thomsson**

**Title: Planning Policy Manager**

**Date: 28/07/2025**