

# Sustainability Appraisal of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041

FINAL

## Scoping Report

August 2024



**LEPUS** CONSULTING  
LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, PLANNING & URBAN SUSTAINABILITY



# Sustainability Appraisal of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041

## Scoping Report

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Oxfordshire Local Plan and meets the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations. It is not intended to be a substitute for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Appropriate Assessment (AA).

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# Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>A&amp;E</b>	Accident and Emergency
<b>ALC</b>	Agricultural Land Classification
<b>AQMA</b>	Air Quality Management Area
<b>ASR</b>	(Air Quality) Annual Status Report
<b>BBOWT</b>	Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust
<b>BMV</b>	Best and Most Versatile
<b>BNG</b>	Biodiversity Net Gain
<b>CA</b>	Conservation Areas
<b>CAMS</b>	Catchment Area Management Strategies
<b>DBEIS</b>	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
<b>DLUHC</b>	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gas
<b>GI</b>	Green Infrastructure
<b>GIS</b>	Geographical Information Systems
<b>GP</b>	General Practitioner
<b>HER</b>	Historic Environment Record
<b>HLC</b>	Historic Landscape Characterisation
<b>HMA</b>	Housing Market Area
<b>HRA</b>	Habitats Regulations Assessment
<b>IRZ</b>	Impact Risk Zone
<b>LGS</b>	Local Geological Site
<b>LNR</b>	Local Nature Reserve
<b>LNRN</b>	Local Nature Recovery Network
<b>LPA</b>	Local Planning Authority
<b>LSOA</b>	Lower Super Output Area
<b>LTCP</b>	Local Transport and Connectivity Plan
<b>LWS</b>	Local Wildlife Site
<b>MHCLG</b>	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
<b>NCA</b>	National Character Area
<b>NHS</b>	National Health Service
<b>NNR</b>	National Nature Reserve
<b>NO<sub>2</sub></b>	Nitrogen Dioxide
<b>NPPF</b>	National Planning Policy Framework
<b>NRN</b>	Nature Recovery Network
<b>ONS</b>	Office of National Statistics
<b>PDL</b>	Previously Developed Land
<b>PPP</b>	Policies Plans and Programmes
<b>PRoW</b>	Public Rights of Way
<b>RBMP</b>	River Basin Management Plan
<b>RPG</b>	Registered Park and Garden
<b>SA</b>	Sustainability Appraisal
<b>SAC</b>	Special Area of Conservation
<b>SEA</b>	Strategic Environmental Assessment

<b>SFRA</b>	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
<b>SM</b>	Scheduled Monument
<b>SPA</b>	Special Protection Area
<b>SPZ</b>	Source Protection Zone
<b>SSSI</b>	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
<b>SuDS</b>	Sustainable Drainage System
<b>SWFR</b>	Surface Water Flood Risk
<b>TVERC</b>	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
<b>WHS</b>	World Heritage Site
<b>WODC</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>WRMP</b>	Water Resource Management Plan

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) are preparing a new Local Plan to provide an up-to-date vision and framework to guide decision making for how, where and when development can come forward in the district for the period up to 2041.
- 1.1.2 Lepus Consulting has been commissioned by WODC to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), to support the preparation of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan. The purpose of SA is to assess the extent to which a plan or programme will help to achieve environmental, economic, and social sustainability.
- 1.1.3 This SA Scoping Report represents the first stage in the SA of the Local Plan. This report will be published for consultation with the statutory consultation bodies (Natural England, Historic England, and the Environment Agency) as required by Regulation 12 (5) of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004<sup>1</sup> (SEA Regulations).

## 1.2 West Oxfordshire District

- 1.2.1 West Oxfordshire District lies in the south east of England, within Oxfordshire County, covering an area of approximately 71,444ha (see **Figure 1.1**). The district is primarily rural in character, with roughly a third of the district in the north west falling within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (National Landscape).
- 1.2.2 The district has a clear settlement hierarchy of three main towns (Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton) and six rural service centres (Bampton, Burford, Charlbury, Eynsham, Long Hanborough and Woodstock), with a number of scattered villages and hamlets. The City of Oxford lies adjacent to the district in the east, with a small proportion of Oxford's Green Belt falling within the district. The latest population estimates record approximately 116,928 people living within West Oxfordshire<sup>2</sup>, the majority of whom live in the main towns.
- 1.2.3 The district has a strong and diverse economy, with a history of engineering and manufacturing. Notable features of the district's built environment include various heritage assets, including several historic market towns and villages, and Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site (WHS), which also play an important role in the visitor economy and strong rural tourism sector.

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<sup>1</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004). Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/contents/made> [Date accessed: 19/03/24]

<sup>2</sup> ONS (2023) Estimates of the population for England and Wales: Mid-2022 local authority population estimates. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/estimateofthepopulationforenglandandwales> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

- 1.2.4 The River Thames follows the southern boundary of the district, with various tributaries including the Windrush and Evenlode flowing through the district. These rivers form important ecological corridors alongside the network of ancient woodland and other nature conservation designations, including a small section of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in the east of the district.

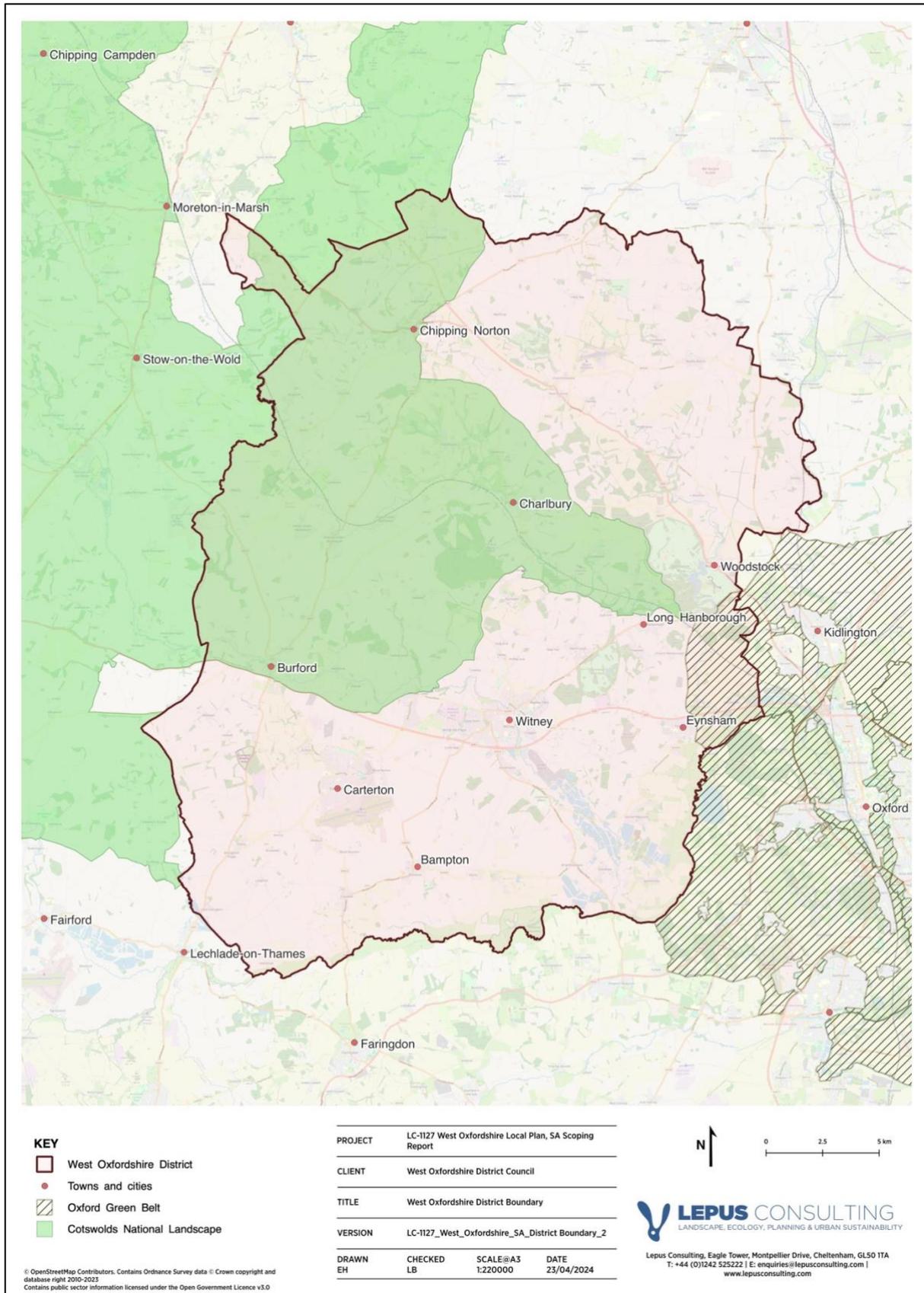


Figure 1.1: The West Oxfordshire Local Plan area

## 1.3 The West Oxfordshire Local Plan

1.3.1 The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 will set out a vision and framework for the future development of the district, enabling needs and opportunities to be identified and decisions made on key issues such as how much development takes place and where, what infrastructure is needed and how positive outcomes such as environmental enhancements can best be achieved.

1.3.2 To date, WODC have held two public consultations to help shape the emerging Local Plan:

- ‘Scoping’ (2022)<sup>3</sup> high-level consultation paper to seek early views on the potential scope for the new Local Plan with various open questions under six core themes; and
- ‘Ideas and Objectives’ (2023)<sup>4</sup> consultation paper presenting a series of draft plan objectives, potential policy topics to cover, eight potential scenarios for the spatial strategy, and inviting suggestions on potential land uses across the district via a call for sites.

1.3.3 Once adopted, the Local Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for the district covering the period to 2041, replacing and updating the current West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (adopted 2018)<sup>5</sup>.

1.3.4 Key facts relating to the emerging Local Plan are presented in **Table 1.1**.

**Table 1.1:** Key facts relating to the West Oxfordshire Local Plan

<b>Responsible authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Title of plan</b>	West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041
<b>What prompted the plan (e.g. legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)</b>	The Local Plan is being developed in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012.
<b>Area covered by the plan</b>	West Oxfordshire District (see <b>Figure 1.1</b> ).

<sup>3</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2022) Initial Scoping Consultation: Local Plan and Council Plan Consultation. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2041/> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

<sup>4</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2023) Focused Consultation: Ideas and Objectives. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2041/> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

<sup>5</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2018) West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2031/> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

<b>Purpose and/or objectives of the plan</b>	The new Local Plan will set out the spatial strategy, allocations and policies to address the district's needs and guide development for the period to 2041. WODC have identified a range of draft objectives for the Plan, aiming to provide a strong policy position on critical environmental issues such as climate change and nature recovery, whilst providing housing, jobs and infrastructure to meet the social and economic needs of the local population.
<b>Contact point</b>	<b>Address:</b> Planning Policy Team, West Oxfordshire District Council, Woodgreen, Witney, OX28 1NB <b>Contact No:</b> 01993 861686 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk">planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk</a>

## 1.4 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.4.1 This document constitutes the SA Scoping Report for the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, representing Stage A of the SA process, according to the Planning Practice Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal<sup>6</sup> (see **Figure 1.2**).
- 1.4.2 SA is a statutory requirement for development plan documents with the key objective being to promote sustainable development. The process of SA involves informing local development plans of their value in regard to sustainability.
- 1.4.3 The requirements to carry out SA and SEA are distinct, although it is possible to satisfy both obligations using a single appraisal process.
- 1.4.4 The European Union Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>7</sup> (SEA Directive) applies to a wide range of public plans and programmes on land use, energy, waste, agriculture, transport and more (see Article 3(2) of the Directive for other plan or programme types). The objective of the SEA procedure can be summarised as follows: *"the objective of this Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development"*.
- 1.4.5 The SEA Directive has been transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004<sup>8</sup> (SEA Regulations). Under the requirements of the SEA Directive and SEA Regulations, specific types of plans that set the framework for the future development consent of projects must be subject to an environmental assessment. Therefore, it is a legal requirement for the Local Plan to be subject to SEA throughout its preparation.

<sup>6</sup> DLUHC & MHCLG (2024) Planning practice guidance. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance> [Date accessed: 25/08/24]

<sup>7</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (SEA Directive). Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN> [Date accessed: 19/03/24]

<sup>8</sup> The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents/made> [Date accessed: 19/03/24]

1.4.6 SA is a UK-specific procedure used to appraise the impacts and effects of development plans in the UK. It is a legal requirement as specified by S19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004<sup>9</sup> and should be an appraisal of the economic, social and environmental sustainability of development plans. The present statutory requirement for SA lies in The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012<sup>10</sup>. SA is a systematic process for evaluating the environmental consequences of proposed plans or programmes to ensure environmental issues are fully integrated and addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision-making.

1.4.7 Public consultation is an important aspect of the integrated SA/SEA process.

## 1.5 Best Practice Guidance

1.5.1 Government policy recommends that both SA and SEA are undertaken under a single sustainability appraisal process, which incorporates the requirements of the SEA Regulations. This can be achieved through integrating the requirements of SEA into the SA process. The approach for carrying out an integrated SA and SEA is based on best practice guidance, including the following:

- European Commission (2004) Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment<sup>11</sup>
- Office of Deputy Prime Minister (2005) A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive<sup>12</sup>
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) (2023) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>13</sup>
- DLUHC & Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (2024) Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents> [Date accessed: 19/03/24]

<sup>10</sup> The Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents/made> [Date accessed: 19/03/24]

<sup>11</sup> European Commission (2004) Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the assessment of the effects of certain plan and programmes on the environment. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eia/pdf/030923\\_sea\\_guidance.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eia/pdf/030923_sea_guidance.pdf) [Date accessed: 19/03/24]

<sup>12</sup> Office of Deputy Prime Minister (2005) A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7657/practicalguides\\_ea.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguides_ea.pdf) [Date accessed: 19/03/24]

<sup>13</sup> DLUHC (2023) National Planning Policy Framework, December 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Date accessed: 12/03/24]

<sup>14</sup> DLUHC & MHCLG (2024) Planning practice guidance. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance> [Date accessed: 19/03/24]

- Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) (2018) Strategic Environmental Assessment: Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of SEA/SA for land use plans<sup>15</sup>.

## 1.6 SEA Regulations Requirements

1.6.1 This Scoping Report represents Stage A of the SA process (see **Figure 1.2**), and presents information in relation to:

- Identifying other relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives;
- Collecting baseline information;
- Identifying sustainability problems and key issues;
- Preparing the SA Framework; and
- Consultation on the scope of SA with the consultation bodies.

1.6.2 Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations<sup>16</sup> sets out the various topics that should be considered in the SEA process, as follows:

- a) biodiversity;
- b) population;
- c) human health;
- d) fauna;
- e) flora;
- f) soil;
- g) water;
- h) air;
- i) climatic factors;
- j) material assets;
- k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage;
- l) landscape; and
- m) the inter-relationship between these factors.

1.6.3 The policy, plan and programme (PPP) review (**Appendix A**), the baseline data and the other relevant sustainability issues are largely structured in accordance with the topics of Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, the details of which are presented in **Table 1.2**.

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<sup>15</sup> Royal Town Planning Institute (2018) Strategic Environmental Assessment, Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of SEA/SA for land use plans. Available at: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1822/sea-sapracticeadvicefull2018c.pdf> [Date accessed: 19/03/24]

<sup>16</sup> The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Schedule 2: Information for Environmental Reports. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/schedules/made> [Date accessed: 19/03/24]



Figure 1.2: Sustainability appraisal process

**Table 1.2: Sustainability themes**

Sustainability theme	Relevant SEA topics included in Schedule 2 of SEA Regulations	What is included in the sustainability theme? (not exhaustive)
<b>Accessibility and transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transport infrastructure</li> <li>Walking and cycling</li> <li>Accessibility</li> </ul>
<b>Air</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air pollution sources</li> <li>Air quality hotspots</li> <li>Air quality management</li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity, flora, fauna and geodiversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biodiversity</li> <li>Flora</li> <li>Fauna</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Habitats and species</li> <li>Nature conservation designations</li> <li>Geological features</li> </ul>
<b>Climatic factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climatic factors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>Effects of climate change</li> <li>Renewable energy</li> <li>Climate change adaptation</li> <li>Flooding</li> </ul>
<b>Human health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health inequalities</li> <li>Access to healthcare</li> <li>Sport, fitness and activity levels</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated and non-designated heritage assets</li> <li>Setting of heritage assets</li> <li>Historic landscape character</li> <li>Archaeological assets</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscape designations</li> <li>Visual amenity</li> <li>Landscape/townscape character</li> <li>Tranquillity</li> </ul>
<b>Population and material assets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Population</li> <li>Material assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waste and recycling</li> <li>Minerals</li> <li>Skills, education and employment</li> <li>House prices, quality and affordability</li> <li>Population size and density</li> <li>Indices of Multiple Deprivation</li> <li>Crime</li> <li>Access to community facilities and local services</li> <li>Recreation and amenity</li> </ul>
<b>Water and Soil</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water</li> <li>Soil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soils</li> <li>Water resources</li> <li>Water quality</li> <li>Contaminated land</li> </ul>

## 1.7 Policy, Plan and Programme review

- 1.7.1 The Local Plan may be influenced in various ways by other policies, plans or programmes (PPPs), or by external sustainability objectives such as those put forward in higher strategies or by legislation. The SA/SEA process will consider potential synergies between these PPPs and address any inconsistencies and constraints.
- 1.7.2 A short introduction to each theme, based on the PPP review, is presented in **Chapters 2 - 10**. The full PPP Review is included in **Appendix A**.

## 1.8 Baseline data collection

- 1.8.1 **Chapters 2 - 10** review the current environmental, social and economic conditions relevant to West Oxfordshire and the emerging Local Plan. The purpose of the baseline review is to help define the key sustainability issues for the Local Plan. The baseline data should be indicative of local circumstances, be up to date and be fit for purpose.
- 1.8.2 One of the purposes of consultation on the Scoping Report is to seek views on whether the selected data is appropriate. The baseline has been constructed utilising a wide range of data sources, with GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data used where available. The data has been presented through tables, text and GIS mapping, and all data sources have been referenced as appropriate.
- 1.8.3 Where data is available at a local scale it has been used to inform the scoping process. If local data is not available, regional information has been used and clearly stated.
- 1.8.4 Within **Chapters 2 – 10**, a summary of the key sustainability issues that have been identified relating to each sustainability theme have been provided, as well as the likely evolution of the baseline without the Local Plan.

## 1.9 Structure of the Scoping Report

- 1.9.1 This chapter has provided background information to the Local Plan and the accompanying SA. The remainder of the report is structured as follows:
- **Chapter 2** – Accessibility and transport;
  - **Chapter 3** – Air;
  - **Chapter 4** – Biodiversity, flora, fauna and geodiversity;
  - **Chapter 5** – Climatic factors;
  - **Chapter 6** – Cultural heritage;
  - **Chapter 7** – Human health;
  - **Chapter 8** – Landscape;
  - **Chapter 9** – Population and material assets;
  - **Chapter 10** – Water and soil;
  - **Chapter 11** – Outlines the proposed SA Framework and SA Objectives, and explains their purpose;
  - **Chapter 12** – Outlines the next steps for the Local Plan and SA process; and
  - **Appendix A** – Review of relevant PPPs.

## 2 Accessibility and transport

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Whilst not a topic listed in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations in itself, accessibility and transport interact with several other topics such as population and human health, material assets and climatic factors. Improving sustainable transport accessibility and usage would be likely to lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, encourage cycling and walking, reducing congestion, with benefits to climate change mitigation, health and wellbeing and the economy.

2.1.2 Various PPPs promote the need for a transport network which is sustainable but also supports economic growth, including the Eddington Transport Study<sup>17</sup>, the 'Road to Zero' strategy<sup>18</sup> and the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP)<sup>19</sup>. The introduction of car free zones, walkable neighbourhoods, and the roll-out of new technologies such as electric vehicle infrastructure should form fundamental aspects of sustainable transport going forward. For more rural areas of West Oxfordshire, there are a number of further challenges in terms of the connectivity and reliability of public transport infrastructure.

2.1.3 The PPPs highlight that congestion on roads, in particular the A40, continues to be a key challenge. Local Plans should therefore focus on meeting transport needs more effectively through improved access to jobs and services, particularly for those in more rural areas of the district, in ways which are more sustainable.

### 2.2 Baseline and key issues

2.2.1 West Oxfordshire's strategic road network comprises the A40 which runs through the district east-west, alongside the A424, A4095, A415, A44 and A361 which link to the main settlements (see **Figure 2.1**). A network of B roads and other minor roads connect the more rural settlements. The nearest motorway is the M40, with Junction 9 (Wendlebury Interchange) and Junction 10 (Cherwell Valley Interchange) both approximately 6km to the north east of the district. The A34 lies outside the district to the east and provides links to the motorway network.

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<sup>17</sup> Eddington Transport Study (2006) Transport's Role in Sustaining the UK's Productivity and Competitiveness. Available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090115123436/http://www.dft.gov.uk/162259/187604/206711/volume1.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

<sup>18</sup> HM Government (2018) The Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/739460/road-to-zero.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/739460/road-to-zero.pdf) [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

<sup>19</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2022) Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022 – 2050, July 2022. Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/ltcp> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

- 2.2.2 Eight railway stations along two main rail lines can be found within the district (see **Figure 2.1**). A small section of the Cherwell Valley Line is located in the north east providing northbound services to Birmingham and southbound services to Oxford, and the Cotswold Line passes through the centre of the district providing westbound services to Hereford and Worcester, and eastbound to Oxford. Service provision is variable, with more frequent services operating from Kingham, Charlbury and Hanborough, with more rural areas having less frequent services.
- 2.2.3 Multiple National Cycle Network routes run through West Oxfordshire (see **Figure 2.1**). Two of these routes end within the district boundary, indicating some fragmentation of the cycle network. Interconnected and comprehensive cycle networks encourage active travel and contribute to decreasing transport emissions.

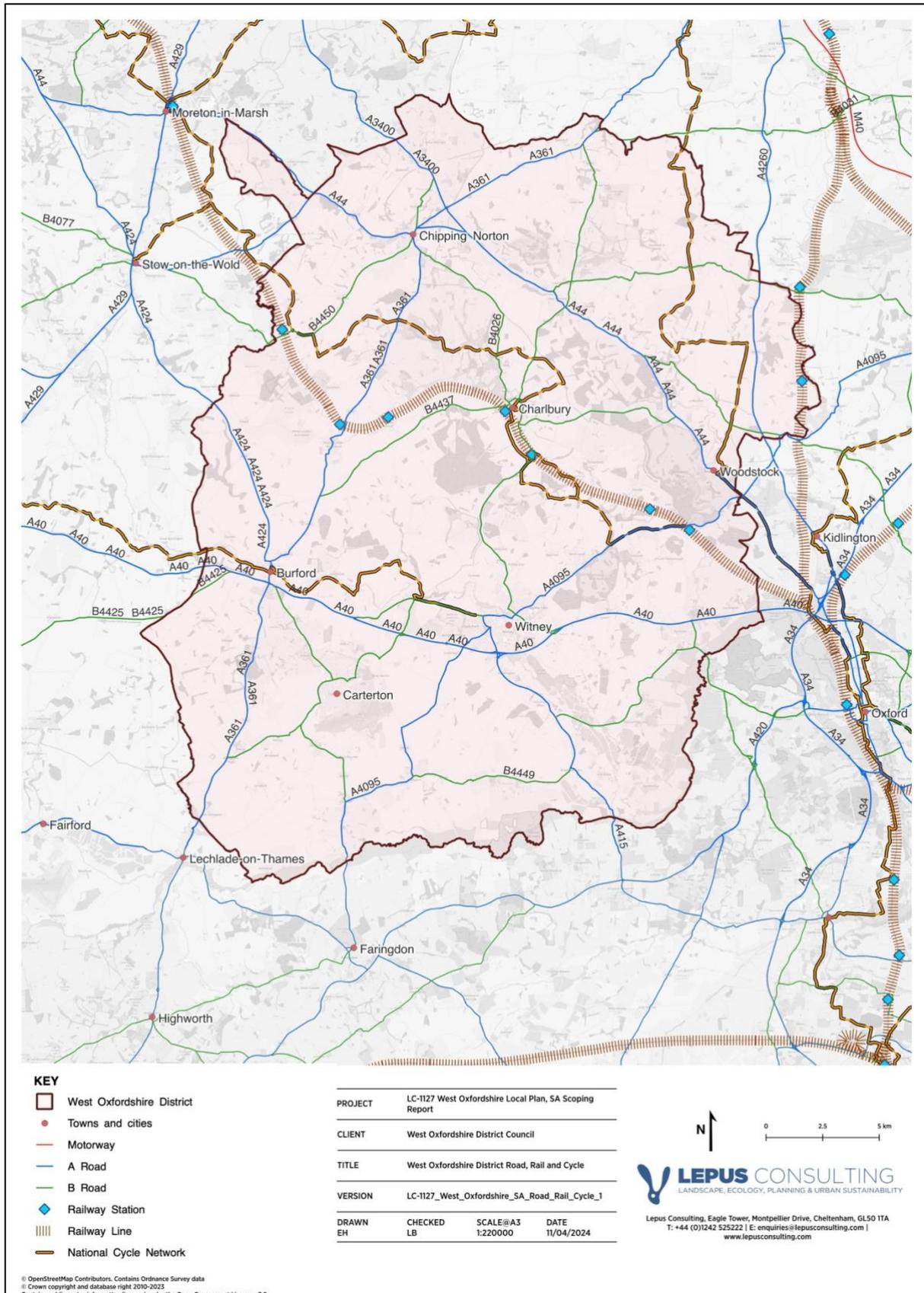
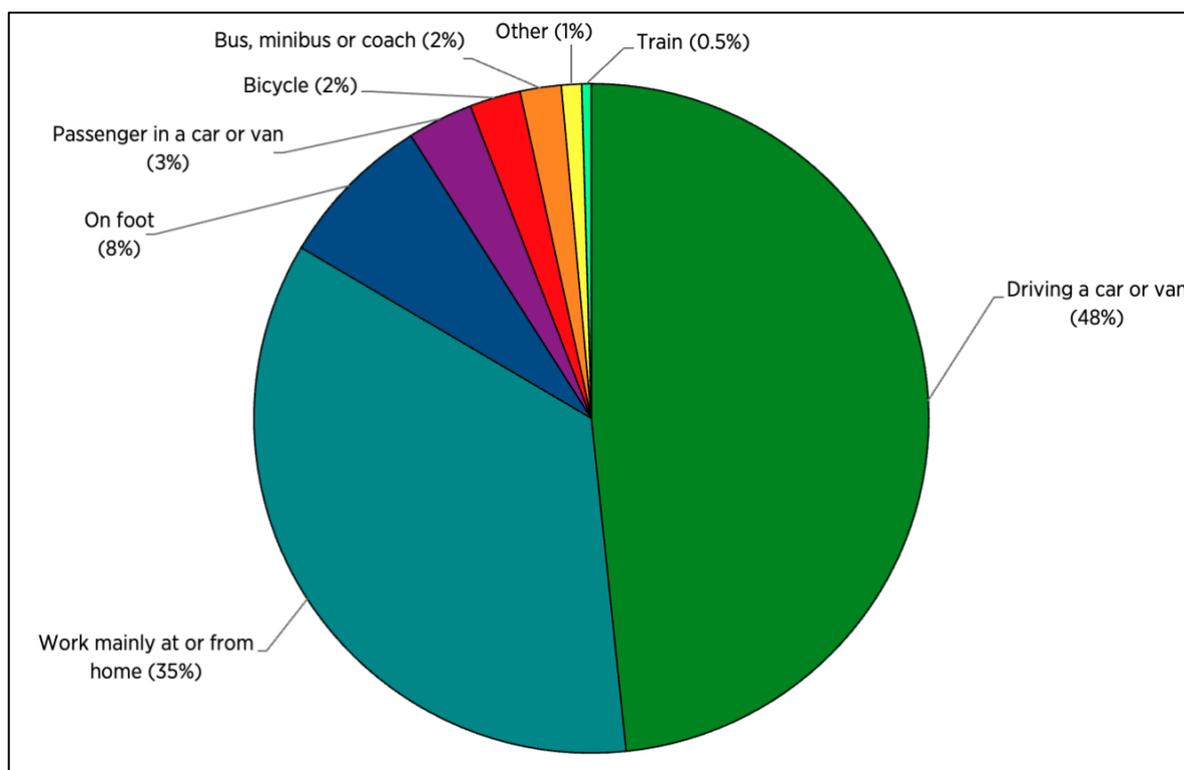


Figure 2.1: West Oxfordshire's road, rail and cycle network

2.2.4 High frequency bus services connect Witney and Carterton, the two largest settlements of the district, to Oxford City; however, services across the remainder of the district vary in terms of frequency and connectivity.

2.2.5 The Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP)<sup>20</sup> and other local PPPs highlight issues with congestion and high reliance on cars, owing to the rural nature of the district. Census data indicates that the majority of residents in employment travel to work by driving a car or van (48%), with smaller proportions of residents travelling via public transport or active travel, whilst a third of residents work from home (see **Figure 2.2**).



**Figure 2.2:** Method of travel to work for residents in West Oxfordshire (2021)<sup>21</sup>

**Box 2.1:** Summary of key sustainability issues: accessibility and transport

**Key issues for accessibility and transport include:**

- ⇒ Whilst Oxfordshire has good public transport connectivity along certain corridors, there are notable areas that suffer from poor connectivity. Poor public transport connectivity and reliability is a particular issue in rural areas.
- ⇒ There is a need to improve walking and cycling connectivity to enable more journeys to be made via active travel.

<sup>20</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2022) Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022 – 2050, July 2022. Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/ltcp> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

<sup>21</sup> ONS (2022) Travel to work, England and Wales: Census 2021. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/traveltoworkenglandandwales/census2021> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

- ⇒ Road congestion is a key issue in the district, with high car ownership and limited public transport access in more rural areas, and high pressure on the A40 to Oxford due to commuter traffic. Facilitating a modal shift away from private car use and improving access to and coverage of sustainable modes of transport should be a key priority for the emerging Local Plan.

**Box 2.2:** *Likely evolution without the Plan: accessibility and transport*

**Likely evolution of the baseline without the Plan**

- The Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and its policies, alongside related plans such as the Mobility Hub Strategy, will still be implemented depending on whether funding is secured from new development. The LTCP seeks to relieve congestion on the road network and improve provision of public transport and active travel infrastructure across the Plan area. In the absence of the Local Plan, there may be reduced scope to implement and monitor effective policies and strategies which can facilitate alternative transport modes and encourage behavioural changes.
- Proposed improvements to the North Cotswold Line and Hanborough Station will still take place, which is likely to increase rail connectivity. However, without the Local Plan, there may be less opportunity for local guidance and strategies to implement and monitor this effectively and integrate with new development proposals.
- Over time, there is likely to be an increase in car ownership, as well as an increase in the proportion of the road transport fleet which are electric or hybrid vehicles, in line with national trends.

## 3 Air

### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Poor air quality is among the largest environmental risks to public health in the UK. Several objectives have been established in relation to air quality at the European, UK and regional levels seeking to reduce emissions of specific pollutants to minimise adverse effects on health and the environment.

3.1.2 Key legislation / PPPs include the Environment Act (2021)<sup>22</sup> which sets out air quality as a priority area, the Air Quality Plan for NO<sub>2</sub><sup>23</sup> and the Clean Air Strategy<sup>24</sup>, as well as the Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy (2023)<sup>25</sup>, which outlines the vision and objectives for tackling air pollution across the county.

### 3.2 Baseline and key issues

3.2.1 There are two small Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within West Oxfordshire District: 'Chipping Norton' AQMA and 'Witney' AQMA (see **Figure 3.1**). Both AQMAs were declared in 2005 due to exceedances in nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>)<sup>26</sup>. WODC has commissioned Air Quality Action Plans for both towns to identify the sources and solutions to the air quality issues in these areas.

3.2.2 WODC's latest Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) (2023)<sup>27</sup> states that NO<sub>2</sub> levels are generally decreasing and remain below the national air quality objective in the two AQMAs, indicating improving air quality, although ongoing monitoring will be needed over the coming years before this trend can be confirmed. The ASR highlights a number of local actions to improve air quality including electric vehicle charging infrastructure, active and public transport schemes, and road improvement schemes to ease congestion.

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<sup>22</sup> Environment Act 2021. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

<sup>23</sup> DEFRA and DfT (2018) Air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-quality-plan-for-nitrogen-dioxide-no2-in-uk-2017> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

<sup>24</sup> DEFRA (2019) Clean Air Strategy. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019/clean-air-strategy-2019-executive-summary> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

<sup>25</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2023) Air Quality Strategy 2023-2030. Available at <https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/download/e80d654a-8d0d-491f-bde4-b0871c83c527/oxfordshirecountycouncilcleanair2023to2030.pdf> [Date accessed: 20/03/24]

<sup>26</sup> DEFRA (2024) AQMAs declared by West Oxfordshire District Council. Available at: [https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/local-authorities?la\\_id=309](https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/local-authorities?la_id=309) [Date accessed: 20/03/24]

<sup>27</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2023) Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR), June 2023. Available at <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/g1albc1w/air-quality-annual-report-2023.pdf> [Date accessed: 20/03/24]

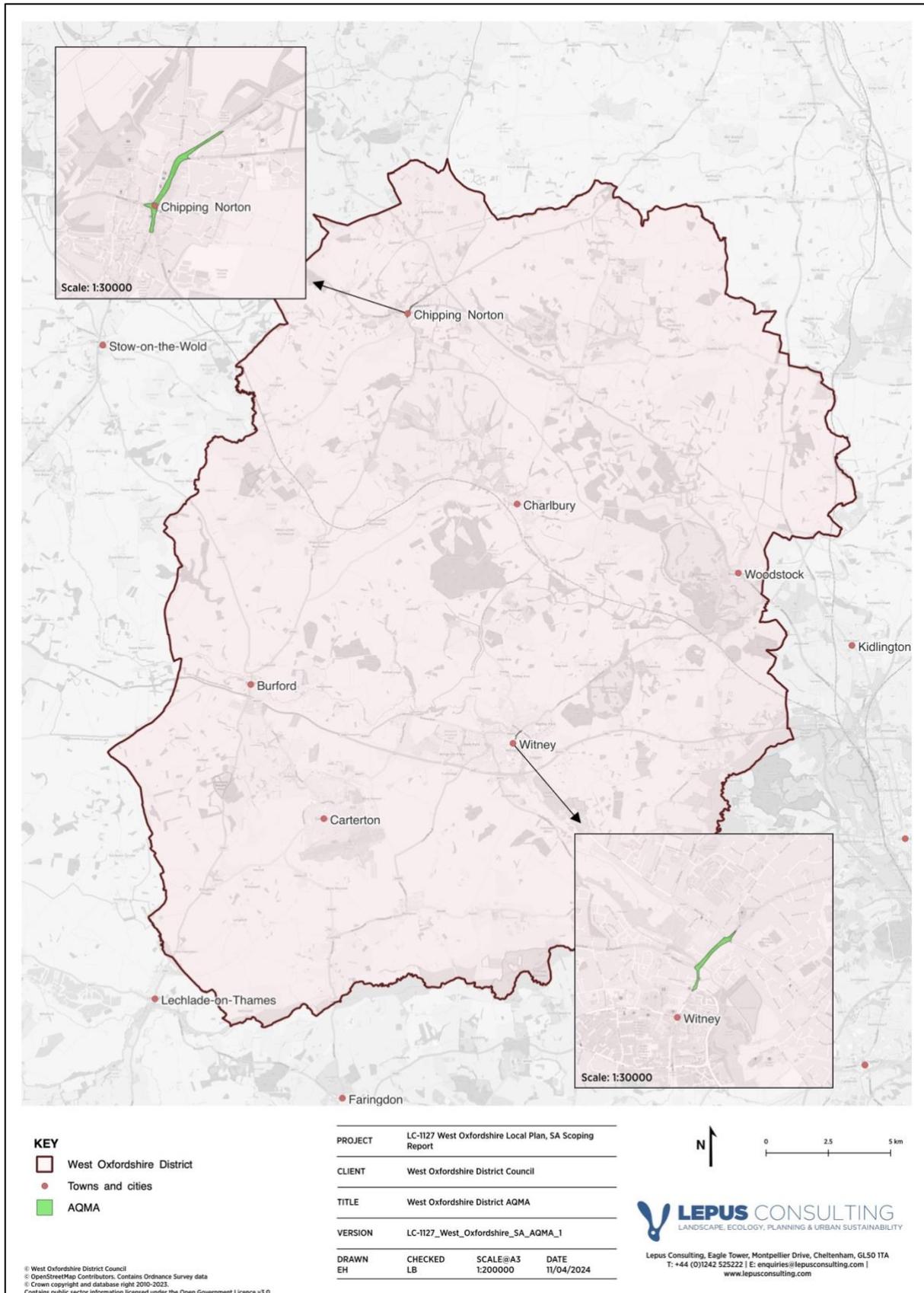


Figure 3.1: AQMAs within West Oxfordshire

- 3.2.3 It is widely accepted that the effects of air pollution from road transport decreases with distance from the source of pollution. The Department for Transport (DfT) in their Transport Analysis Guidance consider that, *"beyond 200m from the link centre, the contribution of vehicle emissions to local pollution levels is not significant"*<sup>28</sup>. Exposure to road transport associated emissions may have long term health impacts. Air pollution, particularly excessive nitrogen deposition, is also known to be harmful to the health and functioning of natural habitats. Within West Oxfordshire, the Oxford Meadows SAC is particularly vulnerable to air quality impacts primarily through vehicular emissions, due to its close proximity to the A40.

**Box 3.1: Summary of key sustainability issues: air quality**

**Key issues for air quality include:**

- ⇒ According to the latest ASR, although there is a general trend of improving air quality within the district's two AQMAs, some locations showed slight increases in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations compared to the previous two years.
- ⇒ There is a need to change attitudes and behaviours to encourage less private car use and more active travel and use of public transport.
- ⇒ There is a shortage of suitable electric vehicle charging stations across the district to support the uptake of electric vehicles as well as electric public transport operating from Oxford.
- ⇒ The Oxford Meadows SAC is located close to the A40 and is therefore particularly susceptible to vehicular emissions. As a result, there is a need to reduce congestion and air pollution on the A40.

**Box 3.2: Likely evolution without the Plan: air quality**

**Likely evolution of the baseline without the Plan**

- The Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and other local strategies will still be implemented, with potential benefits for air quality as a consequence of the proposed improvements to Oxfordshire's road network and public transport infrastructure. However, there may be less opportunity for local guidance and strategies to implement and monitor this effectively and integrate with new development proposals without the Local Plan.
- Although national trends suggest there is an increasing uptake of lower emission vehicle types which will be likely to help limit road transport associated emissions in the West Oxfordshire area, in absence of the Plan there may be reduced scope to implement and monitor effective policies and strategies which can facilitate alternative transport modes and encourage behavioural changes to improve air quality.

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<sup>28</sup> Department for Transport (2023) TAG Unit A3 Environmental Impact Appraisal. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/825064/tag-unit-a3-environmental-impact-appraisal.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/825064/tag-unit-a3-environmental-impact-appraisal.pdf) [Date accessed: 20/03/24]

## 4 Biodiversity, flora and fauna

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The conservation of biological and geological diversity and the protection and monitoring of endangered and vulnerable species and habitats is of great importance. National and European policies identify a hierarchy of designations which aim to promote the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. Key PPPs include the 25 Year Environment Plan<sup>29</sup> and the Environmental Improvement Plan<sup>30</sup> which seek to halt biodiversity loss, promote nature recovery, and expand multi-functional green infrastructure (GI) networks.
- 4.1.2 The Environment Act 2021<sup>31</sup> introduced targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment. An important aspect of the Act is the focus on biodiversity net gain (BNG), and the incorporation of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric<sup>32</sup> into law to ensure all new development delivers 10% net gain in biodiversity.
- 4.1.3 Local-level action plans for biodiversity and GI strategies should reflect these ecosystem-wide approaches and complement this with local priorities and goals to ensure that the Plan area's wildlife, ecology, geology and ecosystem services are protected and enhanced. These should also consider the connectivity of biodiversity enhancements with landscapes and the historic environment.
- 4.1.4 The State of Nature in Oxfordshire in 2017 Report<sup>33</sup> identified a number of actions which need to be taken to halt the fragmentation and loss of connectivity across the county's landscapes. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire is currently being prepared<sup>34</sup>, and when published will provide a coordinated strategy to help the county's wildlife to flourish, improve air and water quality, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

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<sup>29</sup> HM Government (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf) [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

<sup>30</sup> DEFRA (2023) Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

<sup>31</sup> Environment Act 2021. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

<sup>32</sup> DEFRA (2024) Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

<sup>33</sup> Wild Oxfordshire (2017) The State of Nature in Oxfordshire in 2017. Available at: <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/oxfordshires-nature/oxfordshires-state-of-nature> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

<sup>34</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2024) Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

## 4.2 Baseline and key issues

### Habitats sites

- 4.2.1 Habitats sites provide valuable ecological infrastructure for the protection of rare, endangered and/or vulnerable natural habitats and species of exceptional importance within the EU. These sites consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive, and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under the Birds Directive. Additionally, paragraph 187 of the NPPF (2023) requires that sites listed under the Ramsar Convention are to be given the same protection as fully designated habitats sites.
- 4.2.2 A small section of Oxford Meadows SAC lies within West Oxfordshire District in the east, with the remainder of the designated site falling in the adjacent City of Oxford (see **Figure 4.1**). Oxford Meadows SAC is designated for its lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*) and creeping marshwort (*Apium repens*). The Site Improvement Plan (SIP) notes the SAC is vulnerable to hydrological changes and invasive species<sup>35</sup>.
- 4.2.3 Other nearby habitats sites include Cothill Fen SAC (designated for alkaline fens and alluvial forests<sup>36</sup>) located approximately 3.2km to the south east of the district, Little Wittenham SAC (great crested newt<sup>37</sup>) approximately 16km to the south east, Hackpen Hill SAC (chalk grassland<sup>38</sup>) approximately 14km south, and North Meadow & Clattinger Farm SAC (lowland hay meadows<sup>39</sup>) approximately 14km south west.
- 4.2.4 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be prepared alongside the development of the Local Plan which will provide an in-depth assessment of the potential threats and pressures to a number of habitats sites and analysis of potential impact pathways, including air pollution, public access and disturbance, and hydrological changes. The outputs of the HRA process will help to inform the SA.

### National and local designations

- 4.2.5 A total of 30 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) lie within the Plan area, two of which ('Wychwood' and 'Chimney Meadows') are also designated as National Nature Reserves (NNRs), and one of which ('Saltway') is designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). One further LNR, 'Crecy Hill', lies in the Plan area in the east and is managed by Tackley Parish Council. These designations are shown on **Figure 4.1**.

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<sup>35</sup> Natural England (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Oxford Meadows. Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4942743310696448> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

<sup>36</sup> Natural England (2018) Cothill Fen SAC Conservation Objectives. Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5691343946907648> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

<sup>37</sup> Natural England (2018) Little Wittenham SAC Conservation Objectives. Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6104670577623040> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

<sup>38</sup> Natural England (2018) Hackpen Hill SAC Conservation Objectives. Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5182475147935744> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

<sup>39</sup> Natural England (2018) North Meadow & Clattinger Farm SAC Conservation Objectives. Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6299293463871488> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

- 4.2.6 The Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) maintains a 'living list' of the Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) in each local authority area in Berkshire and Oxfordshire<sup>40</sup>. 103 LWS lie wholly or partially within West Oxfordshire District, covering a range of habitat types including grassland, woodland and ponds. Nine further LWSs and three extensions to existing LWSs are proposed. These are shown in **Figure 4.2**.
- 4.2.7 Furthermore, 16 Local Geological Sites (LGS) lie wholly or partially in the district (see **Figure 4.2**), designated by the Oxfordshire Geology Trust, which exhibit important geological and geomorphological features<sup>41</sup>.

### **Habitats and GI**

- 4.2.8 West Oxfordshire supports some significant extents of ancient woodland (see **Figure 4.1**), totalling approximately 2,000ha across the district, as well as large areas of deciduous woodland priority habitat. Other priority habitats (see **Figure 4.2**) present in the district include good quality semi-improved grassland, found scattered throughout the north, and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh along the River Windrush and the River Thames corridors in the centre and south east, as well as some areas of traditional orchard throughout the district. Smaller proportions of lowland habitats are also present (calcareous grassland, dry acid grassland, fens, meadows).
- 4.2.9 Careful consideration should be given during the plan-making process to the potential impacts on habitats and species of principle importance in accordance with the NERC Act 2006<sup>42</sup>.
- 4.2.10 Multi-functional GI assets including natural and semi-natural features within the urban areas should also be conserved and enhanced to support ecosystem services and nature recovery.
- 4.2.11 TVERC, Wild Oxfordshire and the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) are working together to produce a Nature Recovery Network (NRN) for Oxfordshire, building on the existing 'Conservation Target Areas' that have been established since 2006 identifying concentrations of priority habitats/species and surrounding land that can buffer and link these habitats and provide opportunities to create new sites<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> TVERC (2024) LWS 'living list' and locations. Available at: <https://www.tverc.org/cms/LWSLivingLists> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

<sup>41</sup> TVERC (2024) Local Geological Sites. Available at: <https://www.tverc.org/cms/content/local-geological-sites> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

<sup>42</sup> Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

<sup>43</sup> Wild Oxfordshire (2022) Oxfordshire's Nature Recovery Network. Available at: <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/oxfordshires-nature/oxfordshires-nature-recovery-network> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

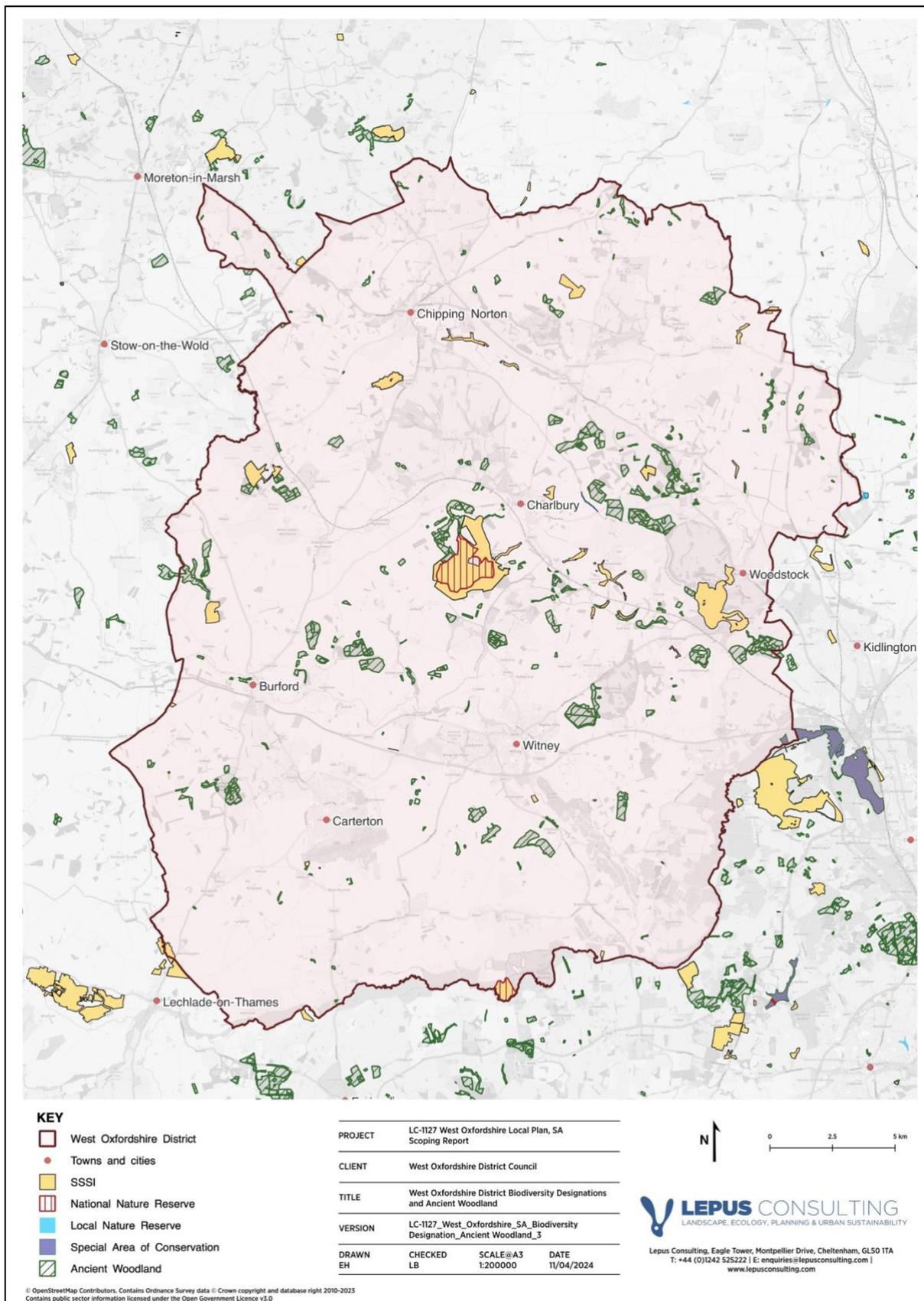


Figure 4.1: Biodiversity designations and ancient woodland within around West Oxfordshire

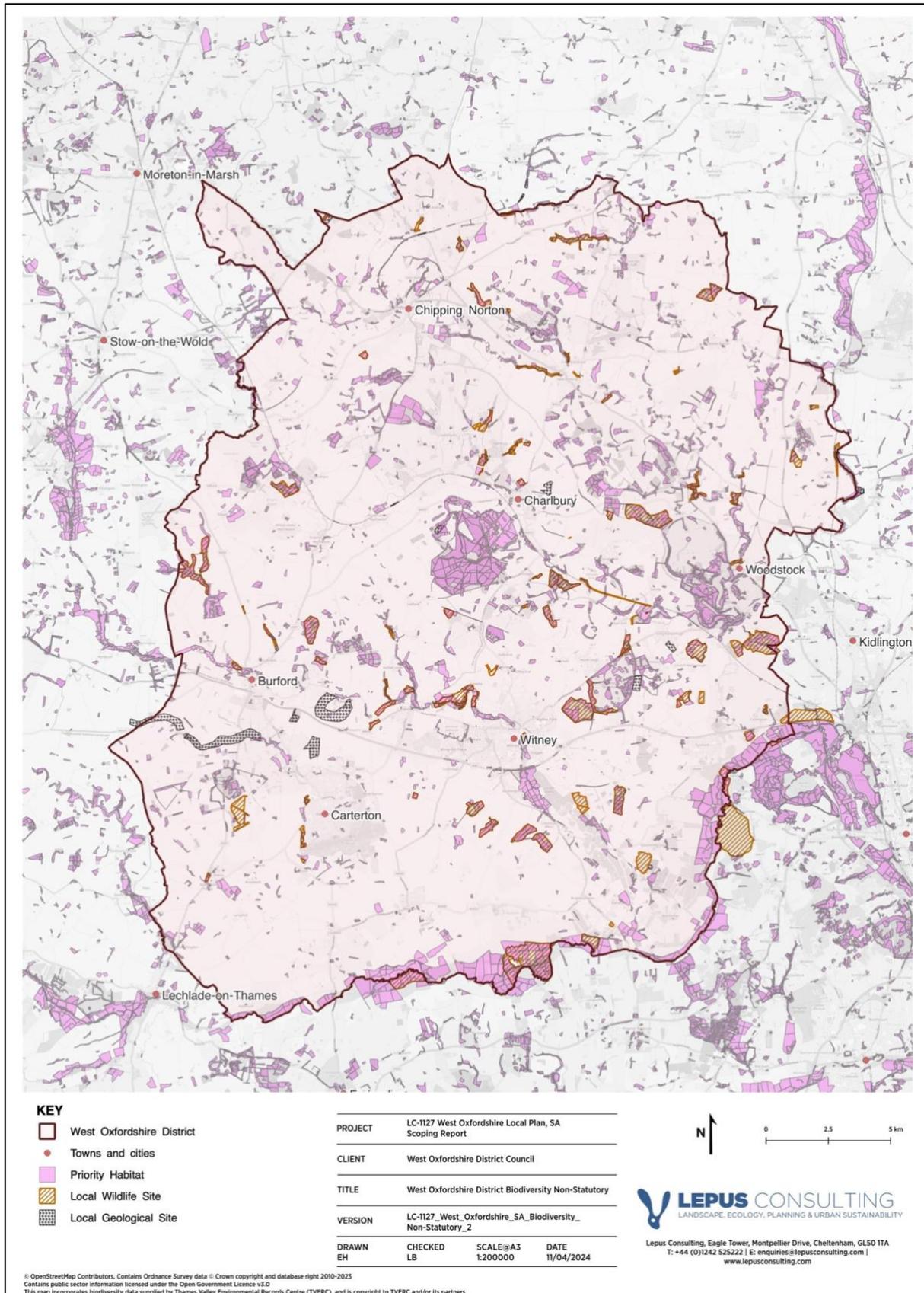


Figure 4.2: Non-statutory biodiversity designations within and around West Oxfordshire

**Box 4.1:** *Summary of key sustainability issues: biodiversity, flora and fauna*

**Key issues for biodiversity, flora and fauna include:**

- ⇒ New development in West Oxfordshire, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, could have the potential to lead to adverse effects on the integrity of habitats sites, including Oxford Meadows SAC and Cothill Fens SAC, through various impact pathways including changes in water quality/quantity, air pollution and public access and disturbance. The HRA of the Local Plan will explore these potential effects in detail.
- ⇒ Oxfordshire supports some of the rarest grasslands in the country which need to be protected from the continued trends of habitat loss and fragmentation.
- ⇒ There is a need to create larger and more connected areas of high-quality habitats, and to assist farmers and landowners to identify financially viable ways of managing their land to provide greater benefits to nature.
- ⇒ Access to green spaces and volunteering opportunities need to be increased, to enable local people to keep in touch with nature and improve understanding and appreciation of the issues faced.

**Box 4.2:** *Likely evolution without the Plan: biodiversity, flora and fauna*

**Likely evolution of the baseline without the Plan**

- Sites designated for their national and international biodiversity value would continue to benefit from legislative protection. The NPPF and its policies relating to biodiversity would continue to be material considerations in planning decisions.
- Whilst 10% BNG will remain mandatory for all Town and Country Planning Act developments as of 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024, without the Local Plan there may be more limited opportunities to strive for higher BNG targets or other biodiversity enhancement measures and there may be less opportunity to establish a strategically planned GI network, and/or potential habitat banks for delivering compensatory BNG off-site, where on-site delivery is proved to be unviable.
- Long-term declines in farmland and woodland biodiversity are likely to continue without intervention. Although the emerging LNRS will still become implemented as required through the Environment Act, without the Local Plan there may be less opportunity to ensure that development is of appropriate type, scale and location to avoid adverse impacts on either biodiversity designations or on the functioning ecological network and the ecosystem services this provides.

## 5 Climatic factors

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Anthropogenic climate change is predominantly the result of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. GHGs are emitted from a wide variety of sources, including transport, construction, agriculture and waste. Typically, development leads to a net increase in GHG emissions in the local area, although efforts can be made to help limit these increases.
- 5.1.2 Commitments to reduce GHG emissions have been introduced from the international level to the sub-regional level. The PPPs address policy development across all sectors and at all levels, combining both demand management (reduced energy consumption and increased efficiency of use) and supply-side measures (low carbon options and renewables). The Committee on Climate Change (CCC)'s latest progress report<sup>44</sup> discusses the need for further measures to be implemented by the government to ensure the UK meets the target of net zero by 2050.
- 5.1.3 WODC has declared a climate and ecological emergency and pledged to become a carbon neutral council by 2030, setting out a framework and key actions in the Carbon Action Plan and Climate Change Strategy<sup>45</sup>.
- 5.1.4 The Environment Agency (EA) provides guidance on flood risk for planners, developers and advisors in order to inform flood risk assessments and the plan-making process and stresses the importance of making allowances for climate change<sup>46</sup>. Adaptation measures proposed by the PPPs include a presumption against development in flood risk areas, appropriate design of new development, the promotion of new infrastructure such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), measures to increase biodiversity, measures dealing with overheating and improved maintenance to help address the changes that are likely to occur as a result of climate change.

### 5.2 Baseline and key issues

#### Carbon and energy

- 5.2.1 The latest UK local authority carbon emissions estimates<sup>47</sup> indicate that West Oxfordshire District's carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions totalled 523.92 kilotonnes in 2021, representing the lowest total emissions of all Oxfordshire LPAs (see **Table 5.1**). However, in terms of per capita emissions, West Oxfordshire falls in the middle with 4.55 tonnes per person.

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<sup>44</sup> CCC (2022) Reducing UK emissions: 2022 Progress Report to Parliament. Available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/2022-progress-report-to-parliament/> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

<sup>45</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2021) Climate Change Strategy for West Oxfordshire 2021-2025. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/climate-change-strategy/> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

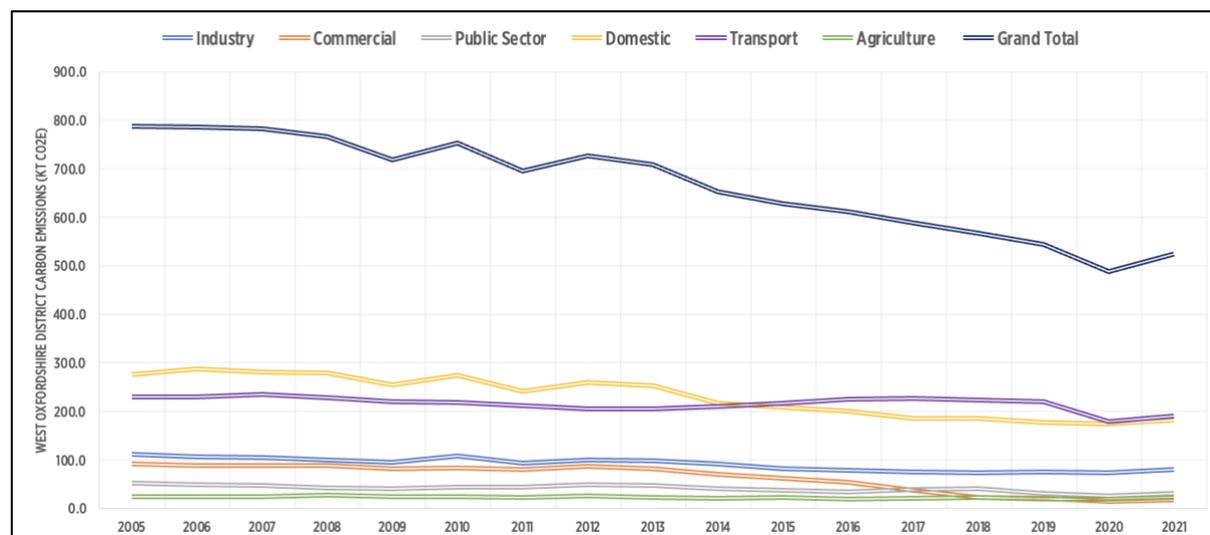
<sup>46</sup> Environment Agency (2022) Flood risk assessments: climate change allowances. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

<sup>47</sup> Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023) UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2021. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

**Table 5.1:** Estimated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for Oxfordshire LPAs in 2021 (ktCO<sub>2</sub>)<sup>48</sup>

Local Authority	Industry	Commercial	Public Sector	Domestic	Transport	Agriculture	Total	Per Capita (tCO <sub>2</sub> )
Cherwell	239.95	36.17	31.86	227.64	294.35	34.36	864.49	5.34
Oxford	102.31	78.82	114.68	180.34	111.39	1.00	588.66	3.68
South Oxfordshire	97.46	37.24	27.64	235.22	224.80	30.47	653.03	4.35
Vale of White Horse	124.40	24.69	28.67	205.40	353.68	18.28	755.30	5.41
West Oxfordshire	80.14	17.90	30.59	181.78	191.33	22.05	523.92	4.55
<b>Oxfordshire total</b>	<b>644.3</b>	<b>194.8</b>	<b>233.4</b>	<b>1,030.4</b>	<b>1,175.6</b>	<b>106.2</b>	<b>3,385.4</b>	<b>4.7</b>
<b>England total</b>	<b>41,261.3</b>	<b>14,653.7</b>	<b>13,226.0</b>	<b>76,940.4</b>	<b>69,502.0</b>	<b>5,122.5</b>	<b>221,021.7</b>	<b>3.9</b>

5.2.2 The majority of West Oxfordshire’s CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are attributed to transport sources, closely followed by domestic, as shown in **Figure 5.1**. Smaller proportions are sourced from the industrial, commercial, public sector and agriculture. The data shows a general trend of decreased emissions from all sectors over time, reflecting the general decrease for the UK during this period driven mainly by reductions in emissions from power stations and industrial combustion, as well as the impact of the pandemic in 2020. Although, 2021 saw a slight increase in all sectors reflecting the trend for the rest of the UK, attributed to COVID-19 restrictions easing and colder temperatures increasing the use of heating in buildings.



**Figure 5.1:** Estimated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and sources for West Oxfordshire District between 2005 and 2021<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023) UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2021. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

- 5.2.3 According to the Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Energy Assessment and Strategy (2016)<sup>50</sup>, there are four large scale renewable energy generating facilities operating in the district including nine solar farms and one anaerobic digestion facility that are either operational or have been approved. The study reports that “*There is potential to develop further renewable and low carbon technologies in West Oxfordshire. However this needs to be balanced with West Oxfordshire District Council’s vision to meet the needs of the district’s communities without significant change to the intrinsic character of the District, and the aims of maintaining an attractive and biodiversity rich environment and protecting the distinctive qualities of the district’s towns and villages*”. It is recommended that this study is updated to review the potential for renewable and low carbon energy schemes during the new Plan period and beyond.
- 5.2.4 There may also be opportunities for carbon sequestration, as recognised in the ‘Pathways to a zero carbon Oxfordshire’ report<sup>51</sup>. Furthermore, the WODC Carbon Action Plan 2024-2030<sup>52</sup>, which sets out the Council’s own organisational goals with regard to climate action, also states that “*As part of the new Local Plan, a Carbon Offset and Inset Fund should be established to provide ring-fenced funding from s106 developer contributions for carbon-reduction projects across the district*”.

### **Flooding**

- 5.2.5 Climate change is anticipated to increase the risk of extreme weather events, leading to an increase in the frequency and severity of flooding. Surface water flooding in urban areas may increase in the incidence of more torrential and frequent rainfall events, especially during winter.
- 5.2.6 A total of 18 significant flood events have been recording in Oxfordshire since 2007<sup>53</sup>. The West Oxfordshire District is affected to varying degrees by fluvial (river) flooding and groundwater flooding. A small portion of the district lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3 (see **Figure 5.2**). These flood zones are most prominent along the River Thames which comprises the southern border of the district. Additionally, small areas of surface water flood risk (SWFR) can be found within the district, which primarily occurs along watercourses in the south east and the north of the district (see **Figure 5.3**). Witney is particularly susceptible to fluvial flooding due to its proximity to the River Windrush, putting a number of historic assets in the town at risk of flooding.

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<sup>50</sup>LDA Design (2016) Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Energy Assessment and Strategy for West Oxfordshire, October 2016. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/ys2okqht/renewable-energy-and-low-carbon-energy-assessment-2016.pdf> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

<sup>51</sup> Environmental Change Institute (2021) Pathways to a zero carbon Oxfordshire. Available at: <https://www.eci.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2022-09/PazCo-summary.pdf> [Date accessed: 01/08/24]

<sup>52</sup> WODC (2024) Carbon Action Plan 2024 – 2030. Available at: <https://meetings.westoxon.gov.uk/documents/s10086/Annex%20A%20-%20Carbon%20Action%20Plan%202023.02.24.pdf> [Date accessed: 01/08/24]

<sup>53</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2024) Climate resilience: Current and future climate risk and vulnerability and health impacts assessments in Oxfordshire. Available at: <https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/ClimateVulnerabilityAssessmentOxfordshireApril24Final.pdf> [Date accessed: 29/07/24]

5.2.7 Careful consideration should be given to the level of flood risk new residents are exposed to, as well as the impacts of development. It is good practice to make allowances for climate change in flood risk assessments<sup>54</sup>. Allowing for the impacts of climate change helps to minimise vulnerability whilst providing greater resilience to flooding by anticipating changes to various factors including the following:

- Peak river flows;
- Peak rainfall intensities;
- Sea level rise;
- Offshore wind speeds;
- Upstream land management;
- Water retention; and
- Nature floodplains.

5.2.8 Climate change allowances can be based on climate change projections under different CO<sub>2</sub> scenarios. WODC will be likely to commission a new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) to provide an updated picture of flood risk in the present and future in the district to inform the emerging Local Plan, compared to the existing SFRA from 2016<sup>55</sup>. The emerging outputs of the SFRA will be used to inform the SA process, when available.

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<sup>54</sup> Environment Agency (2022) Flood risk assessments: climate change allowances. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances> [Date accessed: 02/04/24]

<sup>55</sup> AECOM (2016) West Oxfordshire District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/0adg2zs5/env9-west-oxfordshire-district-council-strategic-flood-risk-assessment-update-report-november-2016.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

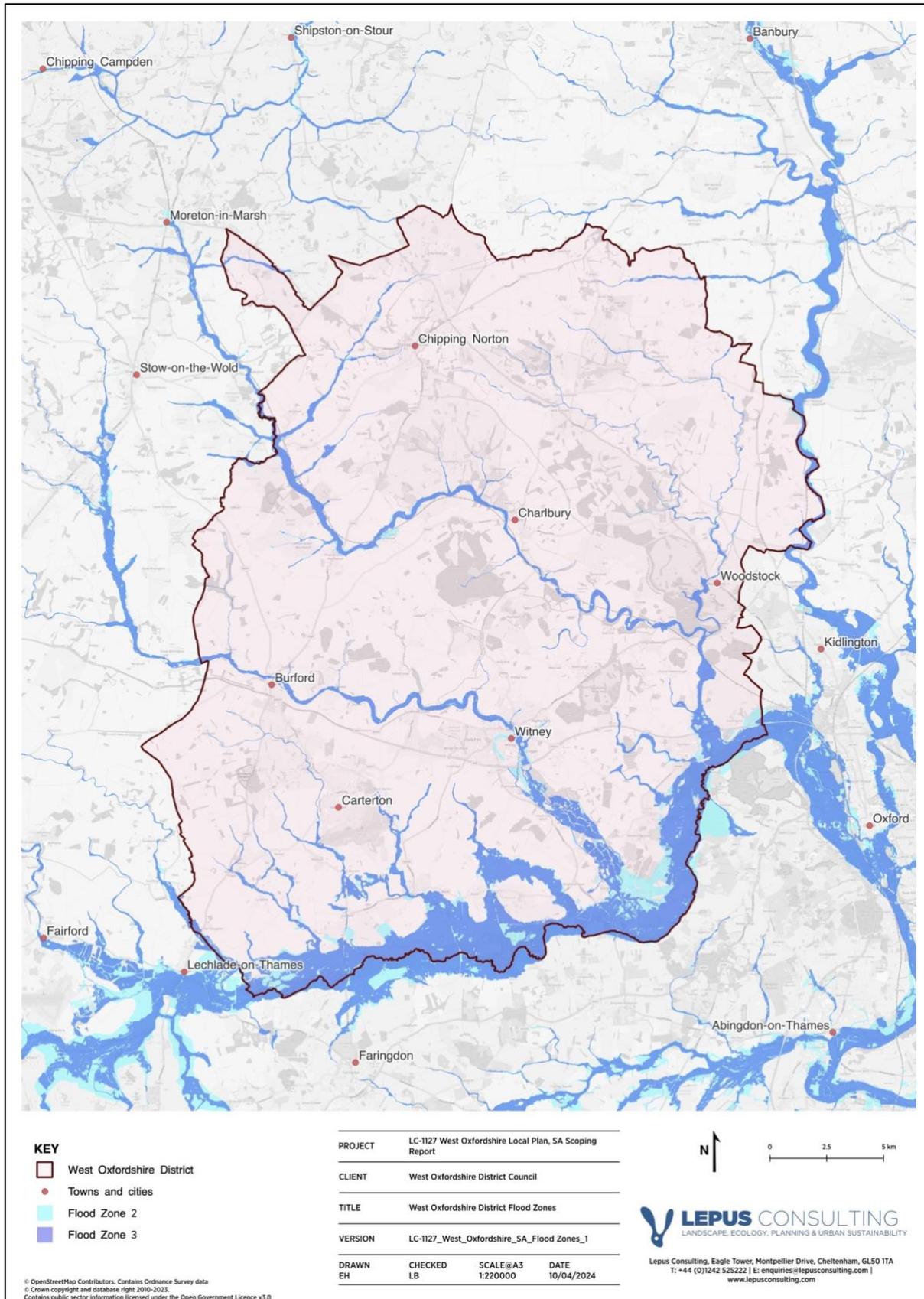


Figure 5.2: Fluvial flood risk in West Oxfordshire

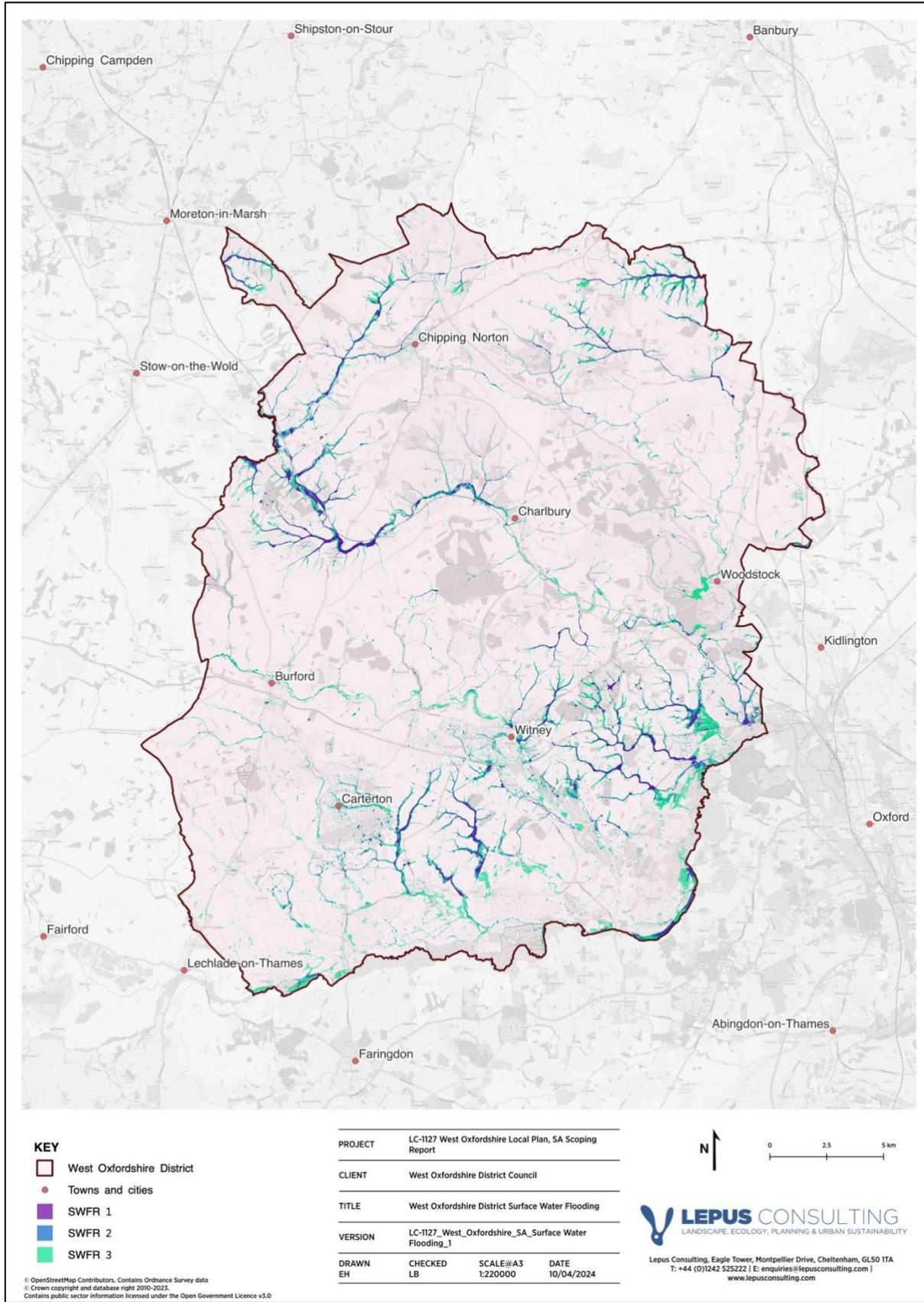


Figure 5.3: Extent of surface water flood risk in West Oxfordshire

## Green infrastructure

- 5.2.9 West Oxfordshire's Green Infrastructure (GI) network has an important role to play in providing ecosystem services. A well-managed and robust GI network can provide many benefits including for human health, climate change adaptation and wildlife value, as well as integrating GI within the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy<sup>56</sup> which is currently in progress (see **Chapter 4** – biodiversity, flora and fauna). GI can play an important role in helping urban areas adapt to climate change, by filtering airborne pollutants, providing shade and local cooling, carbon sink functions, and reducing surface water runoff<sup>57</sup>. The water environment (such as canals, rivers and ponds) can also be referred to as 'blue infrastructure' and often works alongside GI to provide multi-functional benefits including building resilience to climate change and acting as wildlife refuges and corridors.
- 5.2.10 A new GI strategy is currently being developed for West Oxfordshire which is likely to be available in Summer 2024. The previous Interim GI Study (2011)<sup>58</sup> identified a range of GI assets within the area, including parks and gardens, greenspaces, green corridors and sports grounds. The Study identifies key characteristics and issues regarding GI and opportunities for enhancement. In addition, the Natural England GI framework highlights a lack of available greenspace for local residents, increasing demand for an extensive GI network<sup>59</sup>. The conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is also a consideration when implementing GI, as newly created or altered habitats will sit within the historic landscape of West Oxfordshire (see **Chapter 6** – cultural heritage).
- 5.2.11 The West Oxfordshire Open Space Study (2013)<sup>60</sup> and Playing Pitch Strategy (2022)<sup>61</sup> provide guidance for development proposals which have potential to impact open space and playing pitch designations. Each study considers key factors relating to access, design, safety and community, in order to maximise support for recreational demand.

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<sup>56</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2024) Oxfordshire LNRS. Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy> [Date accessed: 29/07/24]

<sup>57</sup> Landscape Institute (no date) Green Infrastructure (GI). Available at: <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/policy/green-infrastructure/> [Date accessed: 02/04/24]

<sup>58</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2011) Interim West Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Study. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/dyyduqtn/interim-green-infrastructure-study-june-2011.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/04/24]

<sup>59</sup> Natural England (2021) Green Infrastructure. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Map.aspx> [Date accessed: 29/04/24]

<sup>60</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2013) West Oxfordshire Open Space Study. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/g2eom11w/west-oxfordshire-open-space-study-2013.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/04/24]

<sup>61</sup> Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd. (2022) West Oxfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy & Action Plan. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/va0jpoje/west-oxfordshire-playing-pitch-strategy-and-action-plan-2022.pdf>. [Date accessed: 02/04/24]

**Box 5.1: Summary of key sustainability issues: climatic factors**

**Key issues for climatic factors include:**

- ⇒ There is a need to respond to climate change by developing further renewable and low carbon technologies in West Oxfordshire without compromising the distinctive biodiversity and landscape qualities of the district. It is also important to incorporate energy efficiency measures such as through retrofitting existing buildings to reduce carbon footprint.
- ⇒ Fluvial flooding, surface water flooding and increased impacts from climate change all pose significant risks to West Oxfordshire, particularly in the south of the district. Flood prevention schemes, surface water run-off management and the incorporation of effective sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) should be a priority for new developments.
- ⇒ There is a need to increase the quality, quantity and connectivity of Green and Blue Infrastructure to provide multi-functional benefits including improved carbon storage, urban cooling, natural flood resilience/flood water storage, and provide a more attractive public realm to encourage active travel.
- ⇒ A range of further risks linked to climate change may affect the Plan area, including increased risk of injury and death as a result of hotter summers and more severe storm events/flooding, adverse effects on water quality, changes in species distributions, and potential soil shrinkages and subsidence as a result of increased drought and flooding events.

**Box 5.2: Likely evolution without the Plan: climatic factors**

**Likely evolution of the baseline without the Plan**

- Climatic and anthropogenic-induced climate change are increasing concerns nationally and globally. Without a clear strategy to reduce emissions across all sectors at the local level, West Oxfordshire's contributions towards the causes of climate change may be exacerbated, particularly policies and strategies to facilitate and encourage a modal shift away from private car use.
- It is likely that flooding and extreme weather events will be exacerbated over time by increased impacts of climate change. Although national policies will continue to restrict development within flood zones, there may be less control over the location of growth without the Plan, which could limit the effectiveness of GI networks and the implementation of water management infrastructure.
- Green and blue infrastructure is likely to have limited quality and accessibility if there is no management or growth strategy for its long-term provision and maintenance.
- It is likely that emissions will continue to decrease over time, owing to technological advances such as renewables and more efficient energy generation. However, without the Local Plan, there may be less scope to implement zero and low carbon policies or seek aspirational energy efficiency targets in West Oxfordshire.

## 6 Cultural heritage

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Historic environment priorities from international to local levels seek to address a range of issues, particularly in relation to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets that are irreplaceable and play an important role in placemaking and the quality of life.
- 6.1.2 National and local policy and guidance seeks to protect the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings. Such assets include but are not limited to Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas (CAs), Scheduled Monuments (SMs), Registered Parks and Gardens (RPGs), and non-designated archaeological remains. Various PPPs, including the West Oxfordshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2016)<sup>62</sup> and the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (2017)<sup>63</sup> seek to ensure that cultural aspects of landscapes are recognised and protected against inappropriate development, encourage recognition of the potential and actual value of unknown and undesignated assets, and encourage the conservation and enhancement of sites and landscapes of archaeological and heritage interest so that they may be enjoyed by both present and future generations.
- 6.1.3 Historic England advocate the seeking of opportunities alongside development for delivering heritage-led regeneration<sup>64</sup>, creating, revealing or enhancing local distinctiveness, encouraging the use of traditional building skills, and promoting climate change resilience and innovative reuse of historic buildings where appropriate<sup>65</sup>.
- 6.1.4 The Local Plan will also have a role to play in establishing cross-cutting provisions relating to development, including between the historic environment and the functionality of open spaces and landscape connectivity.

### 6.2 Baseline and key issues

- 6.2.1 West Oxfordshire District contains a large number of historic assets which are distributed across the Plan area (see **Figure 6.1** and **Figure 6.2**). Within West Oxfordshire there are 42 Grade I Listed Buildings, 214 Grade II\* Listed Buildings, 2,950 Grade II Listed Buildings, 17 RPGs, 139 SMs and 53 CAs. The Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site (WHS) also lies in the east of district.

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<sup>62</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2016) Design Guide. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/> [Date accessed: 23/04/24]

<sup>63</sup> Oxfordshire District Council (2017) Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation. Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/archaeology/landscape-characterisation> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>64</sup> BPF (2017) Heritage Works: A toolkit of best practice in heritage regeneration. Available at: <https://bpf.org.uk/our-work/research-and-briefings/heritage-works-a-toolkit-of-best-practice-in-heritage-regeneration/> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

<sup>65</sup> Historic England (2016) Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment – Historic England Advice Note 8. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

6.2.2 There are eight heritage assets within West Oxfordshire which are listed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. These include seven SMs and one Grade II\* Listed Building 'Church of St Nicholas, Kiddington Park'. In line with the West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD, it is crucial that the Council consider impacts development may have upon and ways to enhance the setting, structure or character of any listed building, which are at considered 'at risk'<sup>66</sup>. WODC could also consider conducting its own assessment of 'at risk' heritage assets, in order to additionally consider potential impacts on Grade II Listed Buildings, which are not considered on the 'at risk' register outside London besides places of worship.

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<sup>66</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2016) Design Guide. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/> [Date accessed: 23/04/24]

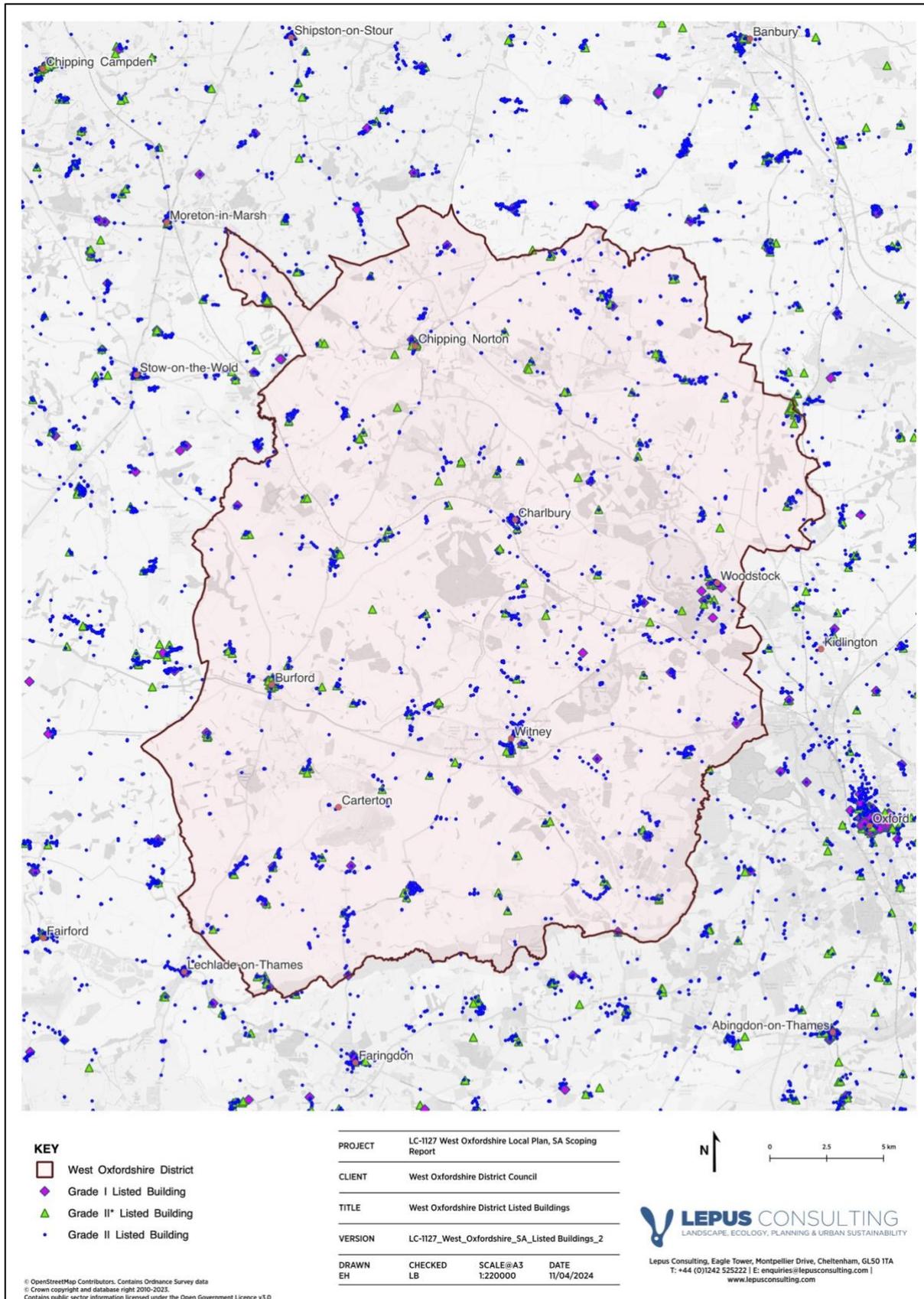


Figure 6.1: Listed buildings in West Oxfordshire

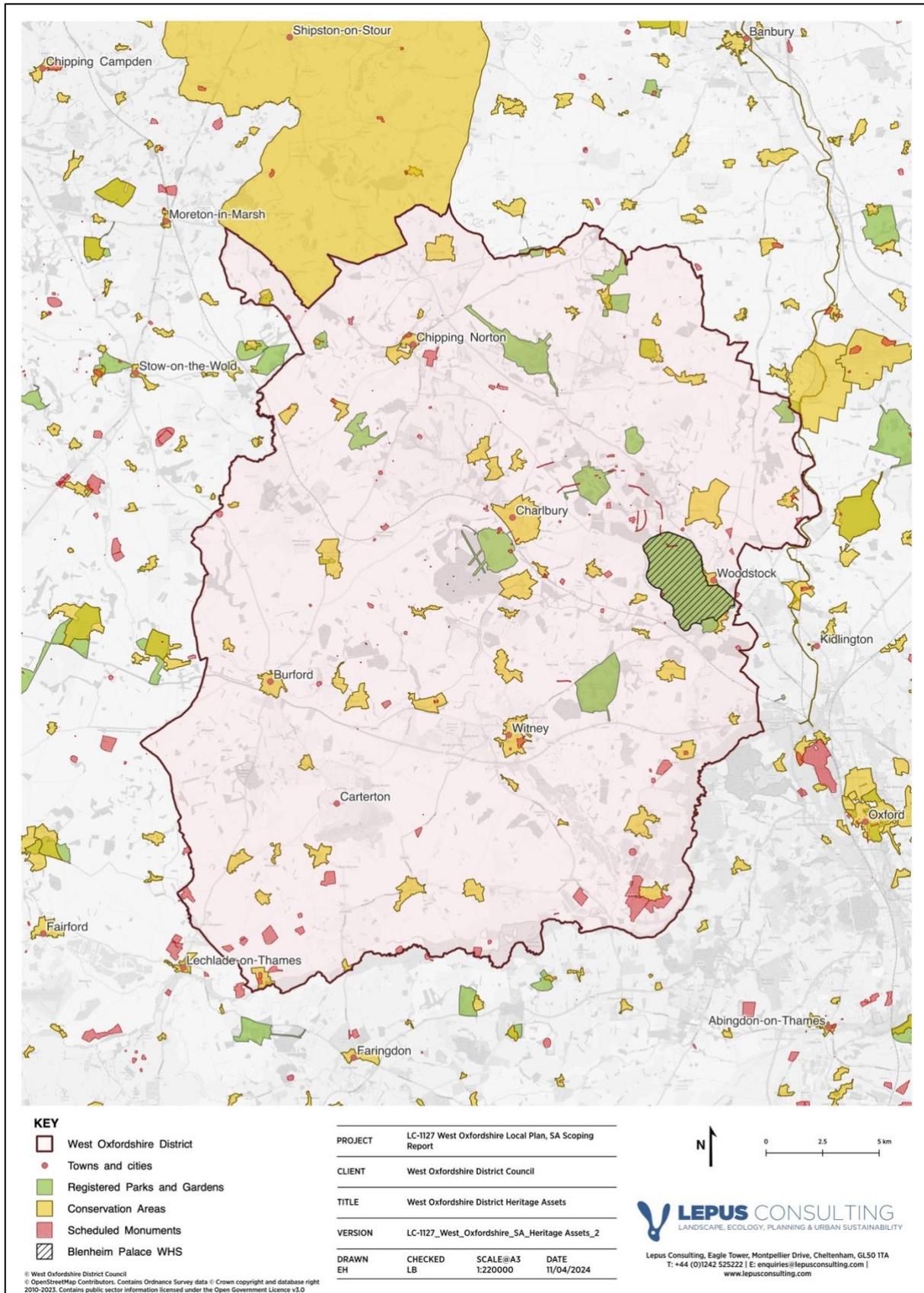


Figure 6.2: Heritage assets in West Oxfordshire

- 6.2.3 The Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)<sup>67</sup> recognises how all parts of the landscape, including West Oxfordshire’s rural landscapes, have historic value and how this has been influenced over time by natural and human activities. As part of the HLC work, the historic landscape of Oxfordshire was digitally mapped using data from the Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 6.2.4 Non-designated heritage assets in West Oxfordshire do not have statutory protection. Many of these are identified within CAs and contribute to the distinctive character of the historic landscape<sup>68</sup>. This includes 980 Locally Listed Buildings, which do not meet the criteria for being nationally listed, however may still be of architectural or historic interest<sup>69</sup>. Additionally, there are 84 Article 4 Directions in West Oxfordshire, which enable the withdrawal of specified permitted development rights across a defined area<sup>70</sup>.
- 6.2.5 Impacts on heritage assets will be largely determined by the specific layout and design of development proposals. The level of impact will be assessed based on the nature and significance of, and proximity of the proposal to, the heritage asset in question, using professional judgement and with reference to evidence base documents.
- 6.2.6 Adverse impacts on heritage assets can include direct loss or truncation of an asset, impacts on the existing setting of the asset and the character of the local area, as well as adverse impacts on views of, or from, the asset. These negative impacts are expected to be long-term and irreversible. It is anticipated that the West Oxfordshire Local Plan will require a Heritage Statement and/or an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment to be prepared to accompany future planning applications, where appropriate.

**Box 6.1:** Summary of key sustainability issues: cultural heritage

**Key issues for cultural heritage include:**

- ⇒ West Oxfordshire’s rich cultural heritage comprises a large quantity of designated and non-designated historic assets. Proposals for development will need to carefully consider potential impacts on the significance of heritage assets including their setting, in order to minimise threats from increased housing demand and maintain or where possible enhance local character.
- ⇒ Careful consideration will be needed for any proposed development that could affect the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site and its setting.
- ⇒ Eight historic assets within the district are on the heritage at risk register and need to be protected from further deterioration to their structure, setting or character from impacts such as recreational, construction and increased pollution.

<sup>67</sup> Oxfordshire District Council (2017) Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation. Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/archaeology/landscape-characterisation> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>68</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2018) West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031: Environmental and Heritage Assets. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/gmncbxu3/8-environmental-and-heritage-assets.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>69</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (no date) Listed Buildings. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/historic-buildings-and-conservation/listed-buildings/> [Date accessed: 08/04/24]

<sup>70</sup> UK Government (2023) When is permission required? Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/when-is-permission-required#article4> [Date accessed: 08/04/24]

- ⇒ There is a need to improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings and take into account their embodied carbon value when considering their retention and re-use, rather than replacing heritage assets with new development.
- ⇒ Archaeological remains, both seen and unseen, have the potential to be adversely affected by new development.

**Box 6.2:** *Likely evolution without the Plan: cultural heritage*

**Likely evolution of the baseline without the Plan**

- National and local guidance to protect designated assets and their settings such as Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, and Registered Parks and Gardens, which would continue with or without the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.
- The Heritage at Risk Register will continue to be managed by Historic England who will continue to work with stakeholders to protect these assets, although there could be less opportunity to focus on regeneration and investment without the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.
- Without the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, opportunities to promote connectivity with places and to protect and emphasise local distinctiveness and culture may be lost or reduced.

## 7 Human health

### 7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 National and local health strategies and policies seek to promote the development of healthy communities, such as through delivering age-friendly environments for the elderly, encouraging healthier food choices and facilitating active travel. In line with the NPPF, local planning authorities (LPAs) should seek to promote social interaction, create communities which are safe and accessible, and ensure there is good accessibility to a range of GI, sports facilities, local shops, cultural buildings and outdoor spaces.

7.1.2 Key PPPs include Public Health England's Strategy for 2020 – 2025<sup>71</sup> which sets out priorities within the health system including a focus on addressing health inequalities. The Oxfordshire 2022/23 Director of Public Health Annual Report<sup>72</sup> focuses on issues of obesity and physical activity. Although Oxfordshire overall is one of the least deprived counties, the report also addresses issues of inequality that are highlighted through issues surrounding healthy lifestyles.

### 7.2 Baseline and key issues

#### Healthcare facilities

7.2.1 In order to facilitate healthy and active lifestyles for local residents, WODC should seek to ensure that residents have good access to NHS hospitals and GP surgeries.

7.2.2 There are no NHS hospitals providing an Accident and Emergency (A&E) service within West Oxfordshire, with the nearest being the John Radcliffe Hospital approximately 10km east of the district boundary, Horton General Hospital approximately 9km north of the district boundary and the Great Western Hospital approximately 17km south of the district boundary.

7.2.3 According to data provided by WODC, the district includes 13 GP surgeries. There are also two community hospitals providing rehabilitation and palliative care (Witney Community Hospital) and outpatient and maternity services (Chipping Norton War Memorial Community Hospital).

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<sup>71</sup> Public Health England (2019) PHE Strategy 2020 to 2025. Available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phe-strategy-2020-to-2025> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

<sup>72</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2023) 2022/23 Director of Public Health Annual Report. Available at:  
[https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/public-health/public\\_health\\_annual\\_report\\_2022\\_23.pdf](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/public-health/public_health_annual_report_2022_23.pdf) [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

### **Leisure facilities**

- 7.2.4 The provision of affordable and accessible leisure facilities is important to encourage an active and healthy local population. The West Oxfordshire district has eight leisure facilities open to local residents. These include 'Chipping Norton Leisure Centre' which is located in the north of the district and 'Woodstock Open Air Pool' which is located in the east of the district. Additionally, facilities relating to 'Bartholomew Sports Centre', 'Carterton Leisure Centre' and 'Windrush Leisure Centre' are located in the south of the district.

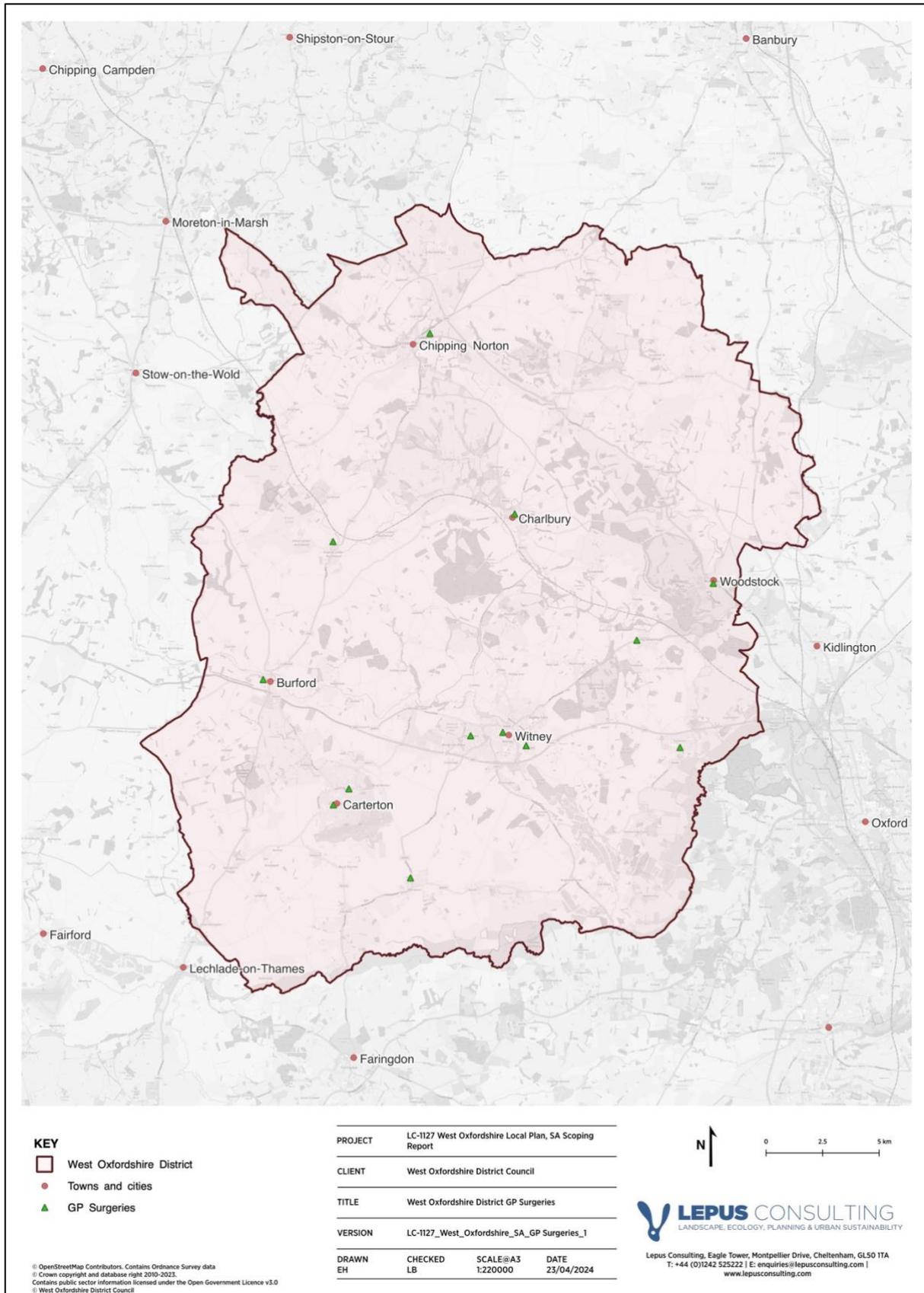


Figure 7.1: Location of healthcare facilities in West Oxfordshire

## Greenspace

- 7.2.5 Opportunities to experience a diverse range of natural habitats and recreational spaces is known to be beneficial for physical and mental health and wellbeing<sup>73</sup>. Good access to such areas can reduce stress, fatigue, anxiety and depression<sup>74</sup>, and has been linked with healthy foetal growth in pregnant women, higher birth weights, healthy microbiomes in babies and reduced rates of obesity and type 2 diabetes. Impacts of restricted access to the natural environment are particularly significant for lower socio-economic groups.
- 7.2.6 Providing residents with sustainable access to a diverse range of natural habitats can be an effective means of reducing health inequalities in the area.
- 7.2.7 The Open Space Assessment 2013 - 2029<sup>75</sup> identified a total of 381 sites currently providing greenspace in West Oxfordshire. This includes:
- Allotments;
  - Amenity Greenspace;
  - Parks and recreation grounds;
  - Accessible and private natural greenspace; and
  - Provision for children and young people.
- 7.2.8 The Open Space Assessment scored factors such as the quality, safety and access of the provision of open spaces in each category. Sites were ranked to inform future plans for open spaces within West Oxfordshire.

### *Box 7.1: Summary of key sustainability issues: human health*

#### **Key issues for human health include:**

- ⇒ The increasing population in West Oxfordshire, and especially the ageing population, will be likely to place pressure on the capacity of health infrastructure and leisure facilities, which will need careful planning. It is important that the infrastructure that supports these facilities is kept up to date in order to provide optimal use.
- ⇒ Long travel distances to hospitals with an A&E department make it more difficult for residents to access emergency healthcare.
- ⇒ Sustainable access to GP surgeries and leisure facilities is more limited in the smaller rural settlements.
- ⇒ Through the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, the Council should seek to reduce health inequalities where possible and explore the possibility of delivering new and improved infrastructure, facilities and services.
- ⇒ Development within the West Oxfordshire Local Plan should ensure access to healthy eating options and fresh food stores, promoting healthy lifestyles to combat adult and childhood obesity.
- ⇒ Increasing levels of demand for recreation in combination with population growth increase the demand for local and accessible open space facilities, particularly within larger settlements.

<sup>73</sup> NHS England (no date) Green social prescribing. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing/green-social-prescribing/> [Date accessed: 01/08/24]

<sup>74</sup> Houlden. V., Weich. S. and Jarvis. S. (2017) A cross-sectional analysis of green space prevalence and mental wellbeing in England

<sup>75</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2013). West Oxfordshire Open Space Study. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/g2eom11w/west-oxfordshire-open-space-study-2013.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

**Box 7.2:** *Likely evolution without the Plan: human health*

**Likely evolution of the baseline without the Plan**

- West Oxfordshire's population is expected to continue to rise, putting greater pressure on the capacity of healthcare services, open spaces and leisure facilities.
- Rising life expectancies and a decreasing population of those of working age is leading to an ageing population in West Oxfordshire. This is likely to increase demand on housing and healthcare services to cater for their specific care needs. It may be more difficult to ensure these needs are met in the absence of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.
- Without a clear plan-led development strategy, it is uncertain if existing public green spaces and open spaces would be maintained or enhanced to encourage residents to live healthy and active lifestyles. Existing open spaces may be under greater pressure from windfall development without the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.

## 8 Landscape

### 8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 At the European, national, regional, and local levels emphasis is placed on the protection of landscape as an essential component of people's surroundings and sense of place. Landscape is described as comprising natural, cultural, social, aesthetic, and perceptual elements. This includes flora, fauna, soils, land use, settlement, sight, smells, and sound<sup>76</sup>.
- 8.1.2 Various PPPs seek to increase recognition of the relationships between the different aspects of landscapes including but not limited to local distinctiveness, the historic environment, natural resources, farming and forestry, education, leisure and recreation, transport and infrastructure, and nature conservation.
- 8.1.3 National Design Guidance<sup>77</sup> advocates well-designed places that are functional, attractive and provide a sense of safety, inclusion, and community cohesion. Landscape also links closely with GI, with well-managed GI networks providing multi-functional benefits including improving the health of people and wildlife.

### 8.2 Baseline and key issues

- 8.2.1 Natural England has divided England into 159 National Character Areas (NCAs), defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history and cultural features as well as economic activity. The NCA boundaries follow natural lines in the landscape. The majority of West Oxfordshire is situated within the Cotswolds NCA, and the southern third of the district lies within the Upper Thames Clay Vales NCA. Key characteristics of the Cotswolds NCA include rolling chalk and limestone hills providing expansive views over various major settlements and scattered hamlets<sup>78</sup>. The Upper Thames Clay Vales NCA shifts towards gently undulating lowland farmland, including claylands with wet valleys, mixed farming and open, arable lands<sup>79</sup>.
- 8.2.2 Four distinct architectural character areas have been identified in the West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD<sup>80</sup>: the Thames Vale; the Limestone Wolds; the Ironstone Valleys and Ridges; and the Northern Valleys and Ridges.

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<sup>76</sup> Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>77</sup> MHCLG (2021) National Design Guide: Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>78</sup> Natural England (2015) NCA Profile: 107 Cotswolds (NE420). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5900626> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>79</sup> Natural England (2014) NCA Profile: 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales (NE570). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5865554770395136> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>80</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2016) West Oxfordshire Design Guide. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/> [Date accessed: 08/04/24]

- 8.2.3 The Cotswolds National Landscape, formerly known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), encompasses a large portion of the northern west of the district (see **Figure 1.1**). The Cotswolds is the largest National Landscape in England and is recognised by its rich, diverse and high-quality landscape encompassing flower-rich limestone grasslands and ancient broadleaved woodland<sup>81</sup>. The area is famed for the beauty of its limestone buildings with its central feature comprising the Cotswold Hills which rise from the broad, green meadows of the upper Thames. The Plan will need to seek to improve the Cotswolds National Landscape by considering its conservation and enhancement, such as through its capacity for BNG provision.
- 8.2.4 Baseline data on landscape character within the Plan area is established within the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (1998)<sup>82</sup>, which identified 13 Character Areas and outlined specific guidelines for each. The character areas were further classified into 24 Landscape Types. More recent Landscape Assessments for Witney (2007), Chipping Norton (2009) and Carterton (2009)<sup>83</sup> provide further context regarding the landscape character and sensitivity around the main towns, alongside Landscape and Visual Reviews<sup>84</sup> which were carried out to inform site options in each town as part of the adopted local plan process, and provide additional context for the sensitivity and capacity of land parcels in these areas. The majority of land parcels were considered to be of high landscape value and sensitivity to new development, which will need to be carefully considered throughout the Local Plan process.
- 8.2.5 Three special landscape policy areas were identified in the adopted Local Plan process<sup>85</sup>. These comprise the Lower Windrush Valley Project Area, Wychwood Project Area and Windrush in Witney Project Area. These are identified for special landscape protection, conservation and management.
- 8.2.6 No national parks or country parks lie within or in close proximity to West Oxfordshire.

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<sup>81</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape (2024) Special qualities of the Cotswolds – A National Treasure. Available at: <https://www.cotswolds-nl.org.uk/our-landscape-2/> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>82</sup> Atlantic Consultants (1998) West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/cpqn2fj0/west-oxfordshire-landscape-assessment-1998.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>83</sup> Amanda Hopwood Landscape Consultancy (2007, 2009, 2009) Witney Landscape Assessment; Chipping Norton Landscape Assessment; and Carterton Landscape Assessment. Each available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2031/local-plan-evidence-base/> [Date accessed: 10/04/24]

<sup>84</sup> Kirkham Landscape Planning (2012, 2014, 2015) Landscape and Visual Review of Submissions for Carterton and Witney Strategic Development Options; Landscape and Visual Review of Chipping Norton Strategic Site Option; and Landscape and Visual Review of Two Additional Submissions for Witney Strategic Development Options. Each available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2031/local-plan-evidence-base/> [Date accessed: 10/04/24]

<sup>85</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2018) West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2031/> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

- 8.2.7 The Thames Path is a National Trail which runs along the River Thames and the southern boundary of the West Oxfordshire District. Potential cross-boundary effects will need to be carefully considered, where the district borders South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse. There is an extensive Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network within the semi-rural areas of West Oxfordshire, although this is more fragmented within the urban and the most rural areas (see **Figure 8.1**).

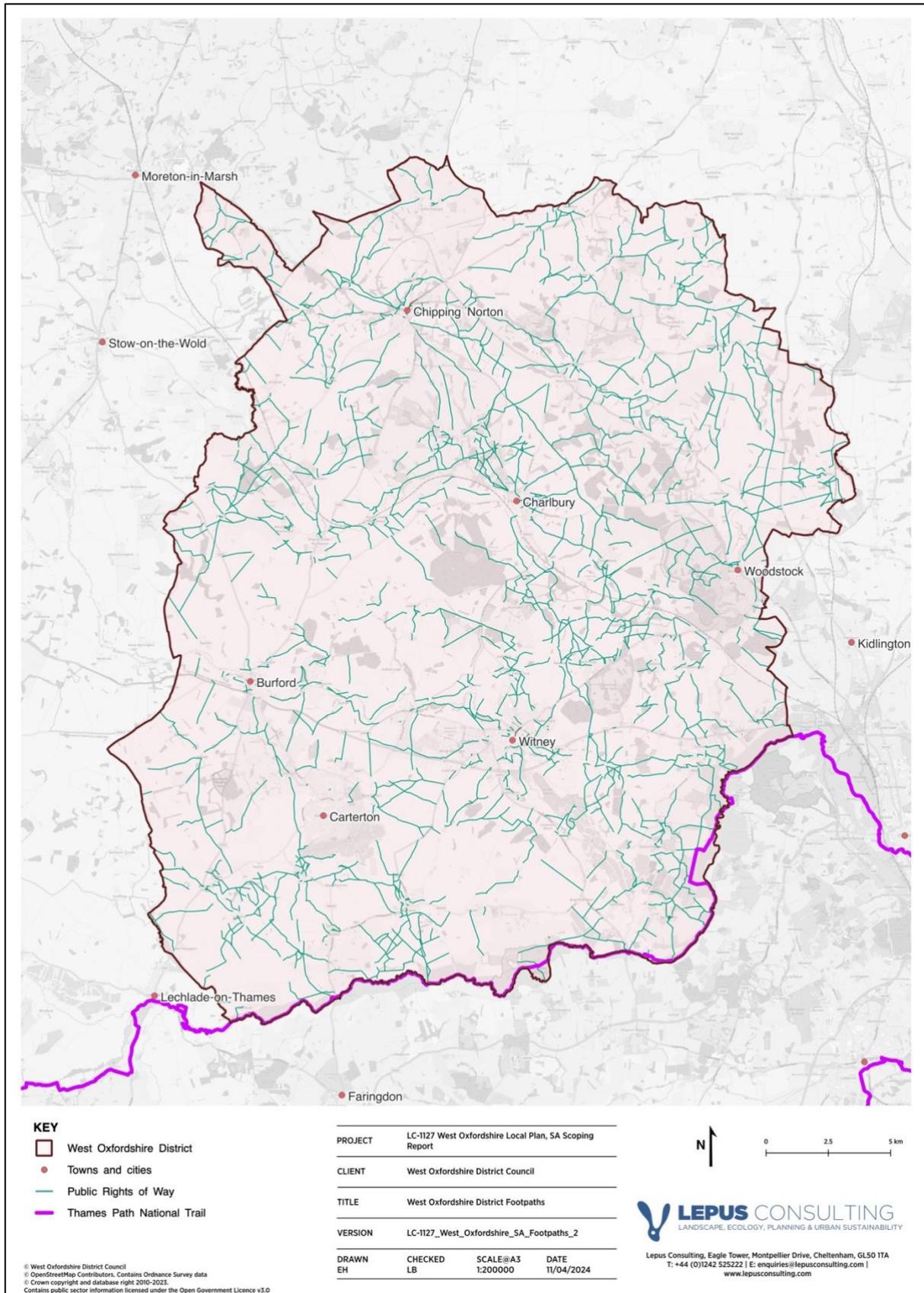


Figure 8.1: Public Rights of Way and National Trails in West Oxfordshire

8.2.8 West Oxfordshire contains a small portion of the Oxford Green Belt in the east of the district (as shown in **Figure 1.1**). The Oxford Green Belt prevents urban sprawl from Oxford and aims to avoid coalescence with nearby settlements such as Eynsham, Cassington and Bladon<sup>86</sup>. Whilst Green Belt is not a statutory landscape designation, it is important to recognise the role that the Oxford Green Belt plays in preserving the setting, character and openness of the countryside.

8.2.9 WODC should seek to review and update landscape evidence to ensure that the emerging Local Plan does not undermine West Oxfordshire's distinctive characteristics and unspoilt countryside, whilst promoting regeneration and enhancements to townscapes within the urban area.

**Box 8.1: Summary of key sustainability issues: landscape**

**Key issues for landscape include:**

- ⇒ New development within the Cotswolds National Landscape, which covers a large proportion of the Plan area, may lead to adverse effects on the setting or special qualities of the designated landscape without careful planning and design.
- ⇒ The increased need for development could increase the risk of urban sprawl from market towns and smaller settlements, as well as the risk of coalescence between settlements.
- ⇒ Development could impact the open landscape, alter the character or impose on the tranquility that gives a sense of place to the extensive number of rural settlements.
- ⇒ Previous landscape assessments determined the landscapes within West Oxfordshire to be of high sensitivity, with low capacity for new development. WODC should carefully consider the findings of existing landscape assessments and commission new evidence to ensure that development has regard to the setting and form of the existing settlements and landscape in order to avoid or minimise harm.
- ⇒ Development should have regard to the key issues and guidelines identified within the published Landscape Assessment and any emerging landscape guidance.

**Box 8.2: Likely evolution without the Plan: landscape**

**Likely evolution of the baseline without the Plan**

- The area of West Oxfordshire which lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape will continue to benefit from legislative protection, however the absence of Plan-led development and a clear policy direction may lead to there being less opportunity to promote conservation and enhancement of the National Landscape and its setting.
- There may be an increased likelihood for a rise in development which sits in discord with the local landscape character, or have little regard for the capacity of areas of high landscape sensitivity.
- As the Green Belt is not a statutory landscape designation, the absence of a Local Plan could make it more at risk of having its openness and tranquillity disturbed by encroachment and pollution from new development.

<sup>86</sup> LUC (2015) Oxford Green Belt Study (2015). Available at:

<https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/communityandliving/partnerships/GrowthBoard/OxfordGreenBeltStudySummary.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

## 9 Population and material assets

### 9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 'Population' is a broad matter and includes consideration of pollution and waste, housing, transport and accessibility, education, economy and employment. The population topic seeks to create places where residents live a high quality of life for longer, are well educated and have the necessary skills to gain employment and succeed in modern society. Indicators of these objectives include the proximity of development proposals to schools, accessibility to employment land and proximity to services and amenities.
- 9.1.2 PPPs on population cover a range of different objectives, including tackling social exclusion and inequalities, improving health, improving housing quality, and reducing levels of education failure, ill health, substance misuse, crime and anti-social behaviour. At the regional and local levels, addressing issues regarding housing affordability and tackling small pockets of rural deprivation are key aims.
- 9.1.3 'Material assets' covers a variety of built and natural assets which are accounted for in a range of topics. It is a requirement of Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations to consider material assets, although the Regulations do not define them. The SA process considers material assets as the social, physical and environmental infrastructure implications of the Local Plan.
- 9.1.4 The material assets sustainability theme covers a range of policy areas, including waste management, minerals, energy production and previously developed land. PPPs seek to protect mineral resources and promote appropriate after uses for mineral workings and promote the 'waste hierarchy'.

### 9.2 Baseline and key issues

#### Population and identity

- 9.2.1 According to the 2021 Census, the district has a resident population of 114,200 people, which has increased by around 9,500 since the previous census in 2011<sup>87</sup>. The population is forecast to grow to 131,100 by 2028, with the majority being those age 65 and above<sup>88</sup>. The district has an ageing population with 21.6% people being 65 years or older, which is higher than the UK average of 18.6%.

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<sup>87</sup> ONS (2022) Population and household estimates, England and Wales: Census 2021. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationandhouseholdestimatesenglandandwales/census2021#population-sizes-and-changes-for-regions-and-local-authorities> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>88</sup> JSNA (2021) West Oxfordshire District Summary 2021. Available at: [https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/oxfordshireinsight/files/documents/WestOxon\\_JSNA\\_2021.pdf](https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/oxfordshireinsight/files/documents/WestOxon_JSNA_2021.pdf) [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

- 9.2.2 The majority (95.2%) of West Oxfordshire's residents describe themselves as 'white', with much smaller proportions identifying as 'mixed' (1.9%), 'Asian' (1.7%), 'black' (0.6%), or 'other ethnic groups' (0.6%)<sup>89</sup>.
- 9.2.3 Most residents living in West Oxfordshire were born in England (85.4%), with 1.8% born in Scotland and 1.7% in Wales<sup>90</sup>. Additionally, 1.0% of the population reported Poland as their country of birth.
- 9.2.4 Between the 2011 and 2021 census, there was a large increase in those identifying as having 'no religion', from 25.9% to 40.6%<sup>91</sup>. Approximately half of people described themselves as 'Christian' in 2021, with other religions each making up less than 1% of the population.

### **Housing**

- 9.2.5 Government guidance requires LPAs to determine the local housing need figure for their area. The deliverability of this figure should then be tested in the local plan process. The local housing need figure is calculated by summing the national standard method figure, using 2014-based ONS household projections and affordability ratios which are updated annually.
- 9.2.6 It is currently estimated that West Oxfordshire requires 570 homes per year<sup>92</sup>. This housing requirement was exceeded in the period 2018 – 2021. The Council has also commissioned a new Local Housing Needs Assessment to determine whether 570 homes per annum is still required for the new Local Plan period.
- 9.2.7 High housing costs cause hardship for many local people. The average house price in West Oxfordshire is £310,000, in comparison with £242,286 across the UK<sup>93</sup>. Full-time employees in England spent an average of 8.3 times their annual earnings on buying a home in 2023, whereas in West Oxfordshire, the affordability ratio was 10.6<sup>94</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> ONS (2023) How life has changed in West Oxfordshire: Census 2021. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E07000181/> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2023) Housing Land Supply Position Statement 2023 – 2028. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/pgyhbrb/housing-land-supply-position-statement-2023-to-2028.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/04/2023]

<sup>93</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2018) Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2018 - 2023. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/k4zlx1n/preventing-homelessness-strategy-2018-to-2023.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>94</sup> UK Government (2023) Housing affordability in England and Wales: 2023. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/housingaffordabilityinenglandandwales/2023> [Date accessed: 19/04/24]

9.2.8 Home ownership in the district decreased slightly from 2011 to 2021 from 69.7% to 66.8%<sup>95</sup>. Additionally, West Oxfordshire has a lower proportion of those in social rented housing (13.3%) than the rest of the UK (17.1%)<sup>96</sup>. On the other hand, private renting increased from 14.9% to 17.9% between 2011 and 2021. As a result of pressure on housing costs, there was an identified need for 274 affordable homes per year for the Local Plan 2031<sup>97</sup>.

9.2.9 In order to meet housing needs for all, the Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2018 – 2023<sup>98</sup> anticipated that welfare reform and improving the supply of affordable accommodation were key catalysts for reducing homelessness and housing inequality in the district.

### **Deprivation and crime**

9.2.10 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) measures the relative levels of deprivation in 32,844 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England<sup>99</sup>. Of the 317 LPAs in England, West Oxfordshire is ranked as the 301<sup>st</sup> least deprived. 22 LSOAs within West Oxfordshire fall within the top 10% least deprived areas in England. However, small pockets of deprivation remain in rural areas such as to the east of Witney, and within larger towns such as Witney and Chipping Norton.

9.2.11 Crime rates are lower in West Oxfordshire than the average for England and Wales. As of the year ending September 2023, there was a crime rate of 52 per 1,000 population in West Oxfordshire, whereas the England and Wales average crime rate is 77 per 1,000 people<sup>100</sup>.

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<sup>95</sup> ONS (2023) How life has changed in West Oxfordshire: Census 2021. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E07000181/> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2021) Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/mtadko1o/affordable-housing-spd-final-adoption-version-27-october-2021.pdf> [Date accessed 08/04/24]

<sup>98</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2018) Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2018 - 2023. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/k4zlx1n/preventing-homelessness-strategy-2018-to-2023.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/02/24]

<sup>99</sup> MHCLG (2019) The English Indices of Deprivation 2019. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>100</sup> ONS (2024) Crime in England and Wales, year ending September 2023. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingseptember2023#overall-estimates-of-crime> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

## Economy

- 9.2.12 West Oxfordshire has a strong tourism industry due to its location in the Cotswolds, with popular attractions being Blenheim Palace, and market towns such as Witney and Burford. Its location provides functional economic links to Oxford City, Cherwell District and Vale of White Horse District. In addition, key areas for industry include the Oxford Science Park, RAF Brize Norton and Siemens and Abbot, as well as clusters of science, engineering and manufacturing businesses. There are currently visions for this to be developed in a larger industrial hub encompassing areas of Carterton<sup>101</sup>. However, a lack of large multinational businesses and large employment areas remains a barrier for employment options in the area, owing to the large number of out-commuters<sup>102</sup>. Data from 2001 on out-commuting estimates that 20,159 people leave the district to access employment, totalling in a net loss of 8,326 residents<sup>103</sup>
- 9.2.13 In 2021, 1.8% of people aged 16 – 64 said they were unemployed, compared with 2.0% in 2011<sup>104</sup>. Of the 61.7% people in full time employment, the workforce is highly skilled with approximately one-quarter of people in professional occupations<sup>105</sup>.
- 9.2.14 West Oxfordshire has high job growth potential with the introduction of the Salt Cross Garden Village. It is anticipated that the construction and expansion of this employment area will see a significant increase in jobs throughout and extending beyond the period of its development<sup>106</sup>.
- 9.2.15 Improvements are being made for the provision of ultrafast full-fibre broadband in West Oxfordshire, particularly with an increasing number of people working from home<sup>107</sup>. Over 90,000 premises across Oxfordshire can now access superfast broadband, which is an increase from 69% to 98% from 2020 to 2022<sup>108</sup>.

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<sup>101</sup> OxLEP (2019) Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy. Available at:  
[https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxfordshire-SINGLE-PAGE\\_1.pdf](https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxfordshire-SINGLE-PAGE_1.pdf) [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>102</sup> ONS (2024) Internal Migration Map: Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/dvc638/maps/flow/> [Date accessed: 19/04/24]

<sup>103</sup> ONS (2001) Location of usual residence and place of work by method of travel to work. Available at:  
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/WU03UK/chart/1132462281> [Date accessed: 19/04/24]

<sup>104</sup> ONS (2023) How life has changed in West Oxfordshire: Census 2021. Available at:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E07000181/> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>105</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2021) Annual Monitoring Report 2020 - 2021. Available at:  
<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/wqdcxefn/annual-monitoring-report-2020-2021.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Bower, C. (2022) Oxfordshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan. Available at:  
<https://digitalinfrastructureoxfordshire.co.uk/sites/default/files/2022-07/Digital%20Infrastructure%20Strategy%20v12%20%281%29.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

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## Education

- 9.2.16 According to data provided by WODC, the district contains 51 primary schools and seven secondary schools. It is assumed that new residents in the Plan area will require access to primary and secondary education to help facilitate good levels of education, skills and qualifications of residents.
- 9.2.17 Further education provision is limited in West Oxfordshire. The Witney Campus of Abingdon and Witney College provides sixth form and college courses to local residents. There are no universities within West Oxfordshire itself, however, the district is located within a commutable distance to Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University and the Royal Agricultural College.
- 9.2.18 Educational achievement is relatively high in West Oxfordshire. West Oxfordshire is in the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile of local authorities for average qualification rank<sup>109</sup>.

## Local centres

- 9.2.19 Witney was defined as the principal town centre in the adopted local plan, alongside the primary town centres of Carterton and Chipping Norton. Burford and Woodstock are noted as town centres with a significant tourist role.
- 9.2.20 A range of services and facilities are provided within the towns including libraries, post offices, local shops and convenience stores. All main and rural service centres are supported by a number of smaller town, village and neighbourhood shopping centres. However, nine parishes within the 32 'village' parishes were reported to have no shop in 2016<sup>110</sup>.

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<sup>109</sup> ONS (2023) Education, England and Wales: Census 2021. Highest level of qualification, usual residents aged 16 years and over: index score ranked and percentage distribution, 2021, local authorities in England and Wales. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/bulletins/educationenglandandwales/census2021> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>110</sup> WODC (2016) Settlement Sustainability report. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/z42d1nwm/settlement-sustainability-report-november-2016.pdf> [Date accessed: 23/04/24]

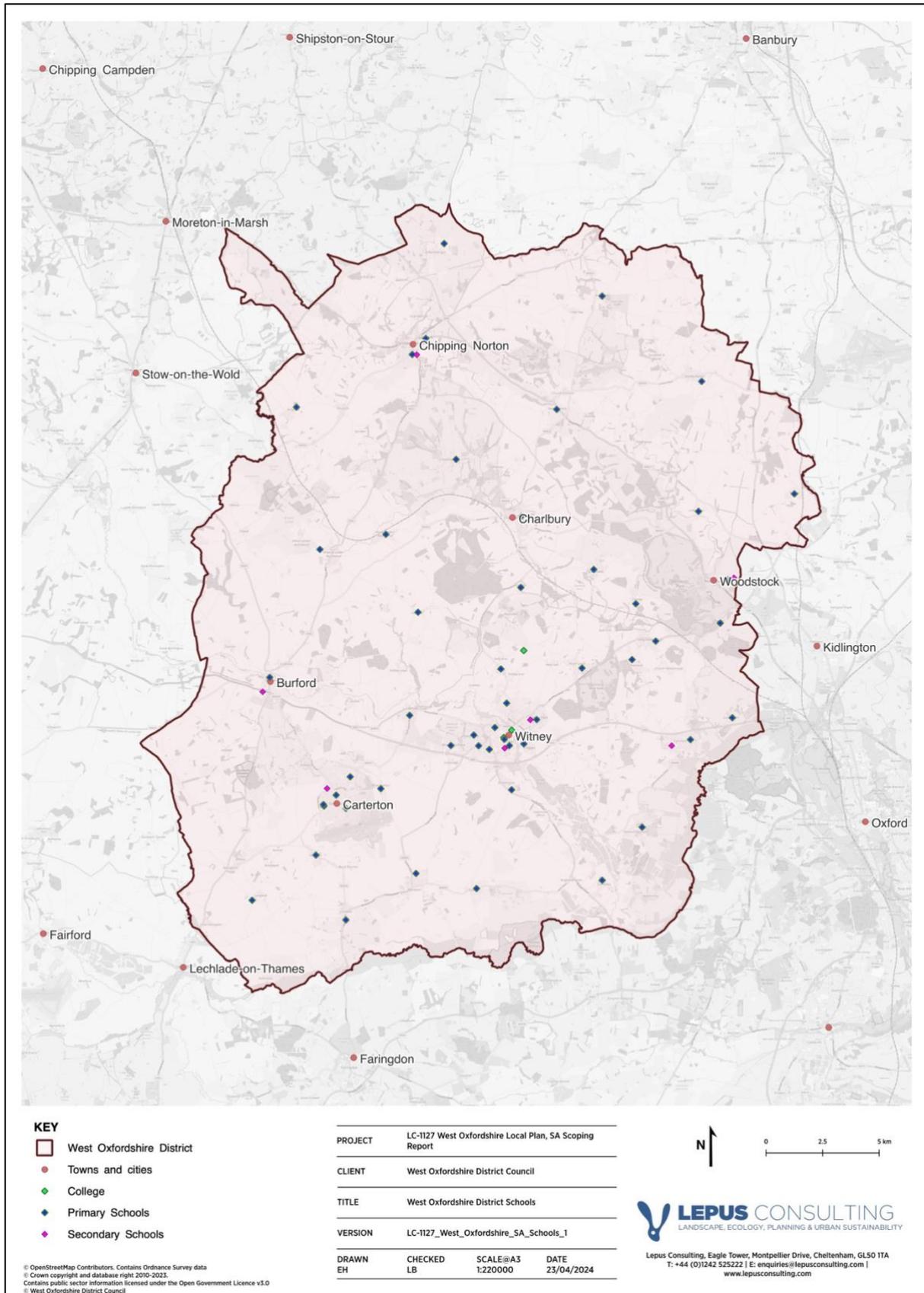


Figure 9.1: Schools and educational provision in West Oxfordshire

## Minerals and waste

- 9.2.21 The proposed development within the Plan area and associated increase in residents would be expected to result in a significant increase in waste produced. It is assumed that new residents will have an annual waste production in line with the national average, which was 377kg per person in 2022<sup>111</sup>.
- 9.2.22 The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (2022)<sup>112</sup> sets out the strategy to produce the new Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan to update the previous Plan from 2017<sup>113</sup>. This will involve safeguarding the current network of waste management facilities and providing new suitable and well-located new facilities to maximise opportunities to reuse, compost, recycle, and treat waste. Currently, the Ardley Energy Recovery Facility converts approximately 95% of Oxfordshire's residual waste into electricity<sup>114</sup>.
- 9.2.23 The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Authority Monitoring Report (2020)<sup>115</sup> identifies a range of minerals worked or with potential for working in the county. Mineral resources are finite and must be protected to ensure future generations can meet their own needs. Sterilisation of mineral resources can occur as a result of surface development directly overlying the mineral resource, or by development that is situated on, or close to, the boundary of a resource. The Minerals and Waste Authority Monitoring Report identified impacts where development may hinder mineral conservation or extraction in any Mineral Safeguarding Areas, which are distributed across the district and primarily supply limestone and soft sand. These impacts including loss of minerals were found to be minimal, with no non-mineral applications being permitted with an objection on mineral safeguarding grounds.

### *Box 9.1: Summary of key sustainability issues: population and material assets*

#### **Key issues for population and material assets include:**

- ⇒ West Oxfordshire has a high population of skilled workers, however a large number of skilled job opportunities require travel outside of the Plan area.

<sup>111</sup> DEFRA (2023) Local authority collected waste management – annual results 2022/23. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-collected-waste-management-annual-results/local-authority-collected-waste-management-annual-results-202223> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>112</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2022) Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme. Available at: [https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/planning-minerals-and-waste/MineralsandWasteDevelopmentScheme2021\\_12thEdition.pdf](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/planning-minerals-and-waste/MineralsandWasteDevelopmentScheme2021_12thEdition.pdf) [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>113</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2017) Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Plan. Available at: [https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/thames/ofas-updates/user\\_uploads/document-14---oxfordshire-minerals-and-waste-core-strategy--2017-.pdf](https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/thames/ofas-updates/user_uploads/document-14---oxfordshire-minerals-and-waste-core-strategy--2017-.pdf) [Date accessed: 19/04/24]

<sup>114</sup> Viridor (2024) Ardley ERF. Available at: <https://www.viridor.co.uk/energy/energy-recovery-facilities/ardley-erf/>. [Date accessed: 19/04/24]

<sup>115</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2020) Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Authority Monitoring Report (2020). Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/planning-minerals-and-waste/MineralsandWasteAMR2020.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

- ⇒ There is a need to continue improving digital connectivity in West Oxfordshire, particularly in rural areas, to help reduce the need to travel and provide residents with the ability to work, shop and access services from home.
- ⇒ The ageing population in West Oxfordshire is likely to place increased pressure on health and social care facilities over time, and may intensify issues with isolation and loneliness, in particular for elderly people living in more rural areas with poorer access to local services.
- ⇒ There is a need to increase the proportion of waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting and ensure that waste management facilities have enough capacity to adapt to population increases.
- ⇒ High housing costs increase housing inequalities and can make it difficult for first-time buyers or low-income families to move onto the property ladder. There is a high demand for affordable housing provision.
- ⇒ An increasing population puts greater demand on schools and further education provision in West Oxfordshire. There is a need to ensure there is sufficient capacity in schools and improve sustainable access to education.

**Box 9.2:** *Likely evolution without the Plan: population and material assets*

**Likely evolution of the baseline without the Plan**

- Without the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, it is unlikely that the identified housing needs would be met. This has potential to increase issues of homelessness and overcrowding, or force residents to move outside the area. A lack of housing provision could also restrict people from moving to the area, which may hinder economic growth.
- It is likely that unemployment levels would increase, as there may be limited job availability in some sectors if land is not allocated through the West Oxfordshire Local Plan. This also has potential to increase the numbers of commuters travelling outside the Plan area.
- In the absence of plan-led development, there may be less scope to implement and manage sufficient health, education, social and transport infrastructure to meet the needs of a rising population.
- Without the influence of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, less planning control would be exercised over the location of new developments. This gives potential for new sites to be developed in unsuitable locations without the necessary supporting infrastructure, which may exacerbate issues of social exclusion and access to key services.
- It is likely that more pressure would be placed on the capacity of local schools, reducing their ability to provide a quality education.
- Housing costs are likely to continue to rise, making it difficult for residents to move onto the property ladder and exacerbating inequalities. It is unlikely that sufficient affordable housing would be delivered to meet identified needs.
- It is likely that the quantity of waste sent to Ardley Energy Recovery Facility will continue to increase as the population in West Oxfordshire rises.

# 10 Water and soil

## 10.1 Introduction

- 10.1.1 National water policies are primarily driven by the aims of the EU Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC, as translated into national law by the Water Framework Regulations 2003. Key objectives include improving the quality of rivers and other water bodies to 'good' ecological status by 2027; considering flood risk at all stages of the Plan and development process in order to reduce future damage to property and loss of life; and incorporating water efficiency measures into new developments. Key PPPs for the West Oxfordshire Plan area includes the Thames River Basin Management Plan (RBMP)<sup>116</sup> which provides information on the status of surface and groundwater bodies and how water quality can be improved.
- 10.1.2 National policies and strategies on soil, including DEFRA's 'Safeguarding our Soils' strategy<sup>117</sup>, seek to prevent soil pollution; reduce soil erosion from wind and water; maintain soil diversity; improve the quality of soil, including through promoting an increase in organic matter in soil; and increase the resilience of soils to a changing climate. Focus should be placed on protecting the quality and availability of agricultural land, through reducing soil degradation and maintaining soil productivity.

## 10.2 Baseline and key issues

### Water quality

- 10.2.1 The main watercourses flowing through West Oxfordshire include the Evenlode, Windrush, Glyme, Shill Brook and their tributaries, and the River Thames along the southern border (see **Figure 10.1**). These primarily drain into the Thames river basin district, however a small portion in the north of the Plan area drains into the Severn river basin district. Construction activities in or near watercourses have the potential to cause pollution, impact upon the bed and banks of watercourses and impact upon the quality of the water.

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<sup>116</sup> Environment Agency (2022) Thames river basin district river basin management plan: updated 2022. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/thames-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>117</sup> Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2011) Safeguarding our soils: A strategy for England. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/thames-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

- 10.2.2 The ecological status of the River Thames in West Oxfordshire is 'poor', alongside sections of the Dorn confluence of the Glyme, Shill Brook and Radcot Cut, according to Environment Agency data<sup>118</sup>, whilst the Enstone to Dorn section of the River Glyme, Evenlode, Cronwell Brook and Windrush are all classed as 'moderate'. The chemical status of all watercourses in West Oxfordshire are classed as 'fail' when ubiquitous, persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic substances (uPBTs) are considered. The Chil and Limb Brooks, for instance, have been identified as having poor status for ammonia<sup>119</sup>.
- 10.2.3 Further development in West Oxfordshire has potential to impact the levels of wastewater and water quality in West Oxfordshire, which includes the construction of the Salt Cross Garden Village. A Water Quality Impact Assessment<sup>120</sup> was therefore undertaken to assess how the Cassington Wastewater Treatment Works can manage the increased levels of forecasted wastewater. Modelling suggested that the additional wastewater is unlikely to impact the water quality of the River Thames or other watercourses, however runoff from development sites will need to be suitably managed in the context of increased demand. Most of the district drains in the Rivers Windrush and the Evenlode, as well as the River Cherwell which lies to the north east of the Plan area<sup>121</sup>.
- 10.2.4 The vulnerability of groundwater to pollution is determined by the physical, chemical and biological properties of the soil and rocks, which control the ease with which an unprotected hazard can affect groundwater. Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) indicate the risk to groundwater supplies from potentially polluting activities and accidental releases of pollutants. These are classified into three zones:
- Inner – SPZ1
  - Outer – SPZ2
  - Total catchment – SPZ3
- 10.2.5 Only one small section of SPZ3 lies within West Oxfordshire, to the east of Chipping Norton.

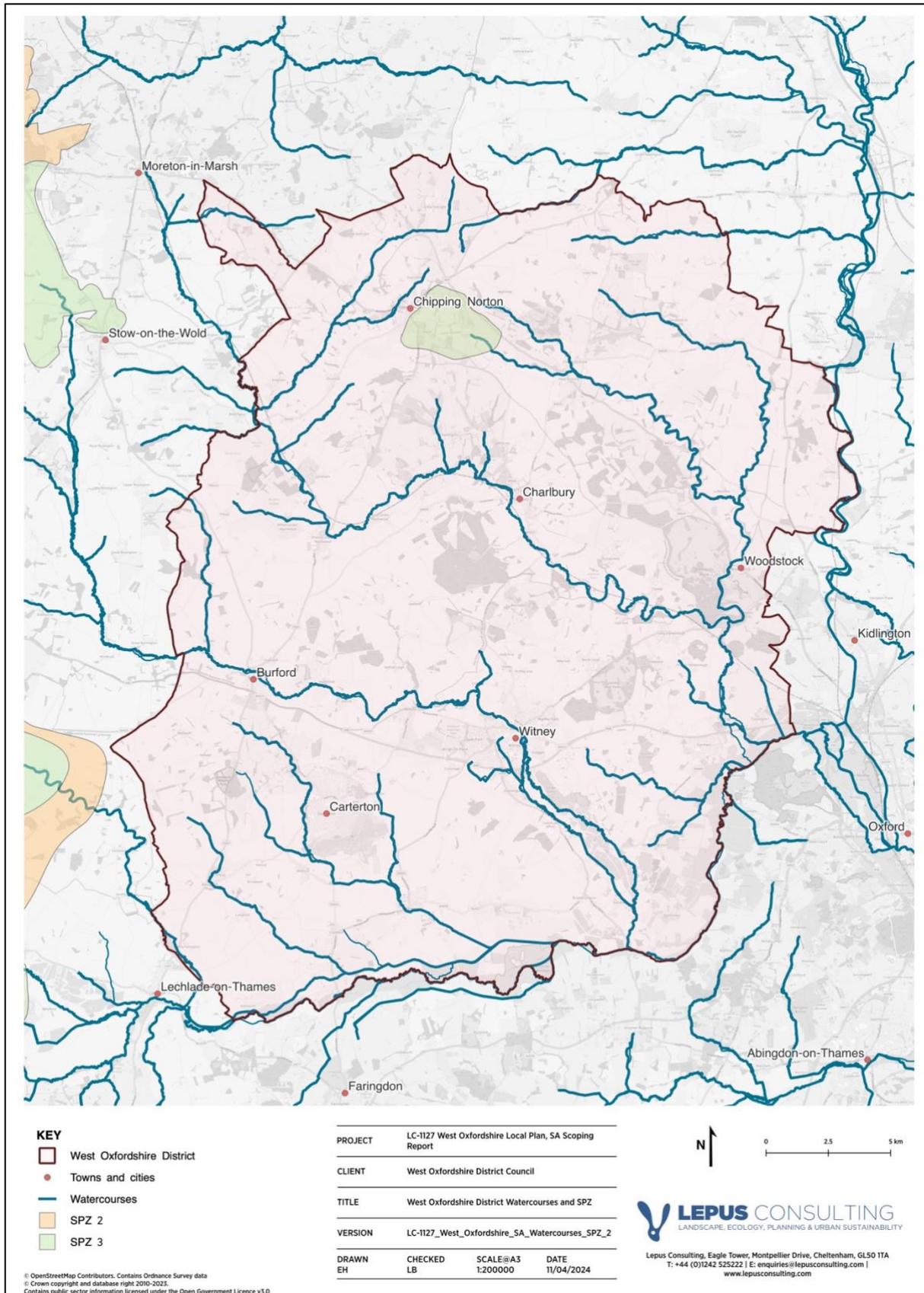
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<sup>118</sup> Environment Agency (2022) River Basin Management Plan: maps. Available at: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/73ed24b6d30441648f24f043e75ebed2/page/Introduction/> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>119</sup> AECOM (2016) West Oxfordshire Water Cycle Study: Phase 1 Scoping Study. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/rqwljgf4/env11-west-oxfordshire-water-cycle-study-phase-1-scoping-study-november-2016.pdf> [Date accessed: 05/04/24]

<sup>120</sup> JBA Consulting (2021) West Oxfordshire District Council Water Quality Impact Assessment. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/114npx43/ev33-garden-village-water-quality-impact-assessment.pdf> [Date accessed: 05/04/24]

<sup>121</sup> AECOM (2016) West Oxfordshire Water Cycle Study: Phase 1 Scoping Study. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/rqwljgf4/env11-west-oxfordshire-water-cycle-study-phase-1-scoping-study-november-2016.pdf> [Date accessed: 05/04/24]



**Figure 10.1:** Watercourses and groundwater SPZ within West Oxfordshire

## Water resources

- 10.2.6 West Oxfordshire is supplied by Thames Water. Sewerage services are also provided by Thames Water. The Thames Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP)<sup>122</sup> aims to manage and meet projected demand through encouraging water use efficiency, reducing leakage, installing smart meters, and implementing incentive-based tariffs to reduce high levels of consumption.
- 10.2.7 The national mandatory water efficiency standard is 125 litres per person per day, as set out in the Building Regulations 2010 Approved Document G<sup>123</sup>. West Oxfordshire currently seeks a higher standard of 110 litres per person per day<sup>124</sup> with an aspirational goal of <75 litres.
- 10.2.8 It is likely that the demand for water and volume of wastewater will increase during the Plan period as the population increases and the climate changes. Wastewater treatment plants will need to ensure there is the capability to withstand the additional capacity and be expanded, if necessary, prior to development taking place.
- 10.2.9 Undertaking a Water Cycle Study (WCS) can help to inform Local Plans and wastewater infrastructure delivery requirements, water resources and water efficiency requirements to plan for sustainable growth. The previous Water Cycle Study for West Oxfordshire found that the district falls within an area of 'water stress'<sup>125</sup>. It would be useful to undertake an updated WCS to further identify cost-effective solutions that are resilient to climate change in West Oxfordshire to inform the emerging Plan and SA process.
- 10.2.10 Abstraction Licensing Strategies (ALS) set out the management of water abstraction at a local level. West Oxfordshire falls primarily within the Cotswold ALS, Thames Catchment ALS, alongside a small section of the Wye, Thame and Cherwell ALS<sup>126</sup>. These catchments are subject to strict conditions regarding water abstraction, due to the lack of water availability in the River Thames downstream.

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<sup>122</sup> Thames Water (2023) Revised Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024. Available at: <https://thames-wrmp.co.uk/document-library/> [Date accessed: 05/04/24]

<sup>123</sup> MHCLG (2016) The Building Regulations 2010: Approved Document G – Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sanitation-hot-water-safety-and-water-efficiency-approved-document-g> [Date accessed: 12/04/24]

<sup>124</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2023). Sustainability Standards Checklist. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-permission/make-a-planning-application/planning-application-supporting-information/sustainability-standards-checklist/#:~:text=Local%20Plan%20Policy%20OS3%20requires,litres%20per%20person%20per%20day>. [Date accessed: 05/04/24]

<sup>125</sup> AECOM (2016) West Oxfordshire Water Cycle Study: Phase 1 Scoping Study. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/rqwljqf4/env11-west-oxfordshire-water-cycle-study-phase-1-scoping-study-november-2016.pdf> [Date accessed: 05/04/24]

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

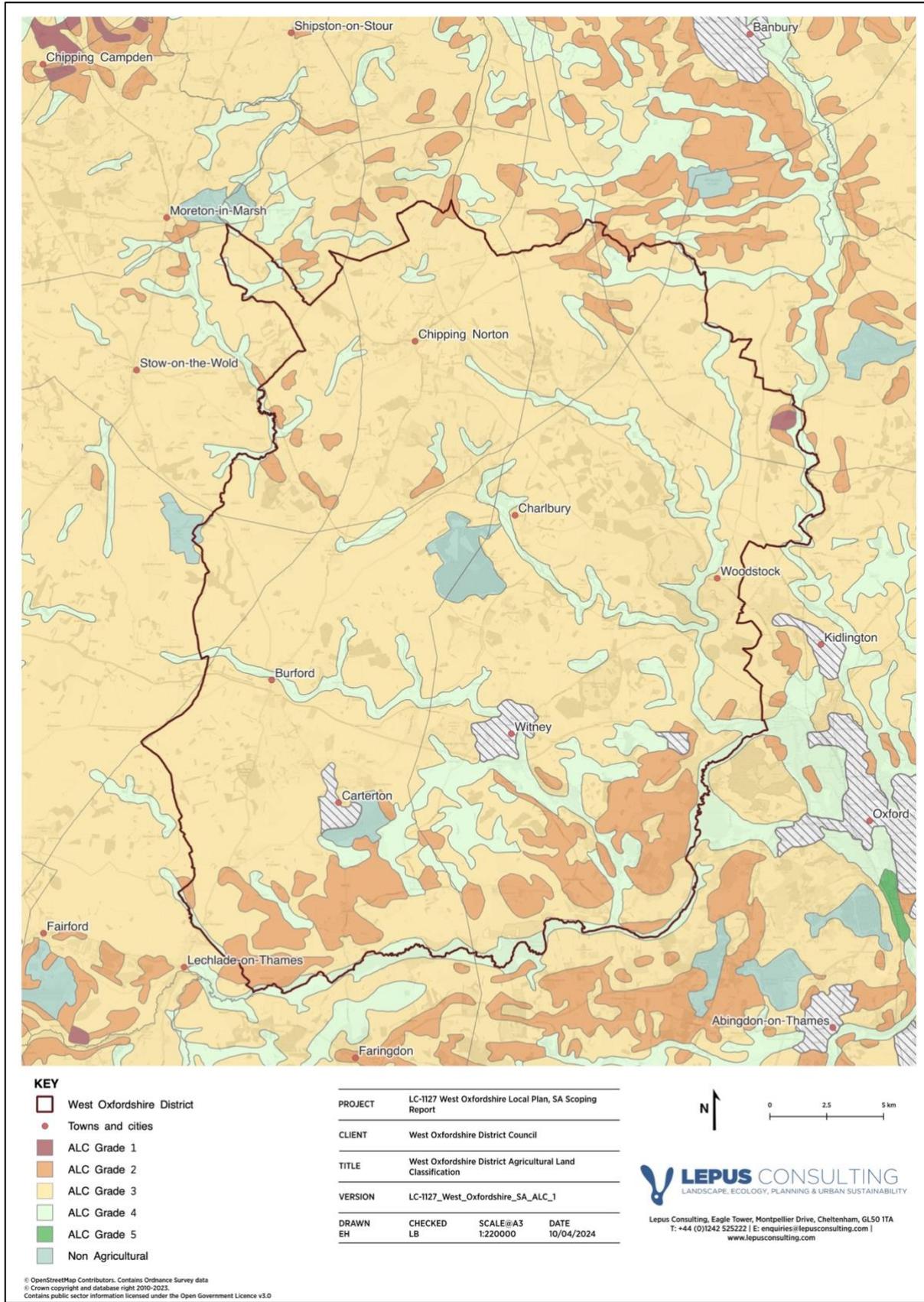
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## Soil

- 10.2.11 Soil is an essential and non-renewable resource that provides a wide range of ecosystem services including cycling water and nutrients, decomposing organic matter, carbon sequestration and supporting plant growth. Development can potentially have adverse impacts on soil stocks, such as by direct loss of soil (e.g. excavating), contamination, increased erosion, breakdown of structure and loss of nutrients. The quality of soils in the UK has rapidly degraded, predominantly due to intensive agricultural production and industrial pollution.
- 10.2.12 In accordance with paragraph 180 of the NPPF, the West Oxfordshire Local Plan should recognise that development can have an irreversible adverse (cumulative) impact on the finite stock of best and most versatile (BMV) land. The loss of BMV land should be minimised, as mitigation is rarely possible. BMV is usually indicated by Agricultural Land Classification (ALC). The ALC system classifies land into five categories according to versatility and suitability for growing crops. The top three grades, Grades 1, 2 and 3a, are referred to as BMV land<sup>127</sup>. The grades are as follows:
- Grade 1 – excellent quality agricultural land
  - Grade 2 – very good quality agricultural land
  - Grade 3 – good (3a) to moderate (3b) quality agricultural land
  - Grade 4 – poor quality agricultural land
  - Grade 5 – very poor-quality agricultural land
- 10.2.13 West Oxfordshire supports large areas of high-quality agricultural land, with the majority of the district classed as ALC Grade 3 (see **Figure 10.2**). Small sections in the south are classed as Grade 2, with areas of Grade 4 typically surrounding watercourses.

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<sup>127</sup> MAFF (1988) Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales: Revised criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land. Available at:  
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6257050620264448?category=5954148537204736> [Date accessed: 05/04/24]



**Figure 10.2:** Agricultural Land Classification within West Oxfordshire

- 10.2.14 Soil pollution can refer to land which is contaminated by a range of pollutants including heavy metals, oils, chemicals, and radioactive substances<sup>128</sup>.
- 10.2.15 In accordance with the core planning principles of the NPPF<sup>129</sup>, development on previously developed land (PDL) will be recognised as an efficient use of land. Development on previously undeveloped land is not considered to be an efficient use of land. Development proposals situated on previously undeveloped land are expected to pose a threat to the soil resource within the proposal perimeter due to excavation, soil compaction, erosion and an increased risk of soil pollution and contamination during the construction phase. This is expected to be a permanent and irreversible impact.
- 10.2.16 It should be noted that PDL could also be of environmental value, and as such, potential impacts on natural resources shall be considered on a site-by-site basis. Building on PDL is of particular importance as the rural disposition of West Oxfordshire increases the demand for greenfield land to meet development needs.

**Box 10.1:** Summary of key sustainability issues: water and soil

**Key issues for water and soil include:**

- ⇒ Soil is a non-renewable resource that will continue to be lost as a result of new development. BMV soil may be under threat from new growth areas and associated infrastructure.
- ⇒ The rural disposition of West Oxfordshire means there is less scope for new development to avoid greenfield land and land with environmental value.
- ⇒ The increasing population in West Oxfordshire, alongside new development such as the Salt Cross Garden Village, is likely to place pressure on water resources. This may result in a deficit between supply and demand if not carefully planned and managed alongside Thames Water, particularly as West Oxfordshire is located within an area of 'water stress'.
- ⇒ It is important to consider the impacts of development proposals on wastewater treatment in the local area and the capacity of water treatment works. There is a need to reduce the frequency of wastewater discharge into rivers during periods of storm overflow.
- ⇒ Poor water quality conditions remain an issue, with no watercourses in West Oxfordshire achieving 'good' ecological status, and all classed as 'fail' for chemical status. There may be consequences of new wastewater generation for local water quality, and the ecological status of ground and surface water bodies.
- ⇒ Most forms of development reduce the amount of rainfall that is intercepted by vegetation on the ground, which can have detrimental implications for surface water run-off.
- ⇒ Potential cross-boundary effects need to be considered with regard to development that may impact the River Thames. Water abstraction also has strict limitations in order to avoid exacerbating water deficits for the River Thames downstream.

<sup>128</sup> UK Government (no date) Contaminated land. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/contaminated-land> [Date accessed: 05/04/24]

<sup>129</sup> MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Date accessed: 05/04/24]

**Box 10.2:** *Likely evolution without the Plan: water and soil*

**Likely evolution of the baseline without the Plan**

- Greenfield sites and BMV soil are likely to be lost in higher quantities if development is not controlled through the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.
- Rates of soil erosion and loss of soil fertility will be likely to continue to rise due to the impacts of agriculture and climate change.
- Water abstraction, consumption and treatment in the local area will continue to be managed by the Environment Agency and Thames Water. However, without plan-led development, there may be less potential to positively plan with regard to water resources and avoid contributing to over-capacity issues at wastewater treatment works.
- The efficiency and sustainability of water consumption may be unlikely to improve as water demand increases. This is also contingent on the nature of any future changes to national regulations, such as the Building Regulations and any emerging policy or regulations relating to water neutrality.
- Without the Local Plan and co-ordination with neighbouring districts, the River Thames is likely to be subject to further pressures from development and water abstraction.
- Water quality is likely to continue to deteriorate without intervention, and a clear plan-led development strategy working with neighbouring authorities and organisations.

# 11 SA Framework

## 11.1 Purpose of the SA Framework

11.1.1 The SA Framework sets out objectives, decision-making criteria and indicators relating to sustainability themes, against which the Local Plan will be assessed. The full proposed SA Framework is presented in **Table 11.1**.

11.1.2 The SA Framework provides a way in which sustainability effects can be described, analysed and compared. The SA Framework consists of SA Objectives, the achievement of which (where practicable), is measurable using indicators. SA Objectives and indicators can be revised as further baseline information is collected and sustainability issues and challenges are identified and are used in monitoring the implementation of the Local Plan.

11.1.3 To expand on the central focus of each SA Objective (as they are high-level and potentially open-ended) the SA Framework includes a series of questions or 'decision making criteria' for use when applying the SA Framework to the assessment of proposed policies.

## 11.2 SA Objectives

11.2.1 The purpose of the SA Objectives is to provide a way of ensuring the proposed policies consider the needs of West Oxfordshire District in terms of the environmental, social, and economic effects. The topics identified in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations are one of the key determinants when considering which SA Objectives should be used for the environmental criteria. Consequently, the SA Objectives seek to reflect all subject areas to ensure the assessment process is transparent, robust, and thorough.

11.2.2 The SA Objectives have been derived drawing on the baseline information, key issues and other plans and programmes of particular interest discussed earlier in this Scoping Report (see **Chapters 2 to 10**). The SA Framework used in the SA of the adopted Local Plan<sup>130</sup> has been drawn on, alongside the SEA topics, to ensure that the objectives are streamlined and relevant for the West Oxfordshire area. It should be noted that the order of the SA Objectives does not infer any prioritisation.

11.2.3 The proposed SA Framework, including decision-making criteria and indicators, is set out in **Table 11.1**.

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<sup>130</sup> Enfusion (2015) West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft Sustainability Appraisal Report, February 2015. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2031/> [Date accessed: 19/03/24]

**Table 11.1:** Proposed SA Framework for the West Oxfordshire Local Plan

#	SA Objective	Relevant SEA Topic(s)	Decision making criteria: Will the option/proposal...	Indicators include (but are not limited to)
1	<b>Climate change mitigation:</b> Minimise West Oxfordshire District's contributions towards the causes of climate change	Climatic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help to reduce the per capita carbon footprint of West Oxfordshire?</li> <li>• Encourage renewable energy generation or the use of energy from renewable or low-carbon sources?</li> <li>• Promote sustainable construction principles?</li> <li>• Increase energy efficiency?</li> <li>• Support a low carbon economy?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon emissions from domestic, industrial and commercial sources in the district</li> <li>• Percentage of energy generated from renewable sources</li> <li>• Energy consumption</li> </ul>
2	<b>Climate change adaptation:</b> Adapt to the anticipated levels of climate change	Climatic factors and water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid development in areas at high risk of flooding and seek to reduce flood risk?</li> <li>• Take into account the likely impacts of climate change and use sustainable drainage solutions?</li> <li>• Increase the coverage and connectivity of green infrastructure?</li> <li>• Promote the use of technologies and techniques to adapt to the impacts of climate change?</li> <li>• Ensure new development is resilient to the effects of extreme weather events?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of properties at risk of flooding</li> <li>• Area and connectivity of green infrastructure</li> <li>• Implementation of adaptive techniques such as SuDS and passive heating/cooling systems</li> <li>• Number of developments given planning permission on floodplains contrary to EA advice</li> </ul>

#	SA Objective	Relevant SEA Topic(s)	Decision making criteria: Will the option/proposal...	Indicators include (but are not limited to)
3	<b>Biodiversity and geodiversity:</b> Conserve, enhance and restore the district's biodiversity and geodiversity	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve and enhance designated features and assets of European and national nature conservation value?</li> <li>Support the positive management of locally important sites designated for their nature conservation and geodiversity value?</li> <li>Contribute towards wider green infrastructure and/or nature recovery networks and promote habitat connectivity?</li> <li>Deliver biodiversity net gain and seek to maximise wider environmental net gain?</li> <li>Enable biodiversity to adapt to and be resilient to climate change?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and diversity of protected species present in the local area</li> <li>Quality and extent of priority habitats (habitats of principal importance)</li> <li>Area and condition of sites designated for biological or geological interest</li> <li>Uplift in biodiversity units provided in new developments measured using the DEFRA BNG Metric</li> <li>Nitrogen deposition levels and critical load exceedances at Oxford Meadows SAC</li> <li>Hectares of biodiversity habitat delivered through strategic site allocations</li> </ul>
4	<b>Landscape:</b> Conserve, enhance and manage the quality and character of landscapes and townscapes	Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve and enhance local character and distinctiveness, and strengthen sense of place?</li> <li>Protect and enhance visual amenity?</li> <li>Conserve and enhance the special character of the Cotswolds AONB (National Landscape) and its setting, seeking opportunities to further the purpose of the landscape?</li> <li>Align with the purposes of the Green Belt i.e. prevent coalescence of settlements and urban sprawl?</li> <li>Safeguard local identity of settlements and preserve openness of the countryside?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of planning applications granted within the Cotswolds AONB</li> <li>Identified local landscape characteristics and sensitivities within the published Landscape Assessment for the district and for the main towns</li> <li>Landscape sensitivity and capacity</li> <li>Development within the Green Belt</li> <li>Tranquillity rating of the local area</li> </ul>

#	SA Objective	Relevant SEA Topic(s)	Decision making criteria: Will the option/proposal...	Indicators include (but are not limited to)
5	<b>Cultural heritage:</b> Conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets and support the effective management of the historic environment	Cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve, enhance and where appropriate, restore and repair West Oxfordshire’s internationally, nationally or locally designated heritage assets and their settings?</li> <li>Respect, maintain and strengthen local historic character and distinctiveness?</li> <li>Conserve features of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest and, where necessary, encourage their conservation and restoration?</li> <li>Improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of applications granted within conservation areas</li> <li>Heritage assets on Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register</li> <li>Statutory and non-statutory sites in the Historic Environment Record (HER) and identified in the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)</li> </ul>
6	<b>Air quality:</b> Protect and improve air quality, creating cleaner and healthier air	Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve air quality and avoid generating further air pollution?</li> <li>Minimise exposure to poor air quality?</li> <li>Protect and enhance the quantity and connectivity of green infrastructure assets that deliver air quality benefits?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development with potential to generate a significant increase in road traffic emissions or other air pollutants</li> <li>Proximity to AQMAs and current AQMA status</li> <li>Number of people living in areas of poor air quality e.g. within 200m of a main road</li> <li>Areas of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) annual mean objective exceedance</li> </ul>
7	<b>Water:</b> Maintain and improve water quality and ensure efficient use of water resources	Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect and improve water quality of the district’s rivers and inland waterbodies?</li> <li>Ensure adequate capacity in water resources and wastewater infrastructure to serve new development?</li> <li>Maximise water efficiency of buildings to reduce the demand on water resources?</li> <li>Protect and enhance the quantity and connectivity of green and blue infrastructure assets that deliver water quality benefits?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of water bodies (rivers and inland water) in or adjacent to sites.</li> <li>Number of developments adopting the optional requirement for water efficiency of 110 litres per person per day.</li> <li>Number of developments given planning permission contrary to EA advice relating to river water quality or the protection of groundwater.</li> </ul>

#	SA Objective	Relevant SEA Topic(s)	Decision making criteria: Will the option/proposal...	Indicators include (but are not limited to)
8	<b>Natural resources and waste:</b> Ensure efficient use of the district's soil and mineral resources and reduce waste	Soil and material assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise the use of previously developed or under-used land?</li> <li>• Minimise the loss of best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land?</li> <li>• Seek to bring contaminated land back to beneficial use through remediation?</li> <li>• Protect and maintain natural capital assets, including soil resources?</li> <li>• Protect mineral resources from sterilisation?</li> <li>• Minimise waste disposal, and encourage recycling, re-use or composting of waste?</li> <li>• Promote the adoption of sustainable design and the use of locally and sustainably sourced, and recycled materials in construction?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-use of previously developed or brownfield land</li> <li>• Re-use of contaminated land</li> <li>• Area of potential BMV agricultural land lost to development</li> <li>• Number of developments within Mineral Consultation Areas</li> <li>• Use of locally sourced materials</li> <li>• Percentage of the district's waste that is recycled or composted</li> </ul>
9	<b>Housing and equality:</b> Provide affordable, high quality and environmentally sound housing for all, whilst reducing crime and social deprivation	Population, human health and material assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a suitable mix of housing to meet the needs of the current and future populations, including those with specialist housing needs?</li> <li>• Seek to increase the provision of affordable housing and homes suitable for first-time buyers?</li> <li>• Provide high quality sustainably constructed housing?</li> <li>• Ensure that the best use is made of existing housing stock?</li> <li>• Create safe neighbourhoods and support community cohesion?</li> <li>• Reduce crime and the fear of crime?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied housing mix</li> <li>• Percentage of dwellings delivered as affordable housing</li> <li>• Number of extra care homes, and accessible and adaptable homes to meet the needs of the population</li> <li>• Provision of pitches and plots for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople</li> <li>• Indices of Multiple Deprivation</li> <li>• Rates of crime</li> </ul>

#	SA Objective	Relevant SEA Topic(s)	Decision making criteria: Will the option/proposal...	Indicators include (but are not limited to)
10	<b>Health and wellbeing:</b> Safeguard and improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities in health	Population and human health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to healthcare and leisure facilities, particularly in rural areas?</li> <li>• Support healthy and active lifestyles?</li> <li>• Improve accessibility to the countryside and other recreational resources?</li> <li>• Improve the quality and extent of existing recreational assets and the green infrastructure network?</li> <li>• Consider the needs of the growing elderly population?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity and travel time to healthcare and leisure facilities</li> <li>• Provision and accessibility of open greenspace and green infrastructure</li> <li>• Accessibility to sports facilities</li> <li>• Hectares of accessible open space per 1,000 population</li> <li>• Percentage of the population having access to a natural greenspace within 400m of their home</li> </ul>
11	<b>Transport and accessibility:</b> Improve accessibility, increase the proportion of travel by sustainable modes, and reduce the need to travel	Population and material assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote sustainable transport patterns and reduce the need to travel, particularly in areas of high congestion?</li> <li>• Help to reduce reliance on private car use by providing good access via more sustainable transport modes including public transport, walking and cycling?</li> <li>• Improve the provision, connectivity and safety of active travel routes to encourage their use?</li> <li>• Tackle social exclusion?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distance and accessibility to public transport options</li> <li>• Proximity and connectivity of walking and cycling links</li> <li>• Frequency of bus services</li> <li>• Distance and travel times to key services and amenities</li> <li>• Sustainability of existing routes of access into sites, considering anticipated increases in usage</li> <li>• Local increases in road traffic congestion and journey times, particularly on the A40</li> </ul>

#	SA Objective	Relevant SEA Topic(s)	Decision making criteria: Will the option/proposal...	Indicators include (but are not limited to)
12	<b>Education:</b> Increase access to education and improve attainment to develop and maintain a skilled workforce	Population and material assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to provide infrastructure to improve education and skills?</li> <li>• Provide or improve sustainable access to education and training opportunities?</li> <li>• Support opportunities for community enterprises and the voluntary sector?</li> <li>• Support the provision of an appropriately skilled workforce?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CIL contributions for education from new development</li> <li>• Proximity and travel time to primary and secondary schools</li> <li>• Capacity of primary and secondary schools</li> <li>• Qualification levels e.g. National Vocational Qualifications</li> <li>• Access to higher education opportunities</li> <li>• Number of Adult Education Opportunities including apprenticeships likely to be generated through new development</li> </ul>
13	<b>Economy and employment:</b> Ensure sufficient employment land and premises are available to develop and support innovative and sustainable economic growth	Population and material assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide or improve sustainable access to a range of employment opportunities?</li> <li>• Support vibrant market towns and a sustainable rural economy?</li> <li>• Support, develop and attract competitive business sectors?</li> <li>• Promote rural diversification?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of existing employment and retail areas?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity and travel time to employment opportunities</li> <li>• Unemployment rates</li> <li>• Number of vacant business units</li> <li>• Total area of new employment floorspace</li> <li>• Number of new business start-ups as a result of new development</li> </ul>

## 12 Next steps

### 12.1 Overview

12.1.1 This chapter summarises the stages of, and approach to, the processes that will be carried out for the Local Plan following consultation at the Scoping stage. Where appropriate, the proposed assessment methods to be used have been included.

### 12.2 Refining options and assessing effects

12.2.1 Following consultation on this SA Scoping Report, the next stage of the SA will involve assessing the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan. Comments received during the Scoping consultation will be carefully considered and used to inform subsequent SA outputs in the SA process.

12.2.2 The assessment of 'options' or 'reasonable alternatives' is an important requirement of the SEA Regulations, which requires the Environmental Report to include *"an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information"*.

12.2.3 Reasonable alternatives will be assessed through the SA process to enable options for the Local Plan to be explored. In this way, the SA can provide a coherent story of the Local Plan's evolution and choice of options by assessing reasonable alternatives in reports prepared throughout the plan making process.

12.2.4 The Regulation 18 SA will also include an assessment of the proposed Vision and Objectives of the Local Plan, and make recommendations for WODC to consider as they prepare the Plan.

### 12.3 Sustainability Appraisal and Publication/Submission

12.3.1 In terms of the assessment methodology, an assessment of all options, policies and proposals presented in the Local Plan iterations will be undertaken. Findings from the assessment will be presented in a single-line matrix format. The high-level matrix is not a conclusive tool or model. Its main function is to identify at a strategic level whether or not the assessment requires a more detailed examination or whether satisfactory conclusions may be drawn from the high-level assessment without the need for further detailed analysis of a particular policy.

12.3.2 The assessment of policies and options will include:

- A description of the predicted effect;
- The duration of the effect: whether the effect is long, medium or short term;
- The frequency of the effect;
- Whether the effect is temporary or permanent;
- The geographic significance: whether the effect is of local, regional, national or international significance;
- The magnitude of effect;
- The severity of significance; and

- 
- Whether mitigation is required/possible to reduce the effect.
- 12.3.3 As required by the SEA Regulations, cumulative, indirect and synergistic effects will also be identified and evaluated during the assessment. An explanation of these is as follows:
- **Cumulative effects** arise where several developments each have insignificant effects but together have a significant effect, or where several individual effects of the Local Plan have a combined effect.
  - **Indirect effects** are effects that are not a direct result of the Local Plan but occur away from the original effect or as a result of a complex pathway.
  - **Synergistic effects** interact to produce a total effect greater than the sum of the individual effects.
- 12.3.4 The assessment of these effects will be presented in tabular format and show where the different effects arise when two or more draft policies operate together.
- 12.3.5 Wherever possible, throughout the appraisal process, GIS will be used as an analytical tool to examine the spatial distribution of identified effects.
- 12.3.6 Following consultation on the Regulation 18 SA Report, any amendments that are made to the Local Plan and any further Regulation 18 stages carried out will be appraised, and consulted on with the statutory consultees and general public, before preparing the final version of the SA Report to accompany the Publication (Regulation 19) version of the Local Plan.

# Appendix A: Policies, Plans and Programmes (PPP) Review

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# Appendix A Contents

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## A.1 Accessibility and transport

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to accessibility and transport
National Planning Policy Framework (2023) <sup>1</sup>	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes guidance on promoting sustainable transport. The NPPF requires development plans to seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and congestion, reduce the need to travel, and exploit opportunities for the sustainable movement of people and goods. Transport should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed.</li> <li>• opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated.</li> <li>• opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued.</li> <li>• the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and considered – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains.</li> <li>• patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places.</li> </ul>
HM Government: The Road to Zero (2018) <sup>2</sup>	<p>This report outlines the transition to zero-emission road transport. This includes measures to reduce emissions from vehicles including specific targets for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), promoting low- and zero- emission cars and developing high quality electric vehicle infrastructure networks.</p>
Department for Transport: Towards a Sustainable Transport System: Supporting	<p>Outlines five national goals for transport, focusing on the challenge of delivering strong economic growth while at the same time reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It outlines the key components of national infrastructure, discusses the difficulties of planning over the long term in the context of uncertain future demand and describes the substantial investments we are making to tackle congestion and crowding on transport networks. The National Goals for Transport are as follows:</p> <p>Goal 1: To reduce transport’s emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcome of tackling climate change.</p>

<sup>1</sup> DLUHC (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF\\_December\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf) [Date accessed: 10/04/24]

<sup>2</sup> HM Government (2018) The Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering out Industrial Strategy. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/739460/road-to-zero.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/739460/road-to-zero.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to accessibility and transport
Economic Growth in a Low Carbon World (2008) <sup>3</sup>	<p>Goal 2: To support economic competitiveness and growth, by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks.</p> <p>Goal 3: To promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society.</p> <p>Goal 4: To contribute to better safety, security and health and longer life expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport, and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health.</p> <p>Goal 5: To improve quality of life for transport users and non-transport users, and to promote a healthy natural environment.</p>
Department for Transport: Connecting People: a Strategic Vision for Rail (2017) <sup>4</sup>	<p>The document describes the government’s strategic vision for the railways, and the actions that will be taken to make it a reality. The key priorities include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A more reliable railway</li> <li>2. An expanded network</li> <li>3. A better deal for passengers</li> <li>4. A modern workforce</li> <li>5. A productive and innovative sector</li> </ol>
Department for Transport: An Evidence Base Review of Public Attitudes to Climate Change and Transport Behaviour (2006) <sup>5</sup>	<p>Summary report of the findings of an evidence base review investigating the research base on public attitudes towards climate change and transport behaviour.</p>
Cycling and Walking Plan for England (2020) <sup>6</sup>	<p>The ‘Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking’ document sets out a vision for a travel revolution in England’s streets, towns and communities. The plan sets out the multiple benefits of increased cycling and walking including health, congestion, the economy and air quality, and the vision that “<i>cycling and walking will be the natural first choice for many journeys with half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030</i>”. The plan sets out four main themes to achieve this vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theme 1: Better streets for cycling and people</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Department for Transport: Towards a Sustainable Transport System: Supporting Economic Growth in a Low Carbon World Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/228953/7226.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228953/7226.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>4</sup> Department for Transport (2017) Connecting people: a strategic vision for rail. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-strategic-vision-for-rail> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>5</sup> Department for Transport: An Evidence Base Review of Public Attitudes to Climate Change and Transport Behaviour (2006) Available at: <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.180.9540&rep=rep1&type=pdf> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>6</sup> Department for Transport (2020) Cycling and walking plan for England. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to accessibility and transport
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theme 2: Cycling at the heart of decision-making</li> <li>• Theme 3: Empowering and encouraging Local Authorities</li> <li>• Theme 4: Enabling people to cycle and protecting them when they do</li> </ul>
Eddington Transport Study (2006) Transport's Role in Sustaining the UK's Productivity and Competitiveness <sup>7</sup>	Study that promotes the need for a transport network that supports sustainable economic growth.
Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) 2022-2050 <sup>8</sup>	<p>The LTCP outlines a clear vision to deliver a net-zero Oxfordshire transport and travel system that enables the county to thrive whilst protecting the environment and making Oxfordshire a better place to live for all residents. The LTCP seeks to achieve this by reducing the need to travel, discouraging individual private vehicle journeys and making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice. The LTCP contains 54 policies to influence and inform the management of transport schemes and outline the measures to be taken to make the vision and targets achievable.</p> <p>The LTCP will also be supported by area and corridor travel plans, bus strategy, rail strategy, and digital infrastructure strategy as 'part 2' of the LTCP.</p>
Oxfordshire County Council Mobility Hub Strategy (2023) <sup>9</sup>	The Oxfordshire County Council Mobility Hub Strategy links with the LTCP to outline how mobility hubs will be developed to improve multi-modal travel. This strategy discusses how policy proposals for a mobility hub strategy will be implemented.

<sup>7</sup> Eddington Transport Study (2006) Transport's Role in Sustaining the UK's Productivity and Competitiveness. Available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090115123436/http://www.dft.gov.uk/162259/187604/206711/volume1.pdf> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>8</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2022) Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022 – 2050, July 2022. Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/ltcp> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

<sup>9</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2023) Mobility Hub Strategy. Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-policies-and-plans/MobilityHubStrategy.pdf> [Date accessed: 29/04/24]

## A.2 Air

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to air
EC Air Quality Directive (1996) <sup>10</sup>	Aims to improve air quality throughout Europe by controlling the level of certain pollutants and monitoring their concentrations. In particular, the Directive aims to establish levels for different air pollutants; draw up common methods for assessing air quality; methods to improve air quality; and make sure that information on air quality is easily accessible to Member States and the public.
Clean Air Strategy (2019) <sup>11</sup>	This Clean Air Strategy sets out how the Government will tackle all sources of air pollution, making air healthier to breathe, protecting nature and boosting the economy. The strategy includes targets such as a commitment to reduce PM2.5 concentrations across the UK, so that the number of people living in locations above the World Health Organisation (WHO) guideline level of 10 µg/m <sup>3</sup> is reduced by 50% by 2025.
National Planning Policy Framework (2023) <sup>12</sup>	The NPPF states that plans should prevent development from contributing to, or being put at risk of, air or water pollution. Plans should consider the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas.
DEFRA and DfT (2018) Air Quality Plan for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> ) in UK <sup>13</sup>	Plan for nitrogen dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> ) in UK and how emissions will be reduced.
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018) <sup>14</sup>	The 25YEP sets out government actions to help achieve natural world regain and retain good health. The main goals of the Plan are to achieve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean air</li> <li>• Clean and plentiful water</li> <li>• Thriving plants and wildlife</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> EC Air Quality Directive (1996) Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31996L0062&from=ES> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

<sup>11</sup> DEFRA et al. (2019) Clean Air Strategy 2019. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

<sup>12</sup> DLUHC (2023) National Planning Policy Framework, December 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

<sup>13</sup> DEFRA and DfT (2018) Air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-quality-plan-for-nitrogen-dioxide-no2-in-uk-2017> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

<sup>14</sup> DEFRA (2021) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to air
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought</li> <li>• Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently</li> <li>• Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment</li> </ul> <p>The Plan seeks to achieve clean air by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting legally binding targets to reduce emissions of five damaging air pollutants. This should halve the effects of air pollution on health by 2030</li> <li>• Ending the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040</li> <li>• Maintaining the continuous improvement in industrial emissions by building on existing good practice and the successful regulatory framework.</li> </ul> <p>The 2021 Environment Act (9<sup>th</sup> November, 2021) embeds several of these aspects into the new legislation.</p>
Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 <sup>15</sup>	<p>The Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023 for England is the first revision of the 25YEP. It builds on the 25YEP vision with a new plan setting out how the government will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of the goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help to restore nature, reduce environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of our country.</p> <p>To achieve clean air, the EIP sets out to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cut overall air pollution by tackling the key sources of emissions, including reducing the maximum limits for domestic burning appliances in Smoke Control Areas.</li> <li>• Tackle specific hotspots by challenging councils to improve air quality more quickly, while supporting them with clear guidance, funding, and tools.</li> <li>• Reduce ammonia emissions (crucial for sensitive natural habitats) by using incentives in our new farming schemes, investing £13 million in slurry storage infrastructure in 2023 and considering expanding environmental permitting conditions to dairy and intensive beef farms.</li> </ul>
Department for Transport (2019) TAG unit A3 Environmental Impact Appraisal <sup>16</sup>	<p>Transport analysis guidance, providing guidance for appropriately qualified environmental practitioners/topic specialists on appraising the impact of transport proposals on the built and natural environment, and on people.</p>

<sup>15</sup> DEFRA (2023) Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

<sup>16</sup> Department for Transport (2023) TAG unit A3 Environmental Impact Appraisal. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/825064/tag-unit-a3-environmental-impact-appraisal.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/825064/tag-unit-a3-environmental-impact-appraisal.pdf) [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to air
Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy 2023-2030 <sup>17</sup>	<p>The Air Quality Strategy sets out Oxfordshire County Council’s vision and objectives to improve air quality across the county, working with district and city councils and other stakeholders. The Strategy focuses on three core areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce emissions of indoor and outdoor air pollution;</li> <li>• Extend distance from pollution sources; and</li> <li>• Protect those most at risk.</li> </ul>
West Oxfordshire Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) (2023) <sup>18</sup>	<p>WODC’s latest ASR provides an overview of air quality in the district, considers the latest air quality monitoring data and updates progress on actions to improve air quality. The ASR reports that NO<sub>2</sub> levels are generally decreasing and remain below the national air quality objective in the district’s two AQMAs, indicating improving air quality, although ongoing monitoring will be needed over the coming years before this trend can be confirmed.</p>
Emerging Witney and Chipping Norton Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs) <sup>19</sup>	<p>To address the elevated NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in both Witney and Chipping Norton, WODC is required to develop an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for each town. The AQAPs have been drafted with the assistance of Ricardo Energy &amp; Environment, and consultation with Steering Groups comprising key stakeholders who live, work or represent businesses operating in each town. WODC ran a public consultation in 2023, and the results are expected to be published shortly.</p>
Air Quality Action Plan: Horsefair and High Street, Chipping Norton (2008) <sup>20</sup>	<p>This document outlines and Air Quality Action Plan for the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at Horsefair and High Street in Chipping Norton, which failed to meet Government objectives for nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentration. The aims of the Action Plan involve facilitating a reduction the concentration of nitrogen dioxide within the Chipping Norton AQMA.</p>
Air Quality Action Plan: Witney (draft) (2023) <sup>21</sup>	<p>This document outlines and Air Quality Action Plan for the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at Bridge Street, Witney, which failed to meet Government objectives for nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentration. The aims of the Action Plan involve facilitating a reduction the concentration of nitrogen dioxide within the Witney AQMA.</p>

<sup>17</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2023) Air Quality Strategy 2023-2030. Available at <https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/download/e80d654a-8d0d-491f-bde4-b0871c83c527/oxfordshirecountycouncilcleanair2023to2030.pdf> [Date accessed: 20/03/24]

<sup>18</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2023) Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR), June 2023. Available at <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/g1albc1w/air-quality-annual-report-2023.pdf> [Date accessed: 20/03/24]

<sup>19</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2024) Air quality. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/noise-pests-pollution-and-air-quality/air-quality/> [Date accessed: 21/03/24]

<sup>20</sup> WODC (2008) Air Quality Action Plan: Horsefair and High Street, Chipping Norton. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/rtko5cvx/horsefair-and-high-street-chipping-norton-air-quality-action-plan.pdf> [Date accessed: 23/04/24]

<sup>21</sup> WODC (2008) Air Quality Action Plan: Witney (draft). Available at: [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://yourvoice.westoxon.gov.uk/uploads/0b54e9be-3532-47b0-aa12-760d3301ca29/project\\_file/file/a0fb1779-d0ad-491f-b7f7-7298986f3592/AQAP\\_Witney\\_draft\\_v1.1a\\_14\\_06\\_23.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwj-neChtiFAXWtXUEAHYgYCPiQFnoECBEQAQ&usg=AOvVaw1pztZKkO-zdDmkBJySL9X4](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://yourvoice.westoxon.gov.uk/uploads/0b54e9be-3532-47b0-aa12-760d3301ca29/project_file/file/a0fb1779-d0ad-491f-b7f7-7298986f3592/AQAP_Witney_draft_v1.1a_14_06_23.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwj-neChtiFAXWtXUEAHYgYCPiQFnoECBEQAQ&usg=AOvVaw1pztZKkO-zdDmkBJySL9X4) [Date accessed: 23/04/24]

## A.3 Biodiversity, flora and fauna

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to biodiversity, flora and fauna
UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) <sup>22</sup>	The aims of the Convention include the conservation of biological diversity (including a commitment to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss), the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.
Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979) <sup>23</sup>	The Convention seeks to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats, and to monitor and control endangered and vulnerable species.
Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 1992 (the Habitats Directive) <sup>24</sup>	<p>The main aim of the Habitats Directive is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity by requiring Member States to take measures to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species listed on the Annexes to the Directive at a favourable conservation status, introducing robust protection for those habitats and species of European importance. In applying these measures Member States are required to take account of economic, social and cultural requirements, as well as regional and local characteristics. The provisions of the Directive require Member States to introduce a range of measures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain or restore European protected habitats and species listed in the Annexes at a favourable conservation status as defined in Articles 1 and 2</li> <li>• Contribute to a coherent European ecological network of protected sites by designating Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for habitats listed on Annex I and for species listed on Annex II. These measures are also to be applied to Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under Article 4 of the Birds Directive. Together SACs and SPAs make up the Natura 2000 network (Article 3)</li> <li>• Ensure conservation measures are in place to appropriately manage SACs and ensure appropriate assessment of plans and projects likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of an SAC. Projects may still be permitted if there are no alternatives, and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In such cases compensatory measures are necessary to ensure the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network (Article 6)</li> <li>• Member States shall also endeavour to encourage the management of features of the landscape that support the Natura 2000 network (Articles 3 and 10)</li> </ul>

<sup>22</sup> UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) Available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/legal/cbd-en.pdf> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>23</sup> Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979) Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/1680078aff> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>24</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:31992L0043> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to biodiversity, flora and fauna
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake surveillance of habitats and species (Article 11)</li> <li>• Ensure strict protection of species listed on Annex IV (Article 12 for animals and Article 13 for plants)</li> <li>• Report on the implementation of the Directive every six years (Article 17), including assessment of the conservation status of species and habitats listed on the Annexes to the Directive</li> </ul>
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Habitats Regulations) <sup>25</sup>	This transposes the Habitats Directive into national law and also consolidates all amendments that have been made to the previous 1994 Regulations. This means that competent authorities have a general duty in the exercise of any of their functions to have regard to the Directive.
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018) <sup>26</sup>	<p>The 25YEP document sets out government action to help achieve natural world regain and retain good health. The main goals of the Plan are to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean air</li> <li>• Clean and plentiful water</li> <li>• Thriving plants and wildlife</li> <li>• A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought</li> <li>• Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently</li> <li>• Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.</li> </ul> <p>The Environment Act (2021) embeds several of these aspects into new legislation.</p>
Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 <sup>27</sup>	<p>The Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023 for England is the first revision of the 25YEP. It builds on the 25YEP vision with a new plan setting out how the government will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of the goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help to restore nature, reduce environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of our country.</p> <p>The apex goal of the EIP is to improve nature, achieving thriving plants and wildlife, building on the Global Biodiversity Framework as agreed at the UN Nature Summit COP15 including a commitment to protect 30% of global land and 30% of global ocean by 2030. To achieve this, the EIP sets out to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch the Species Survival Fund to create, enhance and restore habitat;</li> </ul>

<sup>25</sup> The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitats Regulations) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/1012/contents/made> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>26</sup> A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>27</sup> DEFRA (2023) Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to biodiversity, flora and fauna
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create, restore, and extend around 70 areas for wildlife through projects including new National Nature Reserves, and the next rounds of the Landscape Recovery Projects;</li> <li>• Protect 30% of our land and sea for nature through the Nature Recovery Network and enhanced protections for our marine protected areas. We intend to designate the first Highly Protected Marine Areas this year; and</li> <li>• Implement the Environment Act 2021, including rolling out Local Nature Recovery Strategies to identify areas to create and restore habitat, and Biodiversity Net Gain to enhance the built environment.</li> </ul>
DEFRA: Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services (2011) <sup>28</sup>	<p>The England biodiversity strategy 2020 ties in with the EU biodiversity strategy in addition to drawing links to the concept of ecosystem services. The strategy's vision for England is: <i>"By 2050 our land and seas will be rich in wildlife, our biodiversity will be valued, conserved, restored, managed sustainably and be more resilient and able to adapt to change, providing essential services and delivering benefits for everyone"</i>.</p> <p>The Strategy's overall mission is: <i>"to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people"</i>.</p>
TCPA: Biodiversity by Design: A Guide for Sustainable Communities (2004) <sup>29</sup>	<p>The development process should consider ecological potential of all areas including both greenfield and brownfield sites. Local authorities and developers have a responsibility to mitigate impacts of development on designated sites and priority habitats and species and avoid damage to ecosystems.</p>
National Planning Policy Framework (2023) <sup>30</sup>	<p>The NPPF includes guidance on promoting the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. It requires the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;</li> <li>• recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;</li> <li>• minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;</li> </ul>

<sup>28</sup> DEFRA (2011). Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (2011) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>29</sup> TCPA: Biodiversity by Design: A Guide for Sustainable Communities (2004) Available at: [https://library.uniteddiversity.coop/Ecovillages\\_and\\_Low\\_Impact\\_Development/Biodiversity%20by%20Design.pdf](https://library.uniteddiversity.coop/Ecovillages_and_Low_Impact_Development/Biodiversity%20by%20Design.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>30</sup> DLUHC (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF\\_December\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf) [Date accessed: 10/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to biodiversity, flora and fauna
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and</li> <li>remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.</li> </ul>
<p>Making Space for Nature: a Review of England’s Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network (2010)<sup>31</sup></p>	<p>The Making Space for Nature report, which investigated the resilience of England’s ecological network to multiple pressures, concluded that England’s wildlife sites do not comprise of a coherent and resilient ecological network. The report advocates the need for a step change in conservation of England’s wildlife sites to ensure they are able to adapt and become part of a strong and resilient network. The report summarises what needs to be done to improve England’s wildlife sites to enhance the resilience and coherence of England’s ecological network in four words; more, bigger, better, and joined. There are five key approaches which encompass these, which also take into account of the land around the ecological network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management</li> <li>Increase the size of current wildlife sites.</li> <li>Enhance connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors, or through ‘stepping stones’</li> <li>Create new sites</li> <li>Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites</li> </ul>
<p>The England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024 (2021)<sup>32</sup></p>	<p>The Trees Action Plan sets out how the Government will tackle the challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change, in line with the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan. The plan provides a strategic framework for implementing the Nature for Climate Fund and outlines over 80 policy actions the government is taking over this Parliament to help deliver this vision. Planting vastly more trees in England, and protecting and improving our existing woodlands, will be key to the government’s plan to achieve net zero and to create a Nature Recovery Network across the length of England.</p>
<p>The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature. The Natural Environment White Paper. (HM Government 2011)<sup>33</sup></p>	<p>Published in June 2011, the Natural Environment White paper sets out the government’s plans to ensure the natural environment is protected and fully integrated into society and economic growth. The White Paper sets out four key aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protecting and improving our natural environment</li> <li>Growing a green economy</li> <li>Reconnecting people and nature</li> </ul>

<sup>31</sup> Making Space for Nature: a review of England’s wildlife sites and ecological network (2010) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/making-space-for-nature-a-review-of-englands-wildlife-sites-published-today> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>32</sup> DEFRA (2021) England Trees Action Plan 2021 to 2024. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-trees-action-plan-2021-to-2024> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>33</sup> The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature. The Natural Environment White Paper. (HM Government 2011) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-natural-choice-securing-the-value-of-nature> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to biodiversity, flora and fauna
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International and EU leadership</li> </ul>
Forestry Commission and Natural England (2022) Ancient Woodland, Ancient Trees and Veteran Trees: Protecting them from Development <sup>34</sup>	Document provided on how to assess a planning application when there are ancient woodland, ancient trees or veteran trees on or near a proposed development site.
Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire (2014) <sup>35</sup>	<p>The Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), Oxfordshire County Council and the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) have worked in partnership to produce a Biodiversity and Planning guidance document.</p> <p>The guidance uses maps to illustrate biodiversity in Oxfordshire and combines planning policy with information about wildlife sites, habitats and species to help identify where biodiversity should be protected. The guidance also gives advice on opportunities for enhancing biodiversity.</p>
The State of Nature in Oxfordshire in 2017 <sup>36</sup>	The report gathered the latest available information available to paint a picture of the state of Oxfordshire’s natural habitats and species, including long-term trends as well as more recent losses and gains. The report looks at five broad habitat categories that encompass the full diversity of habitats found across the county. For each habitat headline findings are presented including the current and historic extent and condition of specific habitat types, and recent changes and trends for characteristic species (where these are known).
Emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire <sup>37</sup>	<p>Oxfordshire’s LNRS will provide a coordinated strategy to help the county’s wildlife to flourish, improve air and water quality, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. The strategy will create a written list and a map to highlight areas of land that are particularly important for biodiversity. This decision-making will be influenced by the priorities collected from people across the county. The priorities will be linked to potential actions people across Oxfordshire can take in those areas.</p> <p>A formal consultation period on the emerging LNRS is planned for mid-late 2024, seeking feedback on the initial version of the Strategy.</p>

<sup>34</sup> Forestry Commission and Natural England (2022) Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: protecting them from development. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>35</sup> BBOWT, TVERC and Oxfordshire County Council (2014) Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire. Available at:

<https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/environmentandplanning/countryside/naturalenvironment/Wholedocument.pdf> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>36</sup> Wild Oxfordshire (2017) The State of Nature in Oxfordshire in 2017. Available at: <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/oxfordshires-nature/oxfordshires-state-of-nature> [Date accessed:

22/03/24]

<sup>37</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2024) Oxfordshire’s Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to biodiversity, flora and fauna
Interim guidance on delivering Biodiversity Net Gain in West Oxfordshire (2023) <sup>38</sup>	This document sets out interim guidance on WODC's current approach to BNG assessment, to ensure that planning applications within the district are accompanied by relevant and appropriate BNG information. The guidance document provides standard advice for the district, setting out the factors and key requirements that the Council will need take into consideration to ensure that all relevant new development achieves a minimum 10% BNG throughout the development management process.

<sup>38</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2023) Interim guidance on delivering Biodiversity Net Gain in West Oxfordshire, November 2023. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/firmquau/interim-guidance-on-delivering-biodiversity-net-gain-in-west-oxfordshire.pdf> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

## A.4 Climatic factors

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to climatic factors
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992) <sup>39</sup>	Sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the challenge posed by climate change.
IPCC Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1997) <sup>40</sup>	Commits member nations to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, or engage in emissions trading if they maintain or increase emissions of these gases.
EC Sixth Environmental Action Programme Community 2002-2012 <sup>41</sup>	Climate change has been identified as one of four priority areas for Europe. The EAP's main objective is a reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases without a reduction in levels of growth and prosperity, as well as adaptation and preparation for the effects of climate change.
EU Sustainable Development Strategy (2006) <sup>42</sup>	This Strategy identifies key priorities for an enlarged Europe. This includes health, social inclusion and fighting global poverty. It aims to achieve better policy integration in addressing these challenges, and to ensure that Europe looks beyond its boundaries in making informed decisions about sustainability. The Sustainable Development Strategy was reviewed in 2009 and " <i>underlined that in recent years the EU has mainstreamed sustainable development into a broad range of its policies. In particular, the EU has taken the lead in the fight against climate change and the promotion of a low-carbon economy. At the same time, unsustainable trends persist in many areas and the efforts need to be intensified</i> ". Sustainable development is a key focus of the EU and the strategy continues to be monitored and reviewed.
UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009) <sup>43</sup>	The UK has committed to sourcing 15% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020 – an increase in the share of renewables from about 2.25% in 2008. The Renewable Energy Strategy sets out how the Government will achieve this target through utilising a variety of mechanisms to encourage Renewable Energy provision in the UK. This includes streamlining the planning system, increasing investment in technologies as well as improving funding for advice and awareness raising.

<sup>39</sup> UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992) Available at: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>40</sup> IPCC Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1997) Available at: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>41</sup> EC Sixth Environmental Action Programme Community 2002-2012 Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/action-programme/strategies\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/action-programme/strategies_en.htm) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>42</sup> EU Sustainable Development Strategy (2006) Available at: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/policy-documents/renewed-eu-strategy-for-sustainable-development> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>43</sup> UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uk-renewable-energy-strategy> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to climatic factors
UK Renewable Energy Roadmap Update (2013) <sup>44</sup>	This is the second Update to the 2011 Renewable Energy Roadmap. It sets out the progress that has been made and the changes that have occurred in the sector over the past year. It also describes the continuing high ambitions and actions along with the challenges going forward.
The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan (2009) <sup>45</sup>	<p>The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan sets out how the UK will meet the Climate Change Act's legally binding target of 34 per cent cut in emissions on 1990 levels by 2020. It also seeks to deliver emissions cuts of 18% on 2008 levels. The main aims of the Transition Plan include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producing 30% of energy from renewables by 2020;</li> <li>• Improving the energy efficiency of existing housing;</li> <li>• Increasing the number of people in 'green jobs'; and</li> <li>• Supporting the use and development of clean technologies.</li> </ul>
National Planning Policy Framework (2023) <sup>46</sup>	<p>The NPPF includes guidance on climate change, flooding, and coastal change. Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of Green Infrastructure.</p> <p>To support the move to a low carbon future, planning authorities should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions;</li> <li>• Actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings; and</li> <li>• When setting any local requirement for a building's sustainability, do so in a way consistent with the government's zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards.</li> </ul> <p>Local plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development to avoid where possible flood risk to people and property and manage any residual risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying the Sequential Test.</li> <li>• If necessary, applying the Exception Test.</li> </ul>

<sup>44</sup> UK Renewable Energy Roadmap Update Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-renewable-energy-roadmap-second-update> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>45</sup> The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uk-low-carbon-transition-plan-national-strategy-for-climate-and-energy> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>46</sup> DLUHC (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF\\_December\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf) [Date accessed: 10/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to climatic factors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding land from development that is required for current and future flood management.</li> <li>• Using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding.</li> </ul>
Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 <sup>47</sup>	<p>The Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023 for England is the first revision of the 25YEP. It builds on the 25YEP vision with a new plan setting out how the government will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of the goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help to restore nature, reduce environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of our country. To mitigate and adapt to climate change, the EIP sets out to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on our progress and plans to reach net zero.</li> <li>• Publish a Land Use Framework in 2023, setting out how we will balance multiple demands on our land including climate mitigation and adaptation.</li> <li>• Publish the third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) in 2023 that will set out our five year strategy to build the UK’s climate resilience.</li> <li>• Continue our role as a global leader in tackling climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation and push for an integrated approach to international action</li> </ul>
Energy Saving Trust: Renewable Energy Sources for Homes in Urban Environments (2005) <sup>48</sup>	Provides information about the integration of renewable energy sources into new and existing dwellings in urban environments. It covers the basic principles, benefits, limitations, costs and suitability of various technologies.
Environment Agency, Adapting to Climate Change: A Checklist for Development (2005) <sup>49</sup>	The document contains a checklist and guidance for new developments to adapt to climate change. The main actions are summarised in a checklist.
The Climate Crisis: A Guide for Local Authorities on Planning for Climate Change (2021) <sup>50</sup>	This guide is intended as an introduction to some of the key issues associated with the climate crisis, to ensure that Local Planning Authorities:

<sup>47</sup> DEFRA (2023) Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>48</sup> Energy Saving Trust: Renewable Energy Sources for Homes in Urban Environments Available at: [https://www.buildingcentre.co.uk/media/file/pdf/22220\\_pdf30.pdf](https://www.buildingcentre.co.uk/media/file/pdf/22220_pdf30.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>49</sup> Environment Agency, Adapting to Climate Change: A Checklist for Development Available at: [https://www.ukcip.org.uk/wp-content/Wizard/Checklist\\_for\\_development.pdf](https://www.ukcip.org.uk/wp-content/Wizard/Checklist_for_development.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>50</sup> TCPA & RTPI (2021) The Climate Crisis: A Guide for Local Authorities on Planning for Climate Change. Available at: [https://tcpa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/tcpartpiclimateguide\\_oct2021\\_final.pdf](https://tcpa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/tcpartpiclimateguide_oct2021_final.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to climatic factors
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that tackling the climate crisis is at the heart of the vision for the future of our communities;</li> <li>2. Recognise how vital planning is to securing that vision – both directly, through facilitating the extension of renewable energy generation, and strategically, through practical nature-based solutions and design actions that can promote sustainable travel, urban cooling, or natural flood defence; and</li> <li>3. Finally, recognise how many of the actions necessary to tackle the climate crisis are also key in creating healthy, ecologically rich, prosperous and beautiful places for us and for future generations.</li> </ol> <p>The guide is intended as a starting point on the vital journey to put in place practical solutions which will halt the rise in temperatures and begin to reverse the climate crisis.</p>
Oxfordshire County Council Climate Action Framework (2020) <sup>51</sup>	The Climate Action Framework sets out Oxfordshire County Council’s guiding principles and how they will aim to tackle climate change through introducing a target to become a carbon neutral council by 2030, supporting community energy projects, and seeking new business models to make investment for zero-carbon viable.
Oxfordshire County Council Carbon Management Plan 2022-2030 <sup>52</sup>	The Carbon Management Plan 2022-30 sets out the approach to reducing the emissions from the County Council’s buildings, highway assets (streetlighting, traffic signals and signage) and vehicle fleet. The Plan is part of a wider Climate Action Programme that also includes actions to enable Oxfordshire’s transition to net-zero across transport and connectivity, buildings, schools, energy systems, waste and consumption, and the natural environment.
Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Energy Assessment and Strategy for West Oxfordshire (2016) <sup>53</sup>	This report sets out the potential for further renewable and low carbon energy development in West Oxfordshire and recommends a renewable and low carbon energy strategy and revised planning policy for the district. Recommendations for wind power and solar farms are informed by an assessment of the district’s landscape capacity for wind power and solar farms. Finally, the report includes planning guidance for each technology that has potential for deployment in the district for use by the planning authority, developers, community energy groups and neighbourhood planning.

<sup>51</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2020) Climate Action Framework. Available at: [https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/about-council/OCC\\_Climate\\_Action\\_Framework2020.pdf](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/about-council/OCC_Climate_Action_Framework2020.pdf) [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

<sup>52</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2023) Carbon Management Plan 2022-2030, June 2023. Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/environment-and-planning/CarbonManagementPlan.pdf> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

<sup>53</sup> LDA Design (2016) Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Energy Assessment and Strategy for West Oxfordshire, October 2016. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/ys2okqht/renewable-energy-and-low-carbon-energy-assessment-2016.pdf> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to climatic factors
Climate Change Strategy for West Oxfordshire 2021-2025 <sup>54</sup>	The Climate Change Strategy identifies five themes including protecting and restoring natural ecosystems, energy, active travel and low-carbon transport, standards in new development and to engage support and educate. Each objective is accompanied by a vision and a set of strategic objectives for which the Council pledges its support. Progress against each objective will be assessed and reviewed annually.
West Oxfordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2016) <sup>55</sup>	This report was prepared for West Oxfordshire District Council to provide a Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). This recorded and presented the most up-to-date flood risk information to support the 2031 Local Plan.
Interim West Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Study (2011) <sup>56</sup>	The Interim West Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure (GI) Study establishes connected networks of accessible multi-functional green space as part of the future planning of West Oxfordshire, through identifying and then protecting those areas we already have and through encouraging improvements to the network. The purpose of the study involves mapping existing components of West Oxfordshire's GI, ensure new development takes account of existing GI and to provide a basis for future planning and management of the network.

<sup>54</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2021) Climate Change Strategy for West Oxfordshire 2021-2025: Climate Action as a District. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/32wj4oq1/wodc-climate-change-strategy-24-03-21.pdf> [Date accessed: 22/03/24]

<sup>55</sup> AECOM (2016) West Oxfordshire District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/0adg2zs5/env9-west-oxfordshire-district-council-strategic-flood-risk-assessment-update-report-november-2016.pdf> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

<sup>56</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2011) Interim West Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Study. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/dyyduqtn/interim-green-infrastructure-study-june-2011.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/04/24]

## A.5 Cultural heritage

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to cultural heritage
Council of Europe: Convention on the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985) <sup>57</sup>	Aims for signatories to protect their architectural heritage by means of identifying monuments, buildings and sites to be protected; preventing the disfigurement, dilapidation or demolition of protected properties; providing financial support by the public authorities for maintaining and restoring the architectural heritage on its territory; and supporting scientific research for identifying and analysing the harmful effects of pollution and for defining ways and means to reduce or eradicate these effects.
Council of Europe: The Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Revised) (Valetta Convention) (1992) <sup>58</sup>	The convention defines archaeological heritage and identifies measures for its protection. Aims include integrated conservation of the archaeological heritage and financing of archaeological research and conservation.
National Planning Policy Framework (2023) <sup>59</sup>	<p>The NPPF includes guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It seeks to ensure local authorities plan recognise heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner that reflects their significance.</p> <p>Planning authorities should take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;</li> <li>• The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring; and</li> <li>• The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.</li> </ul>
English Heritage and CABE: Buildings in Context: New	Aims to stimulate a high standard of design when development takes place in historically sensitive contexts by showing 15 case studies in which achievement is far above the ordinary and trying to draw some lessons both about design and about the development and planning process, particularly regarding building in sensitive locations.

<sup>57</sup> Council of Europe: Convention on the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985). Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/herein-system/council-of-europe> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>58</sup> Council of Europe: The Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Revised). Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/herein-system/council-of-europe> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>59</sup> DLUHC (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF\\_December\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf) [Date accessed: 10/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to cultural heritage
Development in Historic Areas (2002) <sup>60</sup>	
Historic England: Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (2008) <sup>61</sup>	<p>This Historic England document sets out the framework for the sustainable management of the historic environment. This is presented under the following six headline 'principles':</p> <p>Principle 1: The historic environment is a shared resource.</p> <p>Principle 2: Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment.</p> <p>Principle 3: Understanding the significance of places is vital.</p> <p>Principle 4: Significant places should be managed to sustain their values.</p> <p>Principle 5: Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent.</p> <p>Principle 6: Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.</p>
Historic England: Tall Buildings: Historic England Advice Note 4 (2015) <sup>62</sup>	<p>This Historic England Advice Note updates previous guidance by Historic England and CABI, produced in 2007. It seeks to guide people involved in planning for and designing tall buildings so that they may be delivered in a sustainable and successful way through the development plan and development management process. The advice is for all relevant developers, designers, local authorities and other interested parties.</p>
Historic England (2015) The Historic Environment in Local Plans, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 1 <sup>63</sup>	<p>This advice note provides information to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the National Planning Practice Guide (PPG).</p>
Historic England (2015) Managing Significance in	<p>The purpose of this Historic England Good Practice Advice note is to provide information in relation to assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and</p>

<sup>60</sup> English Heritage and CABI: Buildings in Context: New Development in Historic Areas (2002). Available at: <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/building-in-context-new-development-in-historic-areas.pdf> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>61</sup> Historic England: Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (2008). Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-principles-sustainable-management-historic-environment/> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>62</sup> Historic England: Tall Buildings: Historic England Advice Note 4. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/tall-buildings-advice-note-4/> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>63</sup> Historic England (2015) The Historic Environment in Local Plans, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 1. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa1-historic-environment-local-plans/> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to cultural heritage
Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 <sup>64</sup>	unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness.
Heritage Works: A toolkit of best practice in heritage regeneration (2017) <sup>65</sup>	The purpose of this document is to provide those involved in the development process with guidance on how they need to help make successful heritage-based regeneration achievable.
Historic England (2016) Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment <sup>66</sup>	Providing advice on historic environment considerations as part of the Sustainability Appraisal/SEA process. Aimed at relevant local planning authorities, neighbourhood groups, developers, consultants, landowners and other parties.
Historic England (2015) The Setting of Heritage Assets, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 <sup>67</sup>	This document sets out guidance, against the background of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guide (PPG), on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas, and landscapes.
The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans Historic England Advice Note 3 (2015) <sup>68</sup>	The purpose of this Historic England advice note is to support all those involved in the Local Plan site allocation process in implementing historic environment legislation, the relevant policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guide (PPG). In addition to these documents, this advice should be read in conjunction with the relevant Good Practice Advice and Historic England advice notes. Alternative approaches may be equally acceptable, provided they are demonstrably compliant with legislation and national policy objectives.

<sup>64</sup> Historic England (2015) Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa2-managing-significance-in-decision-taking/> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>65</sup> BPF (2017) Heritage Works: A toolkit of best practice in heritage regeneration. Available at: <https://bpf.org.uk/our-work/research-and-briefings/heritage-works-a-toolkit-of-best-practice-in-heritage-regeneration/> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>66</sup> Historic England (2016) Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment – Historic England Advice Note 8. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>67</sup> Historic England (2015) The Setting of Heritage Assets, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>68</sup> The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans Historic England Advice Note 3 (2015). Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/historic-environment-and-site-allocations-in-local-plans/> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to cultural heritage
Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site Revised Management Plan (2017) <sup>69</sup>	<p>The Management Plan provides background information of the World Heritage Site (WHS), its character and condition and wider setting, sets out management policies and identifies challenges and opportunities. The Management Plan seeks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• define the detail of key elements of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS;</li> <li>• ensure that the original vision still reflects the right direction for sustaining the OUV and significance;</li> <li>• understand any current issues that might be affecting OUV and significance;</li> <li>• revise, where necessary, the management objectives to ensure they accord with current levels of understanding;</li> <li>• update the Action Plan to reflect the priorities over the coming 10 year period.</li> </ul>
Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (2017) <sup>70</sup>	<p>The Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project digitally mapped the historic dimension of the current landscape of Oxfordshire in order to inform its management and conservation. The project recognises how all parts of the historic landscape have been influenced over time by natural and human activities.</p>
West Oxfordshire Greener Historic Buildings <sup>71</sup>	<p>This document sets out guidance for making alterations or additions to historic buildings, such as improving energy efficiency, to ensure that such changes are carefully considered to ensure a balance between modernisation and preservation of character. This includes statutory listed buildings and non-statutory historic buildings.</p>
West Oxfordshire Conservation Area Appraisals and Proposals for Preservation & Enhancement (various dates) <sup>72</sup>	<p>Conservation Area Character Appraisals have been prepared for several of West Oxfordshire’s conservation areas including Chipping Norton, Witney and Cogges, which describe the main aspects of character or appearance which contribute to the special interest and quality of the area and can be used to inform any planning applications affected the area, complementing the local plan policies regarding these features. Several ‘Proposals for Preservation &amp; Enhancement’ documents have also been prepared, providing further information and context regarding the conservation areas and advice for development including design, boundary treatments and repairs.</p>

<sup>69</sup> Historic Landscape Management Ltd & Nick Cox Architects (2017) Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site Revised Management Plan 2017. Available at: <https://www.blenheimpalace.com/worldheritagesite/downloads/WHSMP-Web-version-with-maps.pdf> [Date accessed: 10/04/24]

<sup>70</sup> Oxfordshire District Council (2017) Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation. Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/archaeology/landscape-characterisation> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>71</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (no date) Greener Historic Buildings. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/iejff5u1/greener-historic-buildings-guidance.pdf> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>72</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (various dates) Conservation areas. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/historic-buildings-and-conservation/conservation-area-maps/> [Date accessed: 10/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to cultural heritage
West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD (2016) <sup>73</sup>	The Design Guide SPD contains a detailed analysis of both natural and man-made aspects of the district and detailed design advice. Several of the documents relate to the historic environment, including Part 6 which sets out guidance for conservation areas and Part 7 which sets out guidance for the preservation and enhancement of West Oxfordshire’s designated heritage assets.

<sup>73</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2016) West Oxfordshire Design Guide. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/> [Date accessed: 08/04/24]

## A.6 Human health

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to human health
<p>Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our Strategy for Public Health in England White Paper (2011)<sup>74</sup></p>	<p>Sets out the government’s approach to tackling threats to public health and dealing with health inequalities. It sets out an approach that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the population from health threats – led by central government, with a strong system to the frontline;</li> <li>• Empower local leadership and encourage wide responsibility across society to improve everyone’s health and wellbeing, and tackle the wider factors that influence it;</li> <li>• Focus on key outcomes, doing what works to deliver them, with transparency of outcomes to enable accountability through a proposed new public health outcomes framework;</li> <li>• Reflect the government’s core values of freedom, fairness and responsibility by strengthening self-esteem, confidence and personal responsibility; positively promoting healthy behaviours and lifestyles; and adapting the environment to make healthy choices easier; and</li> <li>• Balance the freedoms of individuals and organisations with the need to avoid harm to others, use a ‘ladder’ of interventions to determine the least intrusive approach necessary to achieve the desired effect and aim to make voluntary approaches work before resorting to regulation.</li> </ul>
<p>Public Health England Strategy 2020-2025<sup>75</sup></p>	<p>The strategy sets out priorities within the public health system and areas of focus including addressing health inequalities and narrowing the ‘health gap’ between poor and wealthy communities, reducing rates of infectious diseases, addressing unhealthy behaviours and ensuring the potential of new technologies is realised.</p>
<p>Improving Health and Work: Changing Lives: The Government’s Response to Dame Carol Black’s Review of the Health of Britain’s Working-age population (2008)<sup>76</sup></p>	<p>This sets out the government’s response to a review into the health of Britain’s working age population conducted by Dame Carol Black. The vision is to: <i>“create a society where the positive links between work and health are recognised by all, where everyone aspires to a healthy and fulfilling working life and where health conditions and disabilities are not a bar to enjoying the benefits of work”</i>.</p> <p>To achieve the vision three key aspirations have been identified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. creating new perspectives on health and work</li> </ol>

<sup>74</sup> DoH (2011) Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England White Paper Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-lives-healthy-people-our-strategy-for-public-health-in-england> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>75</sup> Public Health England (2019) PHE Strategy 2020 to 2025 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phe-strategy-2020-to-2025> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>76</sup> Improving health and work: changing lives. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-health-and-work-changing-lives> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to human health
	2. improving work and workplaces 3. supporting people to work Through these three aspirations Britain’s working population will fulfil their full potential, create stronger communities and help relieve the financial burden of health problems on the economy.
Forestry Commission: Trees and Woodlands – Nature’s Health Service (2005) <sup>77</sup>	Provides detailed examples of how the Woodland Sector (trees, woodlands and green spaces) can significantly contribute to people’s health, well-being (physical, psychological and social) and quality of life. Increasing levels of physical activity is a particular priority.
Accessible Natural Green Space Standards Towns and Cities: Review & Toolkit for Implementation (2003) <sup>78</sup>	Aims to help Local Authorities develop policies which acknowledge, protect and enhance the contribution natural spaces make to local sustainability. Three aspects of natural space in cities and towns are discussed: their biodiversity; their ability to cope with urban pollution; ensuring natural spaces are accessible to everyone.
A Cross-sectional Analysis of Green Space Prevalence and Mental Wellbeing in England (2017) <sup>79</sup>	Study of the impacts green space can have on the mental wellbeing of residents in England.
2022/23 Director of Public Health Annual Report for Oxfordshire <sup>80</sup>	The Director of Public Health Annual Report presents the scale of obesity within Oxfordshire and examines the provisions required to improve accessibility to healthy food and physical activity. It also addresses issues of inequality that are highlighted by issues surrounding healthy lifestyles.
Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2030 <sup>81</sup>	This strategy is Oxfordshire’s primary strategy for health and wellbeing, setting out a strong, unified vision to improve health and wellbeing for local people between 2024-2030. It has been prepared following consultation with residents and organisations to take into account the concerns and ideas expressed, and defines high level principles and priorities. It will be complemented by a delivery plan

<sup>77</sup> Forestry Commission (2005) Trees and Woodlands - Nature's Health Service. Available at: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/publications/trees-and-woodlands-natures-health-service/> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>78</sup> Accessible Natural Green Space Standards Towns and Cities: Review & Toolkit for Implementation Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/65021> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>79</sup> Houlden. V., Weich. S. and Jarvis. S. (2017) A cross-sectional analysis of green space prevalence and mental wellbeing in England.

<sup>80</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2023) 2022/23 Director of Public Health Annual Report. Available at: [https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/public-health/public\\_health\\_annual\\_report\\_2022\\_23.pdf](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/public-health/public_health_annual_report_2022_23.pdf) [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>81</sup> Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board (2024) Health and Wellbeing Strategy Oxfordshire, 2024-2030. Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/constitution/oxfordshirejointwbstrategy.pdf> [Date accessed: 10/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to human health with detailed actions.
West Oxfordshire Open Space Study (2013) <sup>82</sup>	The West Oxfordshire Open Space Study presents the findings of an open space study of the three main towns in West Oxfordshire District: Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. The study evaluates the current quantity, quality and accessibility of open space, sports and recreational provision in these towns, alongside identifying future needs.
West Oxfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy & Action Plan (2022) <sup>83</sup>	This report sets out a strategy and action plan for all local playing pitch provision in West Oxfordshire. The strategy provides planning guidance to assess development proposals effecting outdoor sports facilities to inform their protection and provision. This includes providing a framework for the provision and management of playing pitches.
Interim West Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Study (2011) <sup>84</sup>	The Interim West Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure (GI) Study establishes connected networks of accessible multi-functional green space as part of the future planning of West Oxfordshire, through identifying and then protecting those areas we already have and through encouraging improvements to the network. The purpose of the study involves mapping existing components of West Oxfordshire's GI, ensure new development takes account of existing GI and to provide a basis for future planning and management of the network.

<sup>82</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2013). West Oxfordshire Open Space Study. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/g2eom11w/west-oxfordshire-open-space-study-2013.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/04/24]

<sup>83</sup> Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd. (2022) West Oxfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy & Action Plan. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/va0jpoje/west-oxfordshire-playing-pitch-strategy-and-action-plan-2022.pdf>. [Date accessed: 02/04/24]

<sup>84</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2011) Interim West Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Study. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/dyyduqtn/interim-green-infrastructure-study-june-2011.pdf> [Date accessed: 02/04/24]

## A.7 Landscape

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to landscape
Council of Europe: European Landscape Convention (2006) <sup>85</sup>	Aims to promote the protection, management and planning (including active design and creation of Europe’s landscapes, both rural and urban, and to foster European co-operation on landscape issues).
English Heritage and CABE: Guidance on Tall Buildings (2007) <sup>86</sup>	Provides advice and guidance on good practice in relation to tall buildings in the planning process and to highlight other related issues, which need to be taken into account, i.e. where tall buildings would and would not be appropriate.
National Planning Policy Framework (2023) <sup>87</sup>	The NPPF states that development could seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness; both aesthetic considerations and connections between people and places should be considered. The NPPF also promotes the protection and enhancements of valued landscapes, giving greatest weight to National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 <sup>88</sup>	<p>The Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023 for England is the first revision of the 25YEP. It builds on the 25YEP vision with a new plan setting out how the government will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of the goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help to restore nature, reduce environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of our country. To enhance beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment, the EIP sets out to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work across government to fulfil a new and ambitious commitment that everyone should live within 15 minutes walk of a green or blue space;</li> <li>• Continue our delivery of the England Coast Path and the Coast to Coast National Trail;</li> <li>• Green the Green Belt as set out in the Levelling Up White Paper by identifying key areas for nature restoration;</li> <li>• Invest in a new national landscapes partnership for National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and National Trails;</li> </ul>

<sup>85</sup> Council of Europe: European Landscape Convention (2006) Available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/236096/8413.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/236096/8413.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>86</sup> English Heritage and CABE: Guidance on Tall Buildings (2007) Available at: [https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/guidance-on-tall-buildings\\_0.pdf](https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/guidance-on-tall-buildings_0.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>87</sup> DLUHC (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF\\_December\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf) [Date accessed: 10/04/24]

<sup>88</sup> DEFRA (2023) Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to landscape
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend the delivery of our Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, using lessons learned to inform future farming schemes; and</li> <li>Invest in active travel, with a vision for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be cycled or walked by 2030. £35 million funding has already been committed this financial year.</li> </ul>
MHCLG: National Design Guide: Planning Practice Guidance for Beautiful, Enduring and Successful Places (2021) <sup>89</sup>	This design guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the government’s collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools.
Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework (2023) <sup>90</sup>	<p>The Green Infrastructure Framework is a commitment in the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan. It supports the greening of our towns and cities and connections with the surrounding landscape as part of the Nature Recovery Network. The Green Infrastructure Framework comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Green Infrastructure Principles</u>: the why, what and how of good Green Infrastructure</li> <li><u>Green Infrastructure Standards</u>: guidance on national standards for Green Infrastructure quantity and quality</li> <li><u>Green Infrastructure Maps</u>: mapped environmental, socio-economic datasets to support the standards</li> <li><u>Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide</u>: practical, evidence-based advice on how to design good quality Green Infrastructure</li> <li><u>Green Infrastructure Process Journeys</u>: guides on how to apply all the products in the Green Infrastructure Framework</li> </ul>
National Character Area Profile: 107 Cotswolds (NE420) <sup>91</sup>	The Cotswolds National Character Area (NCA) profile is a guidance document which can help communities living within the Cotswolds to inform their decision-making about the places they live. The document supports the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale to help inform choices about how the land is managed and facilitate landscape change.
National Character Area Profile: 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales (NE570) <sup>92</sup>	The Upper Thames Clay Vales National Character Area (NCA) profile is a guidance document which can help communities living within the Upper Thames Clay Vales to inform their decision-making about the places they live. The document supports the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale to help inform choices about how the land is managed and facilitate landscape change.

<sup>89</sup> MHCLG & DLUHC (2021) National design guide. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>90</sup> Natural England (2023) Green Infrastructure Framework. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>91</sup> Natural England (2015) NCA Profile: 107 Cotswolds (NE420). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5900626> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>92</sup> Natural England (2014) NCA Profile: 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales (NE570). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5865554770395136> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to landscape
Oxford Green Belt Study (2015) <sup>93</sup>	The Oxford Green Belt Study assess how the land within the Oxford Green Belt performs against the purposes of the Green Belts, as set out in the NPPF. The study also examines the case for including additional areas of land within the Green Belt.
West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (1998) <sup>94</sup>	The West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment aims to increase understanding of the landscape to assist with policy formulation and development control. The report identifies and provides a district breakdown of the main attributes of the landscape that contribute to local distinctiveness. It seeks to examine the relationship between the landscape and settlement buildings, identify enhancement strategies and priorities, and identify variations in landscape sensitivity and its ability to accommodate change.
West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD (2016) <sup>95</sup>	The West Oxfordshire Design Guide sets out detailed design advice that acts as a material consideration in planning decisions. It contains a detailed analysis of both natural and man-made aspects of the district. 20 documents set out guidance for different design aspects, including local character, sustainable building design and shop fronts.
Witney Landscape Assessment (2007) <sup>96</sup>	This study aims to update and expand on previous studies of land on the fringes of Witney, in particular the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment, in order to establish a sound evidence base for the West Oxfordshire Local Development Framework (WOLA). The study divides the surroundings of the town into eight areas, based on the WOLA, as well as a topographical and geographical basis.
Chipping Norton Landscape Assessment (2009) <sup>97</sup>	This study aims to update and expand on previous studies of land on the fringes of Chipping Norton, in particular the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment, in order to establish a sound evidence base for the West Oxfordshire Local Development Framework (WOLA). The study divides the surroundings of the town into six areas, based on the WOLA, as well as a topographical and geographical basis.
Carterton Landscape Assessment (2009) <sup>98</sup>	This study aims to update and expand on previous studies of land on the fringes of Carterton, in particular the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment, in order to establish a sound evidence base for the West Oxfordshire Local Development Framework (WOLA).

<sup>93</sup> LUC (2015) Oxford Green Belt Study (2015). Available at:

<https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/communityandliving/partnerships/GrowthBoard/OxfordGreenBeltStudySummary.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>94</sup> Atlantic Consultants (1998). Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/cpqn2fj0/west-oxfordshire-landscape-assessment-1998.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>95</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2016) West Oxfordshire Design Guide. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/> [Date accessed: 08/04/24]

<sup>96</sup> Amanda Hopwood Landscape Consultancy (2007). Witney Landscape Assessment. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/2mdjjkg4/witney-landscape-assessment-2007-full-report.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>97</sup> Amanda Hopwood Landscape Consultancy (2009) Chipping Norton Landscape Assessment. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/qwrkoffm/chipping-norton-landscape-assessment-2009-full-report.pdf> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>98</sup> Amanda Hopwood Landscape Consultancy (2009) Carterton Landscape Assessment. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/1jihezps/kirkham-landscape-and-visual-review-of-strategic-site-options-2012.pdf> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to landscape
	The study divides the surroundings of the town into three areas, based on the WOLA, as well as a topographical and geographical basis.
Landscape and Visual Review of Chipping Norton Strategic Site Option (2014) <sup>99</sup>	This report was prepared in order to the examine the landscape and visual aspects of options for major development to the east of Chipping Norton. It also draws on the previous WOLA, the previous Chipping Norton Landscape Assessment in 2009, and further field studies. Particular attention has been given to the inter-relationship between the landscape and the settlement and the degree to which the landscape hinterland is representative of the wider landscape in which it lies.
Landscape and Visual Review of Two Additional Submissions for Witney Strategic Development Options January 2015 <sup>100</sup>	This report was prepared in order to the examine the landscape and visual aspects of options for major development on the southern edge of Witney. It also draws on the previous WOLA, the previous Witney Landscape Assessment in 2007 and 2009, and further field studies. Particular attention has been given to the inter-relationship between the landscape and the settlement the degree to which the landscape hinterland is representative of the wider landscape in which it lies.
Landscape and Visual Review of submissions for Carterton and Witney Strategic Development Options (2012) <sup>101</sup>	This report was prepared in order to the examine the landscape and visual aspects of options for major development surrounding Carterton and Witney. It also draws on the previous WOLA, the previous Carterton Landscape Assessment in 2009 and the previous Witney Landscape Assessment in 2007 and 2009, and further field studies. Particular attention has been given to the inter-relationship between the landscape and the settlement the degree to which the landscape hinterland is representative of the wider landscape in which it lies.

<sup>99</sup> Kirkham Landscape Planning (2014). Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/oi5ll2x0/landscape-and-visual-review-of-chipping-norton-strategic-site-option.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>100</sup> Kirkham Landscape Planning (2015) Landscape and Visual Review of Two Additional Submissions for Witney Strategic Development Options January 2015. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/ayznfzd/landscape-and-visual-review-of-two-additional-submissions-for-witney-strategic-development-options-kirkham-landscape-planning-january-2015.pdf> [Date accessed: 03/04/24]

<sup>101</sup> Kirkham Landscape Planning (2012) Landscape And Visual Review Of Submissions For Carterton And Witney Strategic Development Options. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/1jihezps/kirkham-landscape-and-visual-review-of-strategic-site-options-2012.pdf> [Date accessed: 12/04/24]

## A.8 Population and material assets

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to population and material assets
National Planning Policy Framework (2023) <sup>102</sup>	<p>The NPPF includes guidance on promoting healthy communities, and requires planning authorities to aim to achieve places which promote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity;</li> <li>• Safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and</li> <li>• Safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.</li> </ul> <p>In order to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;</li> <li>• Guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;</li> <li>• Ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community; and</li> <li>• Ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.</li> </ul>
Social Exclusion Unit: Preventing Social Exclusion (2001) <sup>103</sup>	<p>The primary aims are to prevent social exclusion, and reintegrate people who have become excluded. Improvement is required in the areas of truancy, rough sleeping, teenage pregnancy, youth at risk and deprived neighbourhoods.</p>

<sup>102</sup> DLUHC (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF\\_December\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf) [Date accessed: 10/04/24]

<sup>103</sup> Social Exclusion Unit: Preventing Social Exclusion (2001) Available at: <http://www.bris.ac.uk/poverty/downloads/keyofficialdocuments/Preventing%20Social%20Exclusion.pdf> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to population and material assets
DCLG Homes for the Future: More Affordable, More Sustainable (2007) <sup>104</sup>	The Housing Green Paper outlines plans for delivering homes; new ways of identifying and using land for development; more social housing- ensuring that a decent home at an affordable price is for the many; building homes more quickly; more affordable homes; and greener homes – with high environmental standards and flagship developments leading the way.
ODPM & Home Office: Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention (2004) <sup>105</sup>	Practical guide to designs and layouts that may help with crime prevention and community safety, including well-defined routes, places structured so that different uses do not cause conflict, places designed to include natural surveillance and places designed with management and maintenance in mind.
Cabinet Office: Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion (2006) <sup>106</sup>	Sets out an action plan to improve the life chances of those who suffer, or may suffer in the future, from disadvantage. Guiding principles for action include: better identification and earlier intervention; systematically identifying 'what works'; promoting multi-agency working; personalisation, rights and responsibilities; and supporting achievement and managing underperformance.
Homes England Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028 <sup>107</sup>	<p>This 5-year plan spans financial year 2023 to 2024 to financial year 2027 to 2028. It outlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homes England's mission</li> <li>• Strategic objectives and aims</li> <li>• How performance will be measured</li> </ul> <p>The plan seeks to drive regeneration and housing delivery to create high-quality homes and thriving places. This will support greater social justice, the levelling up of communities across England and the creation of places people are proud to call home, in line with the priorities of the government's Levelling Up White Paper.</p>
EC Waste Framework Directive (1975, updated 2006) <sup>108</sup>	The objective is the protection of human health and the environment against harmful effects caused by the collection, transport, treatment, storage and tipping of waste. Particular focus is placed on the re-use of recovered materials as raw materials; restricting the production of waste; promoting clean technologies; and the drawing up of waste management plans.

<sup>104</sup> DCLG Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable (2007) Available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/243191/7191.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/243191/7191.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>105</sup> ODPM & Home Office: Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention Available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7784/147627.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7784/147627.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>106</sup> Cabinet Office: Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion Available at: [https://www.bristol.ac.uk/poverty/downloads/keyofficialdocuments/reaching\\_out\\_full.pdf](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/poverty/downloads/keyofficialdocuments/reaching_out_full.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>107</sup> Homes England (2023) Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-england-strategic-plan-2023-to-2028> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>108</sup> EC Waste Framework Directive Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A31975L0442> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to population and material assets
EC Landfill Directive (1999) <sup>109</sup>	Aims to prevent or reduce as far as possible negative effects on the environment, in particular the pollution of surface water, groundwater, soil and air, and on the global environment, including the greenhouse effect, as well as any resulting risk to human health, from the landfilling of waste, during the whole lifecycle of the landfill.
Our Waste, Our Resources: a Strategy for England (2018) <sup>110</sup>	<p>The Waste Strategy sets out how the government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve our stock of material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy;</li> <li>• Minimise the damage caused to our natural environment by reducing and managing waste safely and carefully; and</li> <li>• deal with waste crime.</li> </ul> <p>It combines actions to take now with firm commitments for the coming years and gives a clear longer-term policy direction in line with the 25 Year Environment Plan. The strategy promotes a more circular economy (re-use, remanufacture, repair, recycle) to keep resources in use for as long as possible.</p>
Waste Management Plan for England (2021) <sup>111</sup>	The Waste Management Plan for England is an analysis of the current waste management situation in England. The plan does not introduce new policies or change how waste is managed in England. Its aim is to bring current waste management policies together under one national plan.
DECC Energy White Paper: Meeting the Energy Challenge (2007) <sup>112</sup>	<p>Sets out government’s long term energy policy, including requirements for cleaner, smarter energy; improved energy efficiency; reduced carbon emissions; and reliable, competitive and affordable supplies. The White Paper sets out the UK’s international and domestic energy strategy, in the shape of four policy goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Aiming to cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by some 60% by about 2050, with real progress by 2020</li> <li>2) Maintaining the reliability of energy supplies</li> <li>3) Promoting competitive markets in the UK and beyond</li> <li>4) Ensuring every home is heated adequately and affordably</li> </ol>

<sup>109</sup> EC Landfill Directive (1999) Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A31999L0031> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>110</sup> DEFRA & EA (2018) Our waste, our resources: a strategy for England. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/resources-and-waste-strategy-for-england> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>111</sup> DEFRA (2021) Waste Management Plan for England 2021. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-management-plan-for-england-2021> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>112</sup> DECC Energy White Paper: Meeting the Energy Challenge Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/meeting-the-energy-challenge-a-white-paper-on-energy> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to population and material assets
DTI Micro Generation Strategy (2006) <sup>113</sup>	Acknowledges that local authorities can be pro-active in promoting small-scale, local renewable energy generation schemes through “ <i>sensible use of planning policies</i> ”.
EU Sustainable Development Strategy (2006) <sup>114</sup>	This Strategy identifies key priorities for an enlarged Europe. This includes health, social inclusion and fighting global poverty. It aims to achieve better policy integration in addressing these challenges, and to ensure that Europe looks beyond its boundaries in making informed decisions about sustainability. The sustainable Development Strategy was reviewed in 2009 and “ <i>underlined that in recent years the EU has mainstreamed sustainable development into a broad range of its policies. In particular, the EU has taken the lead in the fight against climate change and the promotion of a low-carbon economy. At the same time, unsustainable trends persist in many areas and the efforts need to be intensified</i> ”. Sustainable development is a key focus of the EU and the strategy continues to be monitored and reviewed.
DEFRA, Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE) (2010) <sup>115</sup>	This document seeks to clarify the underlying principles and aims in existing policy documents, legislation and guidance that relate to noise. The key aims of this document are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life;</li> <li>• Mitigate and minimise adverse impacts on health and quality of life; and</li> <li>• Where possible, contribute to the improvement of health and quality of life.</li> </ul>
Strategy for Sustainable Construction (2008) <sup>116</sup>	‘Themes for Action’ include: re-use existing built assets; design for minimum waste; aim for lean construction; minimise energy in construction; minimise energy in building use; avoid polluting the environment; preserve and enhance bio-diversity; conserve water resources; respect people and their local environment; and set targets (benchmarks & performance indicators).
Planning for Town Centres: Practice guidance on need, impact and the sequential approach (2009) <sup>117</sup>	This practice guidance was intended to support the implementation of town centre policies set out in Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (PPS4) (now replaced by PPG). It is aimed at helping those involved in preparing or reviewing need, impact and sequential site assessments.

<sup>113</sup> DTI Micro Generation Strategy. Available at: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/sites/default/files/docs/2006/10/ofgem-microgen-next-steps-oct-2006.pdf> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>114</sup> EU Sustainable Development Strategy (2006) Available at: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/policy-documents/renewed-eu-strategy-for-sustainable-development> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>115</sup> DEFRA (2010) Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/noise-policy-statement-for-england> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>116</sup> Strategy for Sustainable Construction (2008) Available at: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/+http://www.bis.gov.uk/files/file46535.pdf> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>117</sup> Planning for Town Centres: Practice guidance on need, impact and the sequential approach (December 2009) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-for-town-centres-practice-guidance-on-need-impact-and-the-sequential-approach> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to population and material assets
West Oxfordshire District Summary (2021) <sup>118</sup>	This document sets out key information on the population of the West Oxfordshire district. It includes data of the historical and project population change, health summaries, and information on inequalities and deprivation.
Housing Land Supply Position Statement 2023 - 2028 <sup>119</sup>	The West Oxfordshire Housing Land Supply Position Statement 2023 – 2028 sets out the Council’s housing land supply position for a five-year period.
Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2018 - 2023 <sup>120</sup>	The West Oxfordshire Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2018 – 2023 sets out a plan to tackle homelessness in West Oxfordshire in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
West Oxfordshire Affordable Housing SPD <sup>121</sup>	The West Oxfordshire Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides detailed guidance on the delivery of new affordable housing in the district to support the Council, developers, housing providers and local communities.
West Oxfordshire Annual Monitoring Report 2020 - 2021 <sup>122</sup>	The West Oxfordshire Annual Monitoring Report 2020 – 2021 has been prepared to lay out information regard progress of the Local Plan and its policies, neighbourhood planning and fulfilling other Council observations.
Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (2019) <sup>123</sup>	The Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy sets out an ambitious plan to deliver transformative growth within the national Industrial Strategy. Its aims involve boosting productivity, investing in key skills and infrastructure and backing businesses to support their growth.
Oxfordshire Investment Plan (2020) <sup>124</sup>	The Oxfordshire Investment Plan underpins the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy through translating its ideas into policies and commitments with regards to investment.

<sup>118</sup> JSNA (2021) West Oxfordshire District Summary 2021. Available at: [https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/oxfordshireinsight/files/documents/WestOxon\\_JSNA\\_2021.pdf](https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/oxfordshireinsight/files/documents/WestOxon_JSNA_2021.pdf) [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>119</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2023) Housing Land Supply Position Statement 2023 – 2028. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/pgyhbtrb/housing-land-supply-position-statement-2023-to-2028.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/04/2023]

<sup>120</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2018) Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2018 - 2023. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/k4zlqx1n/preventing-homelessness-strategy-2018-to-2023.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/02/24]

<sup>121</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2021) Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/mtadko1o/affordable-housing-spd-final-adoption-version-27-october-2021.pdf> [Date accessed 08/04/24]

<sup>122</sup> West Oxfordshire District Council (2021) Annual Monitoring Report 2020 - 2021. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/wqdcxefn/annual-monitoring-report-2020-2021.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>123</sup> OxLEP (2019) Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy. Available at: [https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxfordshire-SINGLE-PAGE\\_1.pdf](https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Oxfordshire-SINGLE-PAGE_1.pdf) [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>124</sup> OxLEP (2020) Oxfordshire Investment Plan. Available at: <https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/sites/default/files/uploads/The%20Oxfordshire%20Investment%20Plan%20-%20August%202020.pdf> [Date accessed: 19/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to population and material assets
Oxfordshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy (2022) <sup>125</sup>	This report presents the progress of the Oxfordshire Digital Infrastructure programme, to outline the increased demand and provision for internet access and mobile connectivity across Oxfordshire.
Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme (2022) <sup>126</sup>	The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme (MWDS) aims to help communities keep track of plan making progress relating to minerals and waste.
Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Authority Monitoring Report (2020) <sup>127</sup>	This report provides information on minerals and waste development in Oxfordshire, to demonstrate the effectiveness of policies relating to minerals and waste in Oxfordshire.
Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (2017) <sup>128</sup>	This document sets out how minerals and waste can be managed in Oxfordshire to support new infrastructure and development, including provision for construction materials, waste disposal capacity and reducing carbon emissions.

<sup>125</sup> Bower, C. (2022) Oxfordshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan. Available at: <https://digitalinfrastructureoxfordshire.co.uk/sites/default/files/2022-07/Digital%20Infrastructure%20Strategy%20v12%20%281%29.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>126</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2022) Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme. Available at: [https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/planning-minerals-and-waste/MineralsandWasteDevelopmentScheme2021\\_12thEdition.pdf](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/planning-minerals-and-waste/MineralsandWasteDevelopmentScheme2021_12thEdition.pdf) [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>127</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2020) Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Authority Monitoring Report. Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/planning-minerals-and-waste/MineralsandWasteAMR2020.pdf> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>128</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2017) Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy. Available at: <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/environmentandplanning/planning/mineralsandwaste/September2017/AdoptedMineralsWasteCoreStrategySept2017.pdf>. [Date accessed: 23/04/24]

## A.9 Water and soil

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to water and soil
DEFRA: Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England (2011) <sup>129</sup>	<p>The Soil Strategy for England outlines the government’s approach to safeguarding our soils for the long term. It provides a vision to guide future policy development across a range of areas and sets out the practical steps that are needed to take to prevent further degradation of our soils, enhance, restore and ensure their resilience, and improve understanding of the threats to soil and best practice in responding to them. Key objectives of the strategy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better protection for agricultural soils</li> <li>• Protecting and enhancing stores of soil carbon</li> <li>• Building the resilience of soils to a changing climate</li> <li>• Preventing soil pollution</li> <li>• Effective soil protection during construction and development</li> <li>• Dealing with our legacy of contaminated land.</li> </ul>
DEFRA: Environmental Protection Act 1990: Part 2A. Contaminated Land Statutory Guidance (2012) <sup>130</sup>	<p>This document establishes a legal framework for dealing with contaminated land in England. This document provides guidelines for how local authorities should implement the regime, including how they should go about deciding whether land is contaminated land in the legal sense of the term. Key aims are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify and remove unacceptable risks to human health and the environment</li> <li>• To seek to ensure that contaminated land is made suitable for its current use</li> <li>• To ensure that the burdens faced by individuals, companies and society as a whole are proportionate, manageable and compatible with the principles of sustainable development.</li> </ul>
National Planning Policy Framework (2023) <sup>131</sup>	<p>The NPPF states that plans should prevent development from contributing to, or being put at risk of, air or water pollution. The NPPF states that planning should protect and enhance soils, particularly those recognised as best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a).</p>

<sup>129</sup> DEFRA (2011) Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-our-soils-a-strategy-for-england> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>130</sup> DEFRA (2012) Environmental Protection Act 1990: Part 2A. Contaminated Land Statutory Guidance Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/223705/pb13735cont-land-guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/223705/pb13735cont-land-guidance.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>131</sup> DLUHC (2023) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF\\_December\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf) [Date accessed: 10/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to water and soil
	The NPPF also states that plans should set out a strategy for, and make sufficient provision for, infrastructure including water supply and wastewater.
Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC <sup>132</sup>	This provides an overarching strategy, including a requirement for EU Member States to ensure that they achieve 'good ecological status' by 2015. River Basin Management Plans were defined as the key means of achieving this. They contain the main issues for the water environment and the actions we all need to take to deal with them.
DEFRA The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations (2003) <sup>133</sup>	<p>Requires all inland and coastal waters to reach 'good' status by 2015. It mandates that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development must not cause a deterioration in status of a waterbody; and</li> <li>• Development must not prevent future attainment of 'good status', hence it is not acceptable to allow an impact to occur just because other impacts are causing the status of a water body to already be less than good.</li> </ul> <p>This is being done by establishing a river basin district structure within which demanding environmental objectives are being set, including ecological targets for surface waters.</p>
HM Government Strategy for Sustainable Construction (2008) <sup>134</sup>	Encourages the construction industry to adopt a more sustainable approach towards development; identifies eleven themes for targeting Action, which includes conserving water resources.
Environment Agency: Building a Better Environment: Our Role in Development and How We Can Help (2013) <sup>135</sup>	Guidance on addressing key environmental issues through the development process (focusing mainly on the issues dealt with by the Environment Agency), including managing flood risk, surface water management, use of water resources, preventing pollution.
Environment Agency (2019) Manual for the Production of	This manual provides the technical background to groundwater capture zone delineation.

<sup>132</sup> Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0060> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>133</sup> The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2003/3242/contents/made> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>134</sup> HM Government Strategy for Sustainable Construction Available at: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa+/http://www.bis.gov.uk/files/file46535.pdf> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>135</sup> Environment Agency (2013) Building a Better Environment: Our role in development and how we can help Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/289894/LIT\\_2745\\_c8ed3d.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/289894/LIT_2745_c8ed3d.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to water and soil
Groundwater Source Protection Zones <sup>136</sup>	
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018) <sup>137</sup>	<p>The document sets out Government action to help achieve natural world regain and retain good health. The main goals of the Plan are to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean air</li> <li>• Clean and plentiful water</li> <li>• Thriving plants and wildlife</li> <li>• A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought</li> <li>• Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently</li> <li>• Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.</li> </ul> <p>The Plan seeks to achieve clean and plentiful water by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing the damaging abstraction of water from rivers and groundwater, ensuring that by 2021 the proportion of water bodies with enough water to support environmental standards increases from 82% to 90% for surface water bodies and from 72% to 77% for groundwater bodies;</li> <li>• Reaching or exceeding objectives for rivers, lakes, coastal and ground waters that are specially protected, whether for biodiversity or drinking water as per our River Basin Management Plans;</li> <li>• Supporting OFWAT’s ambitions on leakage, minimising the amount of water lost through leakage year on year, with water companies expected to reduce leakage by at least an average of 15% by 2025; and</li> <li>• Minimising by 2030 the harmful bacteria in our designated bathing waters and continuing to improve the cleanliness of our waters. We will make sure that potential bathers are warned of any short-term pollution risks.</li> </ul> <p>The 2021 Environment Act (9<sup>th</sup> November, 2021) embeds several of these aspects into the new legislation.</p>
Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 <sup>138</sup>	<p>The Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) 2023 for England is the first revision of the 25YEP. It builds on the 25YEP vision with a new plan setting out how the government will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of the goals for improving the environment, matched with interim targets to measure progress. Taking these actions will help to restore nature, reduce</p>

<sup>136</sup> Environment Agency (2019) Manual for the production of Groundwater Source Protection Zones – March 2019. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/822402/Manual-for-the-production-of-Groundwater-Source-Protection-Zones.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/822402/Manual-for-the-production-of-Groundwater-Source-Protection-Zones.pdf) [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>137</sup> DEFRA (2021) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

<sup>138</sup> DEFRA (2023) Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan> [Date accessed: 11/04/24]

Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to water and soil
	<p>environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of our country.</p> <p>To achieve clean and plentiful water, the EIP sets out to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle nutrient pollution, including by upgrading 160 wastewater treatment works by 2027 and providing increased advice and incentives to support a shift to sustainable agricultural techniques;</li> <li>• Restore 400 miles of river through the first round of Landscape Recovery projects and establish 3,000 hectares of new woodlands along England’s rivers; and</li> <li>• Roll out water efficiency labelling across appliances and ensure water companies deliver a 50% reduction in leakages by 2050.</li> </ul>
Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales (1988) <sup>139</sup>	This report provides revised criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land in England and Wales. The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) grading is set out within this document to provide a framework for classifying the extent to which physical and chemical characteristics of the land impose long-term limitations of agricultural use.
Thames River Basin Management Plan (2022) <sup>140</sup> and Severn River Basin Management Plan (2022) <sup>141</sup>	Each river basin management plan (RBMP) describes the challenges that threaten the water environment and how these challenges can be managed.
Draft Thames Water Resources Management Plan (2023) <sup>142</sup>	The Thames Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) includes an overview of the Thames water supply area and how water services can be distributed around the Thames Water area.
West Oxfordshire District Council Water Quality Impact Assessment (2021) <sup>143</sup>	The West Oxfordshire District Council Water Quality Impact Assessment was undertaken to inform the Salt Cross Area Action Plan, in the context of the development of the Salt Cross Garden Village. The study aims to forecast the additional wastewater generated from the Salt Cross development and how this will be suitably managed.

<sup>139</sup> MAFF (1988) Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales: Revised criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6257050620264448?category=5954148537204736> [Date accessed: 05/04/24]

<sup>140</sup> Environment Agency (2022) Thames river basin district river basin management plan: updated 2022. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/thames-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022> [Date accessed: 04/04/24]

<sup>141</sup> Environment Agency (2022) Severn river basin district river basin management plan. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/severn-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022> [Date accessed: 09/04/24]

<sup>142</sup> Thames Water (2023) Revised Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024. Available at: <https://thames-wrmp.co.uk/document-library/> [Date accessed: 05/04/24]

<sup>143</sup> JBA Consulting (2021) West Oxfordshire District Council Water Quality Impact Assessment. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/114npx43/ev33-garden-village-water-quality-impact-assessment.pdf> [Date accessed: 05/04/24]

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Title of PPP	Main objectives of relevant plans, policies and programmes in relation to water and soil
West Oxfordshire Water Cycle Study: Phase 1 Scoping Study (2016) <sup>144</sup>	The West Oxfordshire Scoping Water Cycle Study was undertaken to inform the Local Plan 2031, in order to ensure that planned growth in the district does not impact water quality.

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<sup>144</sup> AECOM (2016) West Oxfordshire Water Cycle Study: Phase 1 Scoping Study. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/rqwliqf4/env11-west-oxfordshire-water-cycle-study-phase-1-scoping-study-november-2016.pdf> [Date accessed: 05/04/24]

Habitats Regulations Assessments

Sustainability Appraisals

Strategic Environmental Assessments

Landscape Character Assessments

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments

Green Belt Reviews

Expert Witness

Ecological Impact Assessments

Habitat and Ecology Surveys



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