



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Monitoring Report

2018/19





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Introduction



This is the West Oxfordshire District Council Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for the year 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019.

The Council approved its Council Plan (2020 - 2024) in January 2020, the delivery of the key priorities and objectives therein will be measured against a set of success indicators which will need to be reported annually.

This offers the opportunity to streamline the future monitoring of the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan with that of the Council Plan and produce a single annual monitoring report.

This report differs from previous monitoring reports insofar as it has been structured according to the 6 core themes of the Council Plan, as follows: Climate Action; Healthy Towns and Villages; A Vibrant District Economy; Strong Local Communities; and Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance.

The core content however remains broadly the same, setting out for each theme, an outline of the current district context in terms of background/contextual information, before considering what has happened during the monitoring period 2018/19ⁱ and then summarising what is on the horizon in terms of future Council activities and actions.

ⁱWhere more up to date information has been made available since the end of the 2018 - 19 monitoring period, this has been reported and dated accordingly.

1 Climate Action

Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity



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Background Context

- West Oxfordshire is one of the most beautiful areas of the country, with around 34% of the district falling within the **Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB)**.
- Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, while supporting a thriving district economy, has been a continual priority to ensure West Oxfordshire remains an attractive place to live, work and visit.
- Total **CO₂ emissions** in West Oxfordshire have gradually fallen between 2005 and 2017¹ (see figure 1) and the Council has committed to becoming a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030.
- Four standalone **renewable energy schemes** are currently recorded as being operational, all of which are ground mounted Solar Photovoltaics and are located in Charlbury, Chipping Norton, Carterton and Kencot.
- As of 1 October 2019, there were 15 public **electric vehicle charging** devices available in West Oxfordshire², the district being within the bottom 20-40% of UK local authority areas in terms of total provision. 3 of these were located in the Chipping Norton area and 2 are available in Burford. The remainder in the district are either home charging points, including 3 in Witney, or not easily accessible to the public (e.g. located within the grounds of Blenheim Palace).

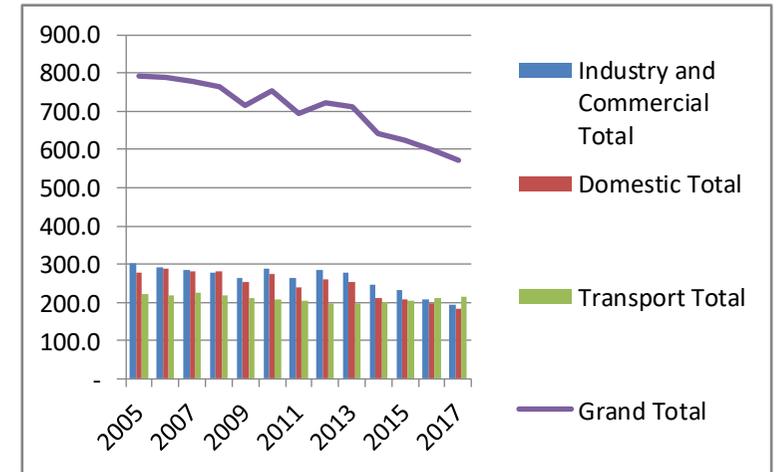


Figure 1: Carbon emissions in West Oxfordshire (DBEIS)¹

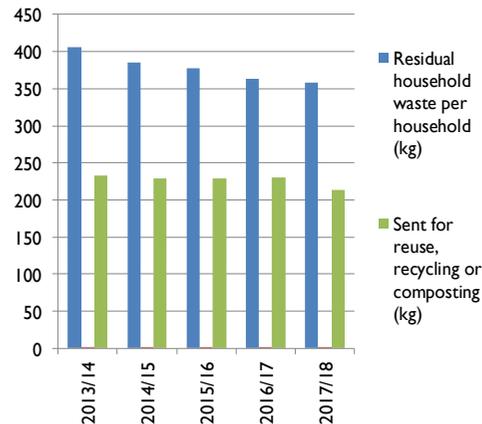


Figure 2: Residual household waste in West Oxfordshire 2013 - 2018

- Residual **household waste** per household (kg) has seen a general decline between 2013 and 2018.
- Over the same period of time, the amount of waste sent for **reuse, recycling or composting** has remained at a relatively consistent level. The relative proportion of overall waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting increased year on year from 2013 (57.4%) to 2017 (63.4%) but fell to 59.6% in 2017/18.
- This trend is broadly in line with Oxfordshire as a whole, the county having one of the lowest rates of waste arising per household, and one of the highest recycling rates (58% across Oxfordshire in 2017-18). Several reasons are suggested, including tightened standards on councils' abilities to recycle materials; changing habits, such as accessing news and information online rather than through print media; re-processors demanding material with less contamination; and lighter packaging³.

West Oxfordshire's ecological network is made up of sites designated for their international, national and local importance, including:

- One international site: a small area of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Two National Nature Reserves (Wychwood NNR and Chimney Meadows NNR)⁴
- 28 SSSIs wholly or partly in West Oxfordshire, representing approximately 0.02% of the land area. 28.2% of the total SSSI area within the district is in favourable condition⁵
- 103 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), totalling 1,917 hectares. The area of these LWS has increased by 14.4ha since 2017.
- 16 Geological Sites, the combined area of which has remained at 346ha since 2017.
- 14 Conservation Target Areas
- Part the Cotswolds Valleys Nature Improvement Area (NIA) extends into West Oxfordshire, largely covering the valley areas of the Evenlode and Windrush rivers.

¹Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (DBEIS), June 2019

²Department for Transport (DfT), October 2019, available at: <http://maps.dft.gov.uk/ev-charging-map/>

³Oxfordshire Resource & Waste Strategy 2018-2023

⁴The state of NNRs are measured by Bucks, Berks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)

⁵Thames Valley Environment Records Centre (TVERC) Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report 2018

1 Climate Action

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Background Context

- While high **light pollution levels** are recorded in Witney and Carterton and in particular the skies above RAF Brize Norton being among the brightest in the country, a large proportion of the most rural areas in the district has some of the darkest skies and lowest levels of light pollution (see figure 3)⁶. There is one Dark Sky Discovery Site in the district, located at the Rollright Stones Ancient Monument near Chipping Norton.
- Several **rivers** flow through West Oxfordshire providing important corridors for biodiversity, opportunities for recreation and forming part of the setting of many towns and villages. However they also present a flood risk, particularly:

- High risk flood zone of the River Windrush, intersected by several developed areas in Witney. Much of the land adjacent to the Windrush is, however, rural agricultural.
- Significant areas of functional flood plain in the south of the Eynsham-Woodstock sub-area associated with the confluence of the River Windrush and the River Thames
- Large areas of River Thames functional flood plain in the south of the Carterton Sub-area, however again this land is largely rural and agricultural in nature.
- Functional Floodplain associated with the River Evenlode at Shipton-under Wychwood and its tributaries flowing from Milton-under-Wychwood.

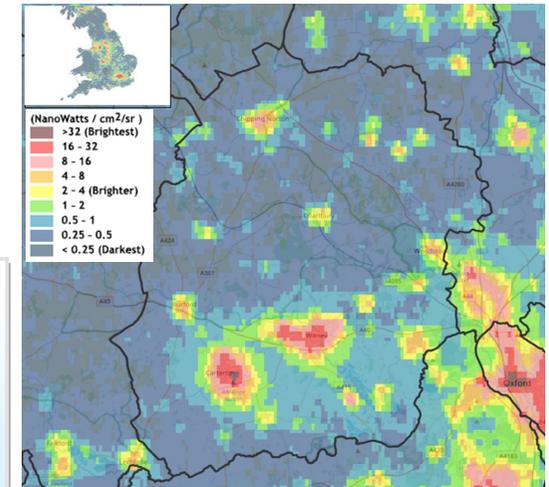


Figure 3: Light Pollution and Dark Skies in West Oxfordshire ⁶

West Oxfordshire Level I Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Update November 2016⁷

- **Flood defences** in West Oxfordshire offer a standard of protection ranging from 2 to 100 years. Defences designed to a 100 year standard are found along the Upper Thames and are maintained by the Environment Agency, such defences include flood walls, embankments and stone revetments. Many of the other fluvial defences across the District have a design standard less than 50 years. Flood defences are mapped in Appendix B, figures 2A-F of the West Oxfordshire Level I SFRA Update Report, Nov 2016.
- There are two **Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)** in the district, at Bridge Street in Witney and at Horsefair in Chipping Norton, both AQMAs having been declared in 2005 and both having high levels of Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollutants.

- **Water quality** is measured on a river catchment scale and West Oxfordshire falls within two catchment areas: the Evenlode and the Windrush. Figures 4 and 5⁸ show that in 2016 in both the Evenlode and Windrush catchments, most of the water bodies were of moderate status. No water bodies in either catchment failed on chemical status. Since 2015, Wild Oxfordshire has also facilitated a community-led water quality testing initiative (WaterBlitz)⁹ which, in two studies within 2018/19, has reported a generally higher nutrient level in waterbodies within the Evenlode catchment than those in the Windrush catchment.

Number of water bodies	Ecological status or potential					Chemical status	
	Bad	Poor	Moderate	Good	High	Fail	Good
18	1	6	11	0	0	0	18

Figure 4: Ecological and chemical classification for surface waters, 2016 Cycle 2, Evenlode catchment

Number of water bodies	Ecological status or potential					Chemical status	
	Bad	Poor	Moderate	Good	High	Fail	Good
19	2	6	10	1	0	0	19

Figure 5: Ecological and chemical classification for surface waters, 2016 Cycle 2, Windrush catchment

- **Designated heritage assets** in West Oxfordshire include the Blenheim World Heritage Site, just over 3,200 Listed Buildings (as of August 2019 comprising 2,968 Grade II, 200 Grade II* and 39 Grade I), 51 Conservation Areas (of which 24 with an up to date Character Appraisal), 138 Scheduled Monuments and 17 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens.

⁶CPRE NightBlight Mapping: interactive map available at: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>

⁷SFRA available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan/local-plan-evidence-base>

⁸Windrush Operational Catchment Summary (Environment Agency) Full summary available at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/OperationalCatchment/3539/Summary>

⁹Reports available on the Wild Oxfordshire website: <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/communities/waterblitz/>

1 Climate Action

Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity

What's happened in 2018/19?

- The District Council reported on its own carbon emissions using Defra/ DECC's guidelines. Total GHG emissions have decreased from 2017/18 to 2018/19 by 554 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent; a decrease of 20%. A cumulative reduction of 47% has been achieved from base year 2009/10.
- The condition of 2 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) was assessed by Natural England¹⁰. The Bould Wood SSSI, with a main habitat of lowland fen, marsh and swamp was found to be in unfavourable recovering condition. The Westwell Gorse SSSI, the main habitat of which is lowland calcareous grassland was found to be in favourable condition.
- As reported by Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre (TVERC), in West Oxfordshire from 2018 to 2019, there was:
 - A small decrease in the number of priority species from 124 (2018) to 116 (2019)
 - A small increase in overall priority habitat from 4,885(2018) to 5,012¹¹
 - 50 water vole surveys were undertaken in 2018 with 33 recording positive signs. This is more than last year.
- Continued support provided by the Council for key local projects and initiatives, including:
 - Windrush in Witney, the project objectives of which are being incorporated into the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA). An 'Issues' consultation for the East Witney SDA was undertaken in June/July 2019.
 - TVERC, annual agreement with which the Council entered into, supporting the collection, management and reporting of data in relation to local wildlife sites, habitats and species.
 - Lower Windrush Valley, continued funding provided, supporting the management of 67 hectares of land in the valley, project awareness raising e.g. yellow fish sticker scheme, access improvements and the set up of 'Friends of the Lower Windrush Valley' in early 2018¹².
- An Issues Paper consultation for the Chipping Norton SDA was carried out in February 2019 and explored the means by which a net gain in biodiversity would need to be demonstrated in a quantifiable way, recognising the importance of assessing any impacts of development on the nearby SSSI and the Glyme and Dorn CTA.
- The Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village was used as part of a pilot programme, led by Natural England, towards the development of an Ecometric which could be used as a means to measure natural capital gains.
- The Council began to work with Oxfordshire County Council and the University of Oxford to bring forward the delivery of additional electric vehicle charging points in the district as part of the Park and Charge project.
- The Council submitted a response to the government's consultation on the Future Homes Standard (January 2020) raising four key matters:
 - 1) Agreement with the expectation that a home built to the Future Homes Standard should produce 75-80% less CO₂ emissions than one built to current requirements and that the fabric package for Option 1 provides a reasonable performance level.
 - 2) No support for the government's proposal to commence the amendment to the Planning and Energy Act restricting local planning authorities from setting higher energy efficiency standards for dwellings.
 - 3) Not considering the timings of the Future Homes Standard ambitious enough.
 - 4) Supporting the government's preferred option 2 which is to uplift Part L of the Building Regulations in 2020 requiring a 31% improvement in carbon emissions reduction when compared to current standards.

Local Plan Core Objectives for protecting and enhancing our environment and reducing the impact from climate change:

- CO14** Conserve and enhance the character and significance of West Oxfordshire's high quality natural, historic and cultural environment – including its geodiversity, landscape, biodiversity, heritage and arts – recognising and promoting their wider contribution to people's quality of life and social and economic well-being both within the District and beyond.
- CO15** Contribute to reducing the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.
- CO16** Enable improvements in water and air quality.
- CO17** Minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.

¹⁰Natural England Designated Sites View available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteSearch.aspx>

¹¹changes most attributable to new information such as confirmation of boundaries or habitat types rather than the creation or loss of habitat

¹²Further information available in the 2018 LWVP Highlights Report: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/countryside/lower-windrush-valley-project/what-we-do>

1 Climate Action

Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity



What's happened in 2018/19?

- No new standalone renewable energy schemes were permitted in 2018/19. It should be noted however that the majority of small scale energy schemes, especially solar PV schemes, benefit from permitted development rights and do not require planning permission. It is not possible to identify and record these installations.
- The latest report on air quality in the district (June 2019)¹³ indicates that the levels of nitrogen within both AQMAs remained higher than the national objectives level of 40 µg^m⁻³. No other sites had levels approaching the national objective and the results show that, in the main, West Oxfordshire District Council has good air quality. Outside of Witney and Chipping Norton, the highest annual average reading of 29.0 µg^m⁻³ was found at Lower High Street, Burford.
- 365 kilos of residual household waste per West Oxfordshire household was produced in 2018/19, lower than the per household rate across the South East region of 527kg and lower still than the England total of 537.2kg per household.
- 57.8% of household waste (cumulative) was sent for reuse, recycling or composting. This was higher than the South east average (47.2%) and the England average (43.5%), but no longer in the highest 20 local authority areas across the Country.
- Two Wild Oxfordshire Waterblitz studies within 2018/19 has reported a generally higher nutrient level in waterbodies within the Evenlode catchment than those in the Windrush catchment¹⁴.
- No Conservation Area Appraisals were carried out in 2018-19.
- Heritage assets added to at risk register 2018-19:
 - In 2018: 3 places of worship and 7 archaeology entries
 - In 2019: 2 places of worship and 7 archaeology entries

What's on the horizon?

- Having appointed its first Climate Change Manager in November 2019, the Council has a breadth of work on the horizon to be a leading influence in tackling climate change locally, including:
 - Production of a Carbon Action Plan to identify action and projects to become a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030.
 - Leading on a district-wide Climate Change Strategy to be subject to public consultation later in 2020.
- A Sustainable Outcomes Guide and Checklist will be published in 2020, to:
 - Promote genuinely sustainable practices in new developments
 - Address national climate change commitments by carbon reduction locally, whilst creating vibrant and attractive communities, and
 - Offer examples of actions and best practice to make schemes more sustainable, for example, through the use of Passivhaus standards for new homes and Building With Nature.
- Continuing to ensure that climate change principles, including securing biodiversity net gain where appropriate, are fully incorporated into the emerging Area Action Plan (AAP) for the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) for the four Strategic Development Areas (West Eynsham, East Chipping Norton, East Witney and North Witney).
- Continued support and grant aid provision for local projects and initiatives.
- In response to the government's Environment Bill, the Council will be working with Partners across Oxfordshire to adopt a local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- Production of a Green Infrastructure Plan / Strategy to be implemented over the course of the next four/five years to incorporate the Building With Nature principles.
- Pending Conservation Area Appraisal for Woodstock.

¹³Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/ed3ckhaw/air-quality-report-2019.pdf>

¹⁴Report available on the Wild Oxfordshire website: <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/communities/waterblitz/>

2 Healthy Towns and Villages

Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone

Background Context

- When assessed against the indicators for health and wellbeing from the Oxfordshire-wide Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2019)¹⁵, West Oxfordshire on the whole, performs better than, or similar to the national average on most indicators.
- This includes, for example, **life expectancy** which is slightly higher than the national and regional averages for both males (82 years in West Oxfordshire compared to 79 years in England) and females (84 years in West Oxfordshire compared to 83 in England).
- The **population** of West Oxfordshire is approximately 109,200 (ONS 2017 mid-year estimate) and is projected to increase by 34% by 2037. By the same estimation the population of residents over the age of 85 (currently approx. 3,400) is projected to increase by 82% by 2037.
- Primary and secondary **health care** in West Oxfordshire is provided by a network of 16 local GP practices and two hospitals, the Witney Community Hospital and the War Memorial Community Hospital in Chipping Norton.

Embedding Healthy Place Shaping in the planning process

- There is a growing movement in Oxfordshire, particularly through the Growth Deal and the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, to embed healthy place shaping in the planning process, especially in light of emerging evidence from local and national experience of Healthy New Towns, including the initiatives at Barton and Bicester New Towns. This should bring together the planning for health with the planning for growth.
- In summary, healthy place shaping is based on 3 concepts:
 - Shaping the built environment, green spaces and infrastructure at a local level to improve health and wellbeing.
 - Working with local people and local organisations, schools etc. to engage them in planning places, facilities and services through 'community activation'.
 - Re-shaping health, wellbeing and care services and the infrastructure which supports them to achieve health benefits, including health services, social care, leisure and recreation services, community centres etc.

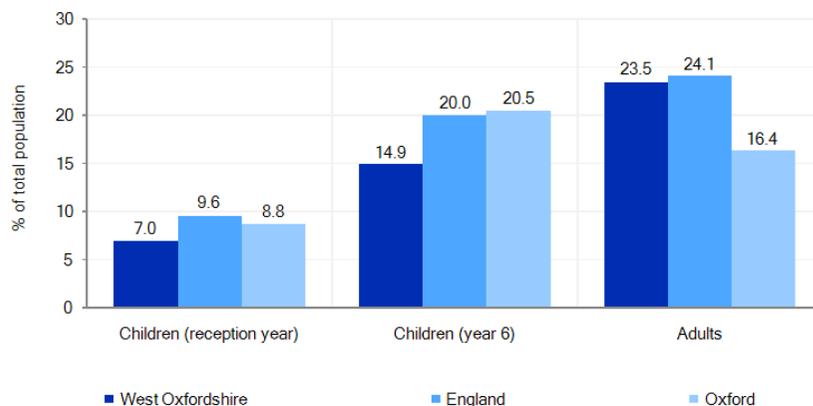


Figure 6: % of West Oxfordshire classified as obese

- The **use of the private car** is the most common means of travel in West Oxfordshire. 89.9% of households in West Oxfordshire own at least one car. 35.4% households own 2 cars, with a further 8.7% of households owning 3 cars and 3.3% owning 4 or more cars.
- Only 4.1% of people **cycle for travel** purposes at least three times a week with 22.9% of people **walking for travel** at least three times a week. In comparison, 2.7% of people cycle 3 or more times a week for leisure and 29.5% walk 3 or more times a week for leisure.
- The number of people killed or seriously injured on roads in West Oxfordshire (46 in the period between 2014 and 2016) is above the national average (39.7). Other public health indicators that are worse in West Oxfordshire than the national average include estimated diabetes diagnosis rate, and alcohol specific hospital stays in under 18s.
- 8% of children are **living in poverty** in West Oxfordshire, in comparison to 10.1% across Oxfordshire.
- Among adults in West Oxfordshire, 23.5% are classified as **obese** (slightly lower than the national average of 24% although considerably higher than adult obesity in Oxford City at 16.4%). Nearly 15% of children at year 6 age (11/12 years old) are classified as obese, somewhat lower than the national average of 20%. 7% of children at reception year age (4/5 years old) are obese, again lower than the average across England at 9.6%.

¹⁵ Provided by Oxfordshire County Council, available at: <https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/joint-strategic-needs-assessment>

2 Healthy Towns and Villages

Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone

What's happened in 2018/19?

- 350m² additional healthcare space was permitted in the 2018/19 period, including two schemes in Witney and one scheme in Carterton:

Parish	Description	Area (m ²)
Witney	Single storey extension to existing MIU unit to provide additional waiting room area, clinic room and associated facilities	284
Carterton	Erection of single storey front extension to enlarge existing Dental Surgery.	10
Witney	Change of use of ground floor from retail to chiropractic consultation and treatment.	56

- 3,912m² additional leisure floor space was permitted in the 2018/19 period, including the now completed extension to the Carterton Leisure Centre and four other schemes:

Parish	Description	Area (m ²)
Hailey	Extension to clubhouse with viewing platform above	150
Aston	Construction of new children's playground	221
Carterton	Alterations and extensions to existing leisure centre, creation of new parking	2064
Clanfield	Change of use from Car Sales/Motorhome Hire to Boxing and Fitness Gym/ Motorhome Hire (Retrospective).	453
Chipping Norton	Store room extension to pro shop	24

- There were 943,516 visits to the district's main leisure centres (Windrush, Chipping Norton, Carterton and Bartholomew) excluding school visits. The following leisure centre developments were completed:
 - The second phase of the Carterton Leisure Centre development was completed and opened in July 2019.
 - Gym extensions at both Windrush Leisure Centre, Witney and the Chipping Norton Leisure Centre including a designated spin studio at the Windrush centre.
 - The conversion of the Witney Artificial Turf Pitch to a 3G surface completed and opened in March 2018.
 - In April 2019 the Chipping Norton MUGA was upgraded to an artificial turf surface.
 - Provision of an artificial turf pitch located at Bartholomew School, Eynsham.

- Members of the Growth Board, officers from the Growth Deal Core Team, County and District leads for each of the four work streams, relevant Councillors, and colleagues from health and social care came together in June 2019 to participate in a half day workshop on healthy place shaping.
- £102m Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) funding was secured for investing in improvements to the A40 following a successful A40 Smart Corridor bid put together in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council.
- In September 2019, a four part Transport Infrastructure Study for Hanborough Station was published as part of the supporting evidence base for the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Area Action Plan, identifying a series of potential short and long-term enhancements to station facilities and supporting infrastructure.
- In June 2019, consultants acting on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council submitted a planning application to the County Council for the proposed Park and Ride site on the A40 to the north-west of Eynsham.

Local Plan Core Objectives for strong market towns and villages:

- CO1** Enable new development, services and facilities of an appropriate scale and type in locations which will help improve the quality of life of local communities and where the need to travel, particularly by car, can be minimised
- CO2** Ensure that new developments are suitably located and well designed to protect and enhance the individual form, character and identity of our towns and villages as well as contributing to the quality of life in West Oxfordshire.
- CO3** Promote safe, vibrant and prosperous town and village centres and resist proposals that would damage their vitality and viability or adversely affect measures to improve those centres.

2 Healthy Towns and Villages

Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone

What's on the horizon?

- The Council is committed to working collaboratively with the health and voluntary sector and local communities to enhance the health and wellbeing of West Oxfordshire's residents.
- A Health and Wellbeing Strategy to be prepared with timescales to be confirmed.
- The Council's community grant programme will be reviewed and criteria updated where necessary to ensure alignment with the Council Plan priorities.
- The final task within the Council's 2011 Leisure Facilities Action Plan is to investigate options and make recommendations for the future of the Windrush Leisure Centre, Witney. Feasibility work is currently underway and officers anticipate reporting the recommendations to Cabinet in the autumn 2020 following the completion of consultant led studies.
- In addition to the above Windrush Leisure Centre feasibility work, a revised Leisure Built Facilities Strategy will be worked up in the coming months and anticipated to be reported to Cabinet in the Autumn. This strategy will form the blueprint for the future of the District Council's leisure provision, ensuring that any investment meets local strategic outcomes and community needs.
- A Playing Pitch Strategy is anticipated to be finalised in Spring 2021.
- It is the ambition of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050¹⁶ to plan for and shape communities to actively promote health and well-being. Through healthy place shaping and working in partnership, the aim is to create sustainable, well-designed, distinctive places where healthy behaviours are the norm and which provide a sense of belonging and safety, as well as a sense of community. The Plan will create a strategic planning policy framework which will provide an evidenced based and supportive context for Oxfordshire local authorities to include relevant healthy place shaping planning policies and principles within their respective local plans and planning documents.
- Consultants have recently been appointed to undertake a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of the emerging Oxfordshire Plan 2050. The HIA will assess the Plan against health determinants in all forms, and where necessary provide recommendations and mitigations to ensure that opportunities to improve health are maximised and adverse health impacts are either reduced or eliminated. The HIA is expected to be completed by May 2020. The consultants will also be producing: a toolkit for use by Oxfordshire Local Planning Authorities when assessing major planning applications; and setting out a standard methodology for HIA s of District Local Plans and of major developments.
- The District Council is proposing to host a Member Seminar, followed by an Officer Masterclass, with the aim of:
 - Identifying the key health and wellbeing challenges that West Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire face
 - Introducing the concept of 'healthy place-shaping' and
 - Exploring ways to embed this in all the Council does
- The District Council will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to progress key infrastructure projects including those identified in the District Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and highlighted as part of the County Council's adopted and emerging Local Transport Plans.
- A second round of formal public consultation (Regulation 18 part 2) on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is anticipated in autumn 2020.

¹⁶Further information available at: <https://oxfordshireplan.org/>

3 A Vibrant District Economy

Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy



Background Context

- West Oxfordshire has a **strong and diverse economy** and one of the lowest **unemployment rates** in the country.
- According to the latest ONS experimental estimates of regional gross value added (GVA) (balanced) by industry, **GVA** in West Oxfordshire totalled £2.38bn in 2018 (provisional estimation)¹⁷. It was estimated that Real Estate and Manufacturing were the largest industry sectors (see figure 7), worth £485m and £411m respectively.
- Previously GVA has typically been used as a measure of productivity at a county and regional level and so a direct comparison / trend analysis of the above figures has not been possible. However, the 2015 West Oxfordshire Economic Snapshot¹⁸ reported on the district's **workforce structure** by industry sector at the time of the last Census (2011). Whilst there was a reported high proportion of employment in the Health, Education, Public Admin & Defence, Wholesale and Retail, and Manufacturing industries; Financial and Real Estate was one of the industries with a lower proportion of the district's workforce (see figure 8).
- The 2015 Economic Snapshot recognised the **potential for growth** in the engineering, motorsport and food production sectors.

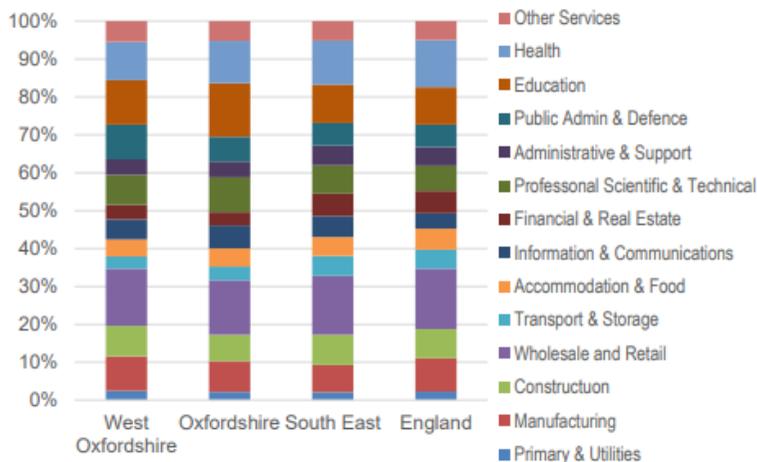


Figure 8: Industrial Structure of West Oxfordshire workforce (Census 2011)¹⁹

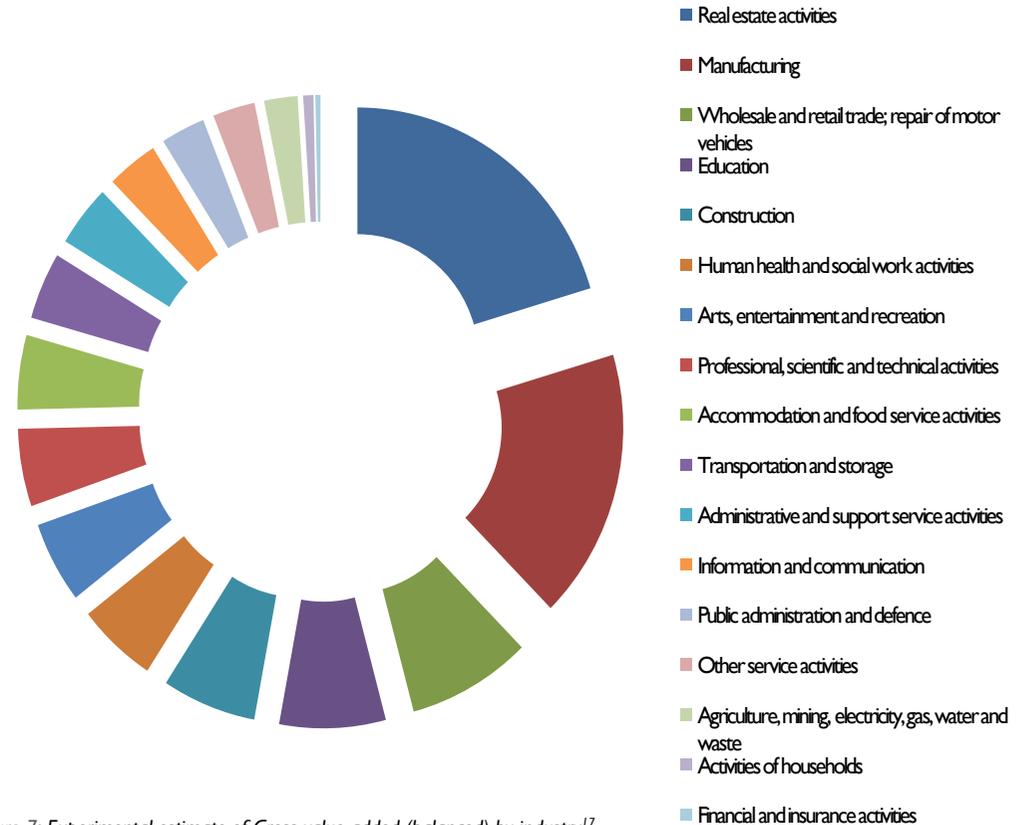


Figure 7: Experimental estimate of Gross value added (balanced) by industry¹⁷

- Launched in September 2019, the **Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (OxLIS)**²⁰ responds to the UK Industrial Strategy which aims to increase growth and productivity across the country and create more prosperous communities. The OxLIS presents a long-term framework against which private and public sector investment decisions can be assessed and there are a number of specific opportunities for West Oxfordshire, including:
 - The West Oxfordshire Science Park (part of the proposed Garden Village) and the Carterton & RAF Brize Norton Industrial Hub identified within a proposed network of global hubs and international clusters.
 - Involvement in the establishment of a Data and Mobility Living Lab

¹⁷ONS data available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossvalueadded/gva>

¹⁸Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/svbpu22/west-oxfordshire-economic-snapshot-jan-2015.pdf>

¹⁹Available at: <https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/lis>

3 A Vibrant District Economy

Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy



Background Context

- In 2018, West Oxfordshire had **45,000 employees**, 2,000 more than in 2016²⁰.
- In 2019, nearly 90% of businesses in West Oxfordshire employed up to 9 employees (micro-businesses). There were 20 businesses employing over 250 people, including Owen Mumford, Siemens and Renault FI.
- 87.6% of West Oxfordshire residents aged 16 - 64 are **economically active** and of persons in employment nearly a quarter are in professional occupations.

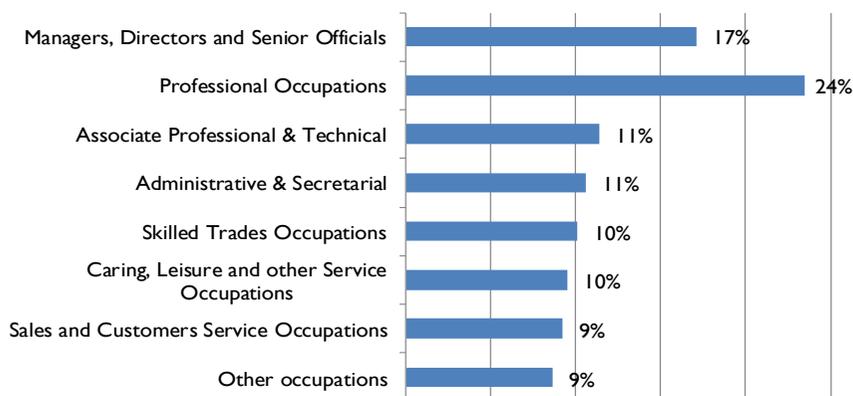


Figure 9: West Oxfordshire workforce by occupation²⁰

- In West Oxfordshire, enterprises have an average of 1.1 **local units**, lower than the national average.
- West Oxfordshire's **town centres** continue to face challenges of remaining competitive in a modern market with new technologies and spending behaviours, competition from out of town retail and leisure destinations. In particular, Witney has experienced an increase in vacant retail units within the town centre, with 21 units currently being unoccupied (6.1% of total number of units).
- The 2015 West Oxfordshire Economic Snapshot²¹ provides the most up to date detailed account of the **key employment locations** across the district. A high-level assessment of these key sites was undertaken in terms of their location, utility and quality (see figure 10). Sites in Carterton, Witney and Eynsham scored particularly well. Further, at the time of the last Census (2011), 18% of employed residents in West Oxfordshire worked mainly at or from home, which had seen an upward trend.

Centre	Sites	Location	Utility	Quality	Total
Carterton	Carterton South Industrial Estate	0	-1	-1	-2
	Ventura Park	1	1	1	3
	West Oxfordshire Business Park	1	1	1	3
Chipping Norton	Elmsfield Industrial Estate, Primsdown Industrial Estate, Station Road Industrial Estate, Worcester Road Industrial Estate	0	1	0	1
	Cromwell Park	1	1	1	3
Eynsham	Oasis Business Park	1	1	1	3
	Elm Place	1	1	1	3
	Oakfields Industrial Estate	1	1	1	3
	Old Station Way	1	1	1	3
Long Hanborough	Hanborough Business Park	1	0	0	1
	Blenheim Office Park	1	1	1	3
Stanton Harcourt	Lakeside Industrial Estate	1	1	1	3
	Stanton Harcourt Industrial Estate	1	1	1	3
Witney	Bromag Industrial Park	0	1	0	1
	De Havilland Way	1	1	1	3
	Eagle Industrial Estate	-1	1	0	0
	Newland Industrial Estate	-1	0	0	-1
	Range Road	1	1	1	3
	Station Lane	0	1	0	1
	Windrush Industrial Park	1	1	1	3
	Network Point	1	1	1	3
	Compton Hay, Des Roches Square, Meadow Court, Spinners Yard, Thorney Leys, Waterside Court, Witney Office Village	1	1	1	3
	Blenheim Palace Sawmill, Cliefield Workshops, Crawley Mill	1	1	1	3
Remote	Enstone Business Park	1	1	0	2
	Langston Priory, Threshers Yard, Mount Manor	1	1	1	3
	Southill Business Park	0	1	1	2
	Groves Timber Yard	-1	-1	-1	-3
	Minster Lovell	-1	-1	-1	-3
	Wroslyn Road	-1	-1	-1	-3

1 = positive
0 = neutral
-1 = negative

Figure 10: Key employment site assessment²¹

²⁰Business Register of Employment Survey (BRES), Nomis, Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/bres>
²¹Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/svbpu22/west-oxfordshire-economic-snapshot-jan-2015.pdf>

3 A Vibrant District Economy

Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy



What's happened in 2018/19?

- A total of 5,965m² (5,584m² net) employment land was permitted in 2018/19, the majority of which (4,267m²) is located within the Eynsham-Woodstock sub-area. In the Witney sub-area a single change of use permission resulted in a small net loss of employment land.
- A total of 16,615m² of permitted employment floorspace was completed. Only within the Witney and Eynsham-Woodstock sub-areas was there a loss of employment floorspace through completed changes of use between non-residential uses and completed change of use from employment to residential use. In the Witney sub-area, 4540m² (3576m² net) employment floorspace was completed. In the Eynsham-Woodstock sub-area, 4610m² (1310m² net) employment floorspace was completed.
- Permitted changes of use to residential in 2018-19 would result in a loss of 885m² employment floorspace, including three office to residential schemes approved under permitted development in Witney, Carterton and Kingham and one storage (B8) to residential scheme in Eynsham.
- Policy EI sets out the quantum of land available for business development at Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton and Eynsham. There were no new permissions on allocated employment sites in 2018/19 however the following status of land detailed in Policy EI can be updated, as at 31 March 2019, as follows:

Sub Area	Location	Site Type	Site Area (Ha)	Updated Planning Status/Development Progress 2018/19
Witney	West of Downs Road, Witney	Industrial	2.10	Previous Local Plan allocation. No current planning status.
Witney	Land at Witney Football Club	Office	0.40	Residential element of permission under construction. Permitted employment development not yet started
Witney	East of Downs Road, South of Burford Road	Commercial	1.81	Development completed
Witney	Land east of De Havilland Way	Business Park	0.47	Previous Local Plan allocation. No current planning status.
Witney	West Witney SDA	Mixed use	10.00	Residential element of permission under construction. Permitted employment development not yet started
Witney	Former Supergas site, west of Downs Road	Industrial	1.15	Previous Local Plan allocation. No current planning status.
Witney	Land Adjacent to Stewart Milne Timber, West of Downs Road	Storage and distribution	0.85	Development completed
Carterton	West Oxfordshire Business Park	Business Park	1.87	Partly completed
Carterton	West Oxfordshire Business Park	Business Park	0.58	Development completed
Carterton	Ventura Park, Carterton	Business Park	0.43	Partly completed
Carterton	Land east of Carterton	Mixed use	1.50	Permission granted
Chipping Norton	Cromwell Park, Chipping Norton	Office	0.13	Part of WOLP 2031 allocation (CNI)
Chipping Norton	Land north of London Road, Chipping Norton	Business Park	9.00	Part of WOLP 2031 allocation (CNI)
Eynsham	Land north of the A40	Science Park	40.00	Allocated in WOLP 2031

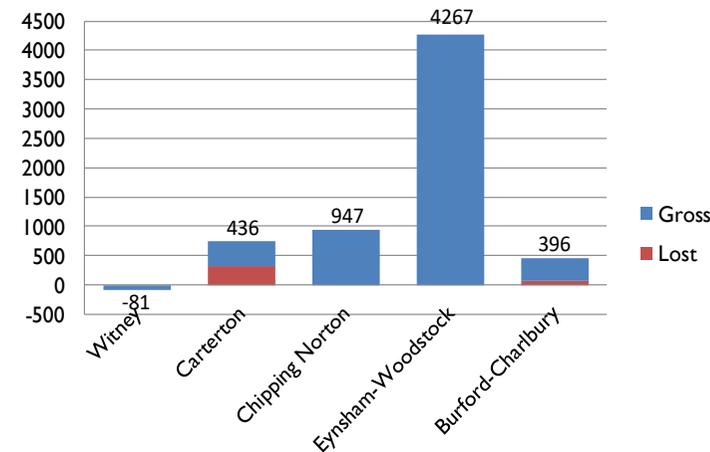


Figure 11: Employment floorspace permitted (m²) in 2018/19

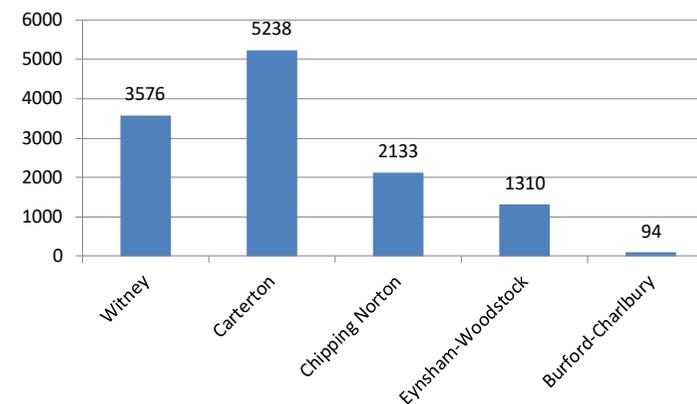


Figure 12: Employment floorspace completed (net) (m²) in 2018/19

3 A Vibrant District Economy

Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy



What's happened in 2018/19?

- A total of 2 change of use schemes from employment to residential completed in the monitoring period resulting in a loss of 932m² (384 m² of office floorspace and 548 m² of industrial floorspace). Both schemes located in Witney.
- In the main towns of West Oxfordshire (Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton, Burford and Woodstock), just 53m² of retail floorspace was permitted (minor extensions of existing units in Witney and Chipping Norton), however conversion/change of uses permitted in the main towns meant that there would be an overall net loss of 382m² of retail floorspace.
- Outside of the main towns, 532m² of A1 retail floorspace was permitted. However the permitted loss from a single development in North Leigh would result in a net gain of only 16m².
- A total of 27 schemes were granted permission during the monitoring period for tourism related developments. Most of these related to the provision of hotel and holiday accommodation.
- In 2018/19, there was an increase of 11% (against a baseline of 342) in members of the Cotswolds Tourism Partnership.

	A1 shops	A2 Financial and professional services	A3 Restaurants and cafes	A4 drinking establishments	A5 Hot food takeaways	TOTAL
2018-19						
Witney	36 (-216 net)					36 (-216 net)
Carterton	0 (-93 net)				90 (90 net)	90 (-3 net)
Chipping Norton	17 (17 net)					17 (17 net)
Burford	0 (-90 net)		90 (90 net)			0
Woodstock						0
Other settlements	532 (16 net)		46 (46 net)			578 (62 net)
TOTAL	585 (-366 net) 0		136 (136 net) 0		90 (90 net)	811 (-140 net)

Figure 13: Floorspace (m²) for shops and other town centre uses granted planning permission for main towns in West Oxfordshire 2018/19

- A total of 27 schemes were granted permission during the monitoring period for tourism related developments. Most of these related to the provision of hotel and holiday accommodation.
- In 2018/19, there was an increase of 11% (against a baseline of 342) in members of the Cotswolds Tourism Partnership.

Local Plan Core Objectives for sustainable economic growth:

- CO7** To support sustainable economic growth which adds value to the local economy, improves the balance between housing and local jobs, provides a diversity of local employment opportunities, capitalises on economic growth in adjoining areas, improves local skills and work readiness, removes potential barriers to investment and provides flexibility to adapt to changing economic needs.
- CO8** To enable a prosperous and sustainable tourism economy

4 Strong Local Communities

Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive communities

Background Context

- There are roughly 130 separate towns, villages and hamlets scattered across the district with 83 parishes.
- The proportion of people **'satisfied'** with their neighbourhood' (90.2%) is higher than the Oxfordshire average (86.5%)
- **Council tax** in West Oxfordshire is the second lowest nationally.
- Since being introduced through the Localism Act 2011, there have been 10 Neighbourhood Planning areas designated in West Oxfordshire and of these there are 5 'made' (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans as at February 2020 including Eynsham, South Leigh, Hailey, Shilton and Chipping Norton.
- There are 16 **community transport schemes** operating throughout West Oxfordshire²².
- West Oxfordshire has maintained its position within the top (best) quartile of all **crime per 1,000 population** within the Thames Valley for at least five consecutive monitoring years.
- Based on the MHCLG **Index of Deprivation**²³, a greater percentage of Lower Super Output Areas in West Oxfordshire were within the 40% most deprived in 2019 (see figure 14) than in 2015. However, on the whole, the district remains largely within the least deprived local authority areas in the country.

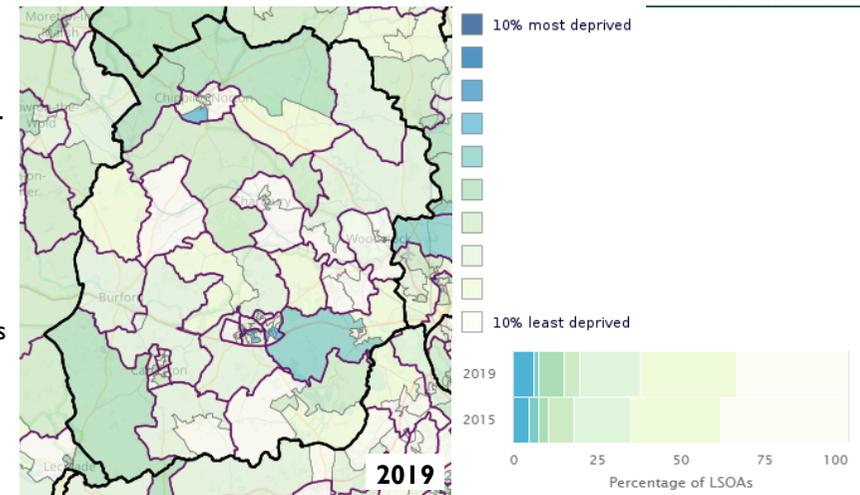


Figure 14: Index of deprivation scoring for West Oxfordshire(2019)²³

What's happened in 2018/19?

- The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new Community Right referred to as the Community Right to Bid which allows Town and Parish Councils and defined community groups to ask the Council to list certain assets as being of community value. In the year 2018/19, there was 1 new listing of an Asset of Community Value bringing the total to 8²⁴.
- In 2018/19, South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan was formally made part of the district's development plan. Since then, in September 2019, Neighbourhood Plans for both Hailey and Shilton have been formally made and, in February 2020, the Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan was the latest to have been made part of the development plan for West Oxfordshire.
- A total of £2.45m was collected in 2018/19 through Section 106 agreements (un-related to affordable housing).
- The Council awarded the following grant funding in 2018/19: £6,090 Communities Activities Grant, £410 Individual Development Grants and (in June and November 2018) £89,462.06 Communities Facilities Grants.
- The following Town and Parish Forums were held:
 - February 2019 - Re-launched the forum, sought input into the Council's priorities for the emerging Council Plan
 - October 2019 - Focus on Climate and Biodiversity Action with External Speaker from Oxfordshire County Council's Environment Strategy Manager.
- In the year to September 2019, there were 44 recorded crimes per 1,000 population, the third lowest rate by Local Authority area in the Thames Valley.

²²2019/20 Oxfordshire Community Transport Directory
²³Index of Deprivation (MHCLG, 2019). Available at: http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html

²⁴Full listing available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/residents/communities/community-rights/>

4 Strong Local Communities

Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive communities

What's happened in 2018/19?

- 222m² community use floorspace was permitted from two schemes (alterations and extensions to Northmoor village hall, and a community use building as part of the former Stanton Harcourt Airfield redevelopment scheme).
- 122m² floorspace for community use was lost from an individual change of use development at North Leigh Methodist Church.
- 567m² additional floorspace for educational uses was permitted.

Local Plan Core Objectives for sustainable communities with access to services and facilities:

- CO9** Promote inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free communities.
- CO10** Ensure that land is not released for new development until the supporting infrastructure and facilities are secured.
- CO11** Maximise the opportunity for walking, cycling and use of public transport.
- CO12** Look to maintain or improve where possible the health and wellbeing of the District's residents through increased choice and quality of shopping, leisure, recreation, arts, cultural and community facilities.
- CO13** Plan for enhanced access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.

What's on the horizon?

- The Council will continue to ensure development supports the provision of local services and infrastructure by securing contributions via Section 106 planning obligations. A Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is anticipated to be adopted by autumn 2020 and will provide further guidance on the Council's approach towards the use and inter-relationship between planning obligations, planning conditions and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- Consultation on a new draft CIL Charging Schedule (DCS) followed by submission for examination and adoption during 2020.
- In accordance with Government Regulations the Council will, by no later than 31st December 2020, publish an Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement. In addition to providing summary details of any non-monetary contributions to be provided under planning obligations, this will also include a report of the amount of money:
 - to be provided under any planning obligations which were entered into during the reported year
 - received under any planning obligations during the reported year
 - (received under planning obligations) which was spent by the authority (including transferring it to another person to spend)
 - (received under planning obligations) which was allocated but not spent during the reported year.
- The Parish Survey 2020 will be used to gain an insight into the challenges and changes facing our local communities, and to inform an update of the Council's Settlement Sustainability report (2016).
- Town and Parish Forum will continue to be held bi-annually with the next scheduled forum for Spring 2020²⁵ seeking input on the Health and Wellbeing Council priority with a focus on community safety/safeguarding.
- In addition to working in collaboration with major landowners in the district (further details in the following section), WODC are also working closely with local communities on the delivery of community led housing and self-build opportunities and have 2 sites that are currently undergoing feasibility work.
- WODC continues to support designated Neighbourhood Planning bodies in their preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. Five further Neighbourhood Plans are currently in progress (Brize Norton, Broadwell, Charlbury, Milton-under-Wychwood, Woodstock).

²⁵At the time of drafting this report this event's postponement has been announced.

5 Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population

Securing the provision of market and affordable housing of a high quality for the wide range of householders making their home in West Oxfordshire



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Background Context

- There are approximately 49,000 **households** in West Oxfordshire, with around 900 Ministry of Defence dwellings (estimation based on a combination of Council Tax and Electoral roll data).
- As of February 2020 there were 2,042 households on the **housing waiting list**, with over half of these requiring a 1 bedroom property. A further 30.26% of households on the register required a 2 bed property. 11.31% required 3 bedrooms, 3.53% required 4 bedrooms and only 0.98% required 5 or more bedrooms.
- The **average house price** in West Oxfordshire was £309,952 at January 2020, 4.8% lower than the average house price in January 2019 (£325,502)²⁶.
- In 2018, full-time workers could expect to pay 11.6 times their annual work-place based earnings on purchasing a home in West Oxfordshire. This had increased from 2011 where the **property price to earnings ratio** was 9.1, and in 1997 where the ratio was 5.1²⁷.
- The most recent assessment of **housing need** in West Oxfordshire identifies an objectively assessed need (OAN) for 660 homes per year from 2011 to 2031. Within this, the SHMA identified a need for 274 affordable homes each year (excluding existing commitments).

- The West Oxfordshire Local Plan sets out that provision will be made for at least 15,950 new homes in the period 2011 - 2031, phased as follows:

	West Oxon's needs	Oxford City's needs	Combined annual requirement
2011 - 17	550 per annum		550 per annum
2017 - 18	550		550
2018 - 19	550		550
2019 - 20	550		550
2020 - 21	550		550
2021 - 22	525	275	800
2022 - 23	525	275	800
2023 - 34	700	275	975
2024 - 25	850	275	1125
2025 - 26	850	275	1125
2026 - 27	850	275	1125
2027 - 28	850	275	1125
2028 - 29	850	275	1125
2029 - 30	850	275	1125
2030 - 31	850	275	1125
Totals	13,200	2,750	15,950

Local Plan Core Objectives for meeting the housing needs of our communities:

- CO4** Locate new residential development where it will best help to meet housing needs and reduce the need to travel
- CO5** Plan for the timely delivery of new housing to meet forecast needs and support sustainable economic growth.
- CO6** Plan for an appropriate mix of new residential accommodation which provides a variety of sizes, types and affordability with special emphasis on the provision of homes for local people in housing need who cannot afford to buy or rent at market prices including those wishing to self-build, as well as homes to meet the needs of older people, younger people, black and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, families and travelling communities.

- Over the last 8 monitoring years (2011—2019) there have been the following **residential permissions and completions**:
 - 8168 dwellings granted permission; an average of 1021 per year
 - 3351 new homes completed; a yearly average of 419
- The Council is required to maintain, and update annually, a register of **Brownfield sites** that are appropriate for residential development and meet a number of criteria set by the government. The West Oxfordshire Brownfield Register, updated in December 2019, contains 21 sites with a potential for between 913 and 1,013 dwellings to come forward over the plan period to 2031.
- There is a theoretical need for around 19 **Gypsy and Traveller pitches** for the period to 2031 however the requirement is likely to be much lower²⁸. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 includes provision for at least 5 pitches and 5 plots between 2016 and 2031.
- As of 1st April 2019 there were a total of 526 registrations on the West Oxfordshire **Self-build** and Custom Housebuilding Register.
- At April 2019, there were 34 **care home beds** per 100 people aged 85, over and above both the regional and national averages (both 31).

²⁶UK House Price Index. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-house-price-index-england-january-2020/uk-house-price-index-england-january-2020>

²⁷Office for National Statistics. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/housingaffordabilityinenglandandwales/2018>

²⁸based on national evidence on those meeting the government's definition of travelling communities being only 10%

5 Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population

Securing the provision of market and affordable housing of a high quality for the wide range of householders making their home in West Oxfordshire



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

What's happened in 2018/19?

- 813 new homes were completed in 2018/19. This exceeds the Local Plan housing requirement of 550 homes for the monitoring year (West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, Policy H2).
- 153 (19%) of completed dwellings were on previously developed (brownfield) land.
- Of the dwellings completed in 2018/19, 294 were on allocated sites. This included the last 74 dwellings of phase one of the Swinbrook Road (North East Carterton) development and the first 220 dwellings at North Curbridge (West Witney).
- The total number of affordable housing completions in 2018/19 was 227 (30% of overall completions).
- 460 dwellings were granted permission, (a net total of 311, taking account of superseded permissions / amended schemes resulting in a net change of extant permissions). This includes 6 dwellings (separate individual schemes) granted via the appeals process.
- 142 (31%) of dwellings granted permission were on previously developed (brownfield) sites.
- The breakdown of residential permissions by property size revealed a larger proportion of smaller properties (1 and 2 bedrooms) and fewer larger 4+ bed homes compared to the Local Plan's indicative housing mix guidelines, as set out below.

Local Plan 2031 property size guidelines	4.8% 1 bed	27.9% 2 bed	43.4% 3 bed	23.9% 4+ bed
Housing permissions 2018 -19 property sizes	15.3%	23%	46.5%	15.27%

- The Council's October 2019 Housing Land Supply Position Statement demonstrates that using the Liverpool (residual) methodology and 5% buffer, the Council can demonstrate a 6.8 year supply of deliverable housing sites over the 5-year period 2019 - 2024.
- Between 1 April 2018 and 22 November 2018, there were 22 entries onto the Council's Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register. Between 22 November 2018 and 31 March 2019, there were 102 entries, the considerable increase likely a result of increased publicity of the Register.
- No additional sites were built for Gypsies during the monitoring period. A new site for Travelling Showpeople began construction in 2018 which will provide 6 new plots.

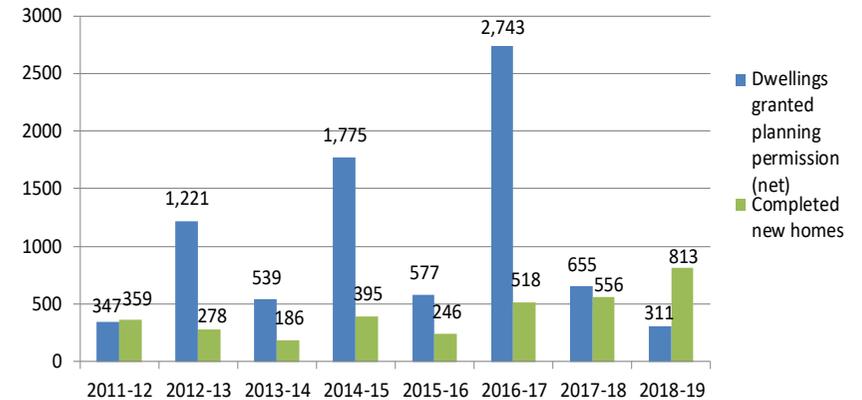


Figure 15: Residential permissions and completions 2011 - 2019

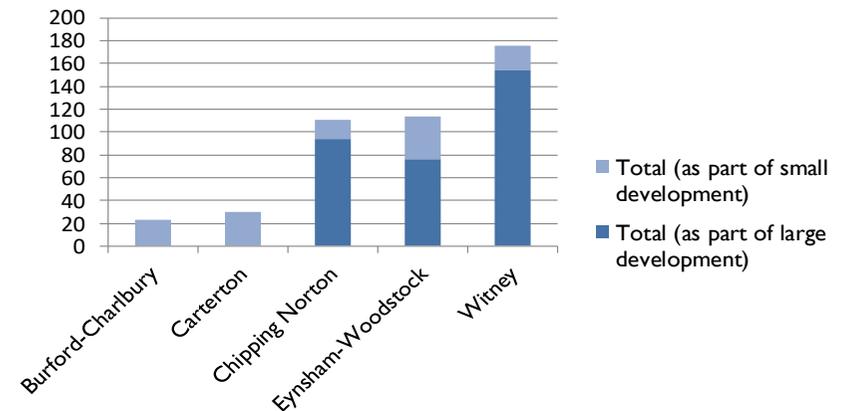


Figure 16: Dwellings granted permission 2018/19 by size and sub-area

- No households were reported to be in emergency accommodation over the period 2018/19. Nonetheless, accommodation at Horse Fair in Chipping Norton "opened" on 28 March 2019 and is providing five bedrooms in the main house with shared facilities and one self-contained unit.

5 Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population

Securing the provision of market and affordable housing of a high quality for the wide range of householders making their home in West Oxfordshire



What's on the horizon?

- The emerging Area Action Plan (AAP) for the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) for the four Strategic Development Areas (West Eynsham, East Chipping Norton, East Witney and North Witney), will establish how the housing needs (including affordable housing needs) of the district will be met on these sites.
- The Council continues to monitor whether the supply of deliverable housing sites is sufficient to meet the housing requirement as set out in the Local Plan. An update of the Council's Housing Land Supply Position Statement, to cover the five year period 2020 to 2025, will be published by December 2020.
- The Council will complete its update of the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) which will also inform the next update of the Council's Brownfield Register to be published by 31 December 2020.
- WODC and Blenheim have developed a new approach to delivering affordable housing where properties are available at up to 60% below local market value. This new approach demonstrates how the Council, working in partnership with a local landowner, can deliver truly affordable homes in perpetuity for local people. The model has been successfully launched on 2 sites with further sites under discussion. Following on from the launch event discussions have taken place with a number of other major landowners interested in developing land for affordable housing and it is hoped more sites will come forward in due course.
- A report has recently been commissioned by WODC to set out potential routes for the delivery of Community Led Housing on strategic sites, in particular the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village. Groups operating as a Community Land Trust will be considered under the Council's Self-build allocation.
- An assessment of future housing needs in Oxfordshire to be undertaken as part of the evidence base supporting the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

6 Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance

Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council

Background Context

- West Oxfordshire District Council, remains committed to delivering excellent **services** to its local communities.
- Since 2017, the Council has been one of the four Member Councils of **Publica**, a company created to assist the Councils to:

- Respond to current and future financial pressures
- Deliver efficient, value for money services using technology in a connected world
- Increase organisational resilience and capacity by sharing expertise
- Deliver better outcomes for our communities
- Champion local needs

- Although the introduction of Publica has seen a joined up approach to service delivery across the Member Councils, one of the key expectations was that Councils would retain their separate identities as individual authorities with decision making remaining locally accountable. The implementation of the planning process is one such function which continues to operate at a local geography. The **West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031** was adopted by the Council on 27 September 2018 and sets out the overall planning framework for the district from 2011 to 2031. At present the Council has two adopted SPDs (Supplementary Planning Documents). These are the West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD (adopted in 2016) and the Affordable Housing SPD (adopted in 2007).
- Over the past five years 81% of **planning applications** were determined by the Council in the target timescale (see annual break-down in figure 17).
- The Council also provides a Building Regulation (Control) approval service, including Full Plan checks and Building Notices (typically for smaller works) and over a thousand applications are processed a year. Over the past five years 73% of **Building Control** Full Plans were checked within 21 calendar days of receipt (see annual break-down in figure 18)²⁹.
- As of 31 January 2019, West Oxfordshire District Council owned 248 land/building holdings, of which 215 were freeholds, 30 were leaseholds and 3 were other types of holdings. The list of the Council's land and buildings is published on the Council's website each year³⁰.

Publica is a council owned employment company which delivers shared services between Cotswold, West Oxfordshire, and Forest of Dean District Councils and Cheltenham Borough Council. Publica additionally provides services to the Cheltenham Trust, Cheltenham Borough Homes and UBICO (an environmental services local authority company). Each of the councils and clients retain their independence and identity but by working together and sharing resources seek to maximise mutual benefit, leading to more efficient, effective delivery of local services.

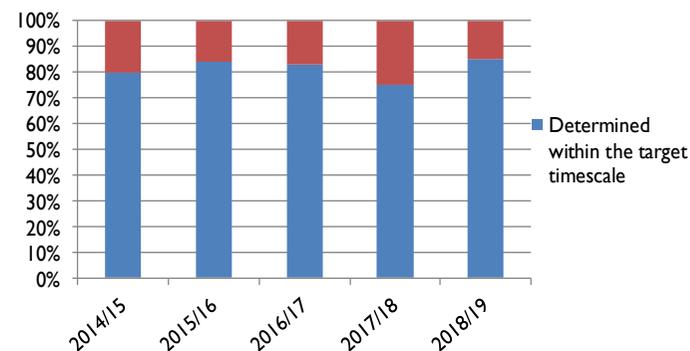


Figure 17: Planning application determinations

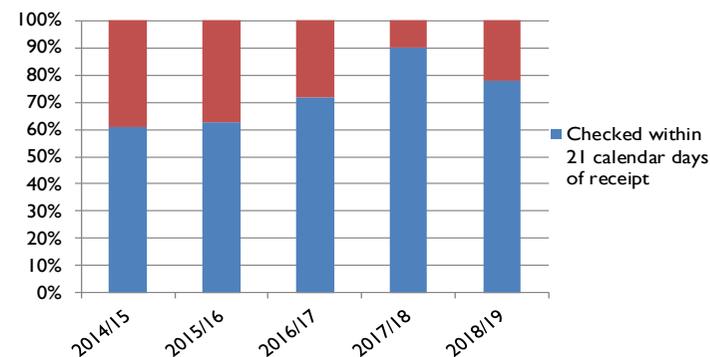


Figure 18: Building Control Full Plan checks

²⁹See Annual Performance Summaries for full commentary on these figures. Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/about-the-council/council-performance-and-spending/council-performance/>
³⁰Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/business-support-and-advice/commercial-property/>

6 Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance

Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council



What's happened in 2018/19?

- No new SPDs were adopted during the monitoring period 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019. However, the Council's current LDS (Dec 2019) identifies seven future SPDs to be prepared. The Council made the following progress in respect of the preparation of the proposed SPDs and the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Area Action Plan. For further information and document timetables in full, please refer to the Council's Local Development Scheme approved in January 2020³¹.

Document	Purpose of document	Progress to date
Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)	Will form part of the statutory development plan for West Oxfordshire, alongside the Local Plan 2031, to lead the development of the garden village allocated as a Strategic Location for Growth (SLG) in the Local Plan.	An initial consultation took place from June – August 2018 followed by consultation on 'preferred options' from August – October 2019.
West Eynsham Development Framework (SPD)	West Eynsham, East Chipping Norton, East Witney and North Witney are all allocated as Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) in the Local Plan 2031. The purpose of the proposed Development Framework for each site is to set out the Council's main aims and objectives for each site and the key parameters within which developers will be expected to work to bring the sites forward in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.	Initial consultation held in August – September 2018
East Chipping Norton Development Framework (SPD)		Initial consultation held in January – March 2019
East Witney Development Framework (SPD)		Initial consultation held in June – July 2019
North Witney Development Framework (SPD)		<i>Preliminary consultation anticipated Summer 2020</i>
Developer Contributions SPD	Intended to provide additional clarity on the use of planning obligations and CIL.	<i>Preliminary consultation anticipated Summer 2020</i>
Affordable Housing SPD	Will provide additional detail in respect of the delivery of affordable housing – a key issue for West Oxfordshire.	<i>Preliminary consultation anticipated Summer 2020</i>
Woodstock Infrastructure Delivery Strategy (SPD)	Intended to build on work previously commissioned by the Blenheim Estate through Community First Oxfordshire to identify the infrastructure improvements that are needed to support planned growth at Woodstock and how these can be funded and delivered in a coordinated and efficient manner.	<i>Preliminary consultation anticipated Summer 2020</i>

³¹West Oxfordshire Local Development Scheme Dec 2019 available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/wbkbuy2c/local-development-scheme.pdf>

6 Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance

Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council

What's happened in 2018/19?

- In October 2018, the Council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to conduct a Corporate Peer Challenge³² which provided 9 key recommendations to the Council, including the need to develop a new Council Plan, and a number of recommended actions in relation to Publica Transformation. This included the need for a Communication and Engagement Plan, the review and strengthening of governance in relationship to Publica and continued work on a People Plan to support staff through change and adapting to new ways of working.
- The Council's customer services migrated onto a new "Salesforce" platform in April/May 2019.
- A total of 1,324 planning applications were determined in 2018-19, 85% of which were determined within the target timescale (up 10% from 2017-18). 7% of applications were refused.
- 77.71% of building control full plans were checked within 21 calendar days of receipt.
- 97% of land charge searches were completed within ten working days.
- Section 110 of the Localism Act sets out a 'duty to co-operate' which essentially means that local planning authorities and other 'prescribed bodies' must engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to address cross-boundary issues of strategic importance such as housing and transport.
 - The Council continues to actively engage with the other Oxfordshire Authorities³³ and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on various spatial planning and infrastructure matters (including the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and delivery of all other components of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal).
 - With regards to the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, discussions have also been had with Gloucestershire County Council, Cotswold District Council, the Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and other duty to cooperate bodies.
 - The Council is also involved in ongoing discussions with Oxford City Council in respect of the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP).
- The Council operates a rolling 10 year Medium Term Financial Strategy, the latest being approved by Cabinet on 13th February 2019 which confirms that the Council has robust and affordable plans to ensure the Council remains financially viable for the duration of the 2019 - 2029 period.
- The Council also reported its Annual Statement of Accounts for 2018/19³⁴ including a Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Movement in Reserves Statement, Cash Flow Statement, Collection Fund and Annual Governance Statement. Key headlines include: a surplus for the year of £199,622 against a budget strategy which assumed a balanced budget with a contribution to reserves of £199,159; a £4.3m Capital Investment Spend; and an increase of Net Assets in the year by approximately £9m. Please refer to the Annual Statement for full details.
- The websites of each Publica Councils were updated to align with the latest accessibility standards and to meet the needs of our customers by providing information in the best possible format, irrespective of the device they are using. The design, layout and structure is based upon guidance from Government Digital Service Standards and to ensure that content is understandable, concise and relevant to all users. The updated West Oxfordshire District Council website went live in March 2020.

³²Full report available online [here](#)

³³Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council

³⁴Available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/150fncncelstatement-of-accounts-2018-to-2019.pdf>

6 Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance

Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council

What's on the horizon?

- Future Annual Monitoring Reports will provide an update of progress on the Council Plan objectives more widely, in addition to Local Plan monitoring, and are anticipated to be published by the autumn following the report's monitoring year. The AMR for the monitoring period 2019-2020 is expected to be published by November 2020.
- The Council will publish its updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for the 10 year period 2020 - 2030.
- The Council will review and update its Asset Management Plan with a draft anticipated by autumn 2020.
- Development of a strategy for the management of the Council's Estate will provide further information on the delivery of the Oxfordshire One Public Estate programme³⁵ which is being taken forward in partnership with the other Oxfordshire Councils (Oxfordshire Public Estate Delivery Partnership). Named projects of the programme in West Oxfordshire include; Witney Welch Way, where there is an opportunity to rationalise the multiple public assets, create a community hub and release land; and a review of depot related activity including appraisal of a co-located depot in Witney for district, police and fire services.
- The Council will prepare and adopt a Commissioning Strategy and a Commercial Strategy, the latter by summer 2020.
- Engagement with service users to inform future service redesign.

³⁵Programme provided by Office of Government Property (Cabinet Office) and the Local Government Association. Further details available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/housing-planning-and-homelessness/one-public-estate>