



# **Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan Adoption Statement**

**West Oxfordshire District Council**

**Final report**

Prepared by LUC

January 2026

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# Contents

<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>4</b>
Introduction	4
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>7</b>
How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Area Action Plan	7
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>25</b>
How the Environmental Report has been taken into account	25
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>28</b>
How opinions of consultation bodies and the public have been taken into account	28
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>31</b>
Why the adopted Area Action Plan was chosen in light of the other reasonable alternatives considered	31
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>33</b>
How significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Area Action Plan will be monitored	33
<b>References</b>	<b>38</b>

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

**1.1** West Oxfordshire District Council adopted the Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan ('the AAP') in February 2026.

**1.2** During the preparation of the AAP, West Oxfordshire District Council was required by law to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the AAP as it developed. Both the SA and SEA requirements were met through a single integrated process (referred to as SA), the method and findings of which were described in a number of SA reports and formal addendum notes which were published alongside the different versions of the AAP during its development.

**1.3** Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012) requires West Oxfordshire Council to make the final SA Report available alongside the adopted AAP.

**1.4** The most recent full SA Report is the SA Report relating to the Pre-Submission AAP (August 2020) [CD2] which was submitted alongside the AAP for examination in February 2021.

**1.5** Examination hearings took place in late-June and early-July 2021. Following this, schedules of Main and Minor Modifications to the submitted AAP were prepared and published for public consultation between September and November 2022. An updated SA Addendum Report relating to the proposed Main Modifications [CD8] was prepared and published during the consultation period. That SA Addendum Report presented an appraisal of the AAP as proposed to be modified, updating the appraisal findings presented previously in the August 2020 SA Report.

**1.6** The Inspector's Report was issued in March 2023. It confirmed that an SA of the AAP had been carried out and raised no concerns about the process.

**1.7** However, before the Council was able to adopt the AAP there was a successful legal challenge to the Inspector's Report which necessitated the re-opening of the Examination in April 2024. This was a focussed Examination, to consider only Policy 2 (Net Zero Carbon Development) which was the subject of the legal challenge, and any other consequential revisions to the AAP. To support this stage of work, an SA Addendum Note [ED9C] was prepared which considered the likely effects of the updated version of Policy 2 only. A one-day hearing was held in late-June 2025. Following this, a schedule of Main Modifications to revised Policy 2 of the AAP was prepared and published for public consultation between October and November

2025. An updated SA Addendum Note [ED19] was prepared and consulted on alongside the Main Modifications. The Inspector's Report was published in January 2026 and the amended Policy 2 was incorporated into the AAP for adoption.

**1.8** In the January 2026 Inspector's Report the Inspector confirmed that SA of AAP Policy 2 had been carried out and raised no concerns about the process.

## Requirement for the Adoption Statement

**1.9** In addition to the requirement in Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (England) Regulations (2012) for the final SA report to be published alongside the adopted Plan, the SEA Regulations [See reference 1] also require a number of steps to be taken upon adoption of a plan (in this case the Salt Cross Area Action Plan). Specifically, SEA Regulation 16 sets out the post adoption procedures and requirements for SEA. The planning authority must, as soon as is reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan for which an SA/SEA has been carried out, make a copy of the plan publicly available alongside a copy of the SA report and an 'SEA Adoption Statement', and inform the public, Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency about the availability of these documents. The SEA Adoption Statement must explain:

- How environmental (and sustainability) considerations have been integrated into the Plan.
- How the Environmental Report has been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan.
- How the opinions expressed by the public and consultation bodies during consultation on the plan and the Environmental Report have been taken into account.
- The reasons for choosing the Plan as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives considered.
- The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental and sustainability effects of the implementation of the Plan.

**1.10** As the SEA process was incorporated into the SA process, this document constitutes the SA/SEA Adoption Statement for the Salt Cross AAP. The remainder of the document is structured according to the SEA Regulations requirements listed above as follows:

- **Chapter 2** summarises how environmental considerations have been integrated into the AAP including by explaining who carried out the SA/SEA and what assessment framework was used.
- **Chapter 3** summarises how the Environmental Report has been taken into account, considering the links between the plan-making and SA/SEA processes.
- **Chapter 4** summarises the consultation responses provided on the Environmental Report at each stage and describes how the results were taken into account.
- **Chapter 5** describes why the adopted AAP was chosen, in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with.
- **Chapter 6** describes how the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the AAP will be monitored.

## Chapter 2

# How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Area Action Plan

**2.1** The SA (incorporating SEA) of the Salt Cross AAP dates back to 2018 when LUC (working on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council) commenced work on the SA of the West Eynsham SDA SPD, as the Salt Cross AAP was known at the time. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan which was adopted in September 2018 had allocated the Salt Cross Garden Village site through Policy EW1, with an Area Action Plan to be prepared to lead development of the site.

**2.2** Initial consultation on the AAP took place in June 2018 on an 'Issues Paper'. A number of the consultation questions were open-ended, seeking views and opinions rather than setting out specific options for consideration. However, a number of potential approaches (i.e. policy options) to different ways of developing the AAP site were included. This included initial vision components and three 'spatial framework' options for how development could be distributed at the Garden Village.

**2.3** Whilst the Issues Paper was not subject to SA at the time, the various options contained therein were subsequently assessed as part of the 'Preferred Options' SA Report (July 2019) - see below.

**2.4** Following consultation on the Issues Paper in June 2018, West Oxfordshire District Council prepared an SA Scoping letter for the AAP in October 2018. At the same time, LUC was appointed by West Oxfordshire District Council to carry out the remaining stages of the SA on its behalf and has carried out the SA work since that point, up to and including the preparation of this SA/SEA Adoption Statement.

**2.5** For the drafting of the Scoping Letter, LUC provided a 'critical friend' service to West Oxfordshire District Council. The letter was published for consultation with the statutory bodies between November 2018 and January 2019. Having regard to the consultation responses received, the SA framework was finalised (including the 17 SA objectives to be used to appraise the options for the AAP) and subsequently used to appraise the Council's Preferred Options AAP document.

**2.6** LUC prepared a Preferred Options SA Report (July 2019) which assessed both the earlier options from the 2018 Issues Paper and the AAP Preferred Options themselves. The SA Report was shared in draft with the Council which enabled officers to take into account its findings, along with other relevant considerations including other supporting evidence and previous stakeholder feedback, in finalising the Preferred Options AAP document.

**2.7** LUC prepared a further SA Report in August 2020 relating to the Pre-Submission AAP, which was published alongside the AAP during the consultation period. LUC also prepared the SA Addendum Report relating to the Proposed Modifications (July 2022) which was published as part of the Main Modifications stage of the Examination, as well as the SA Addendum Notes that were prepared to support the focussed examination into Policy 2 (described in **Chapter 1**).

**2.8** The purpose of the SA was to assist West Oxfordshire District Council in preparing the AAP by identifying the key sustainability issues of relevance to the Salt Cross Garden Village site allocation, to predict what the likely effects of the AAP on these issues would be, and to put forward recommendations to mitigate and monitor effects identified. The aim was to help ensure that the AAP has as many positive effects as possible and that any negative effects are avoided or mitigated as far as reasonably possible.

**2.9** The SA was undertaken iteratively, such that at each stage of the AAP's preparation, the sustainability and environmental effects of the options for the AAP were assessed. The SA assessed a range of options, and the Council considered the SA findings to inform which options to take forward and what mitigation may need to be incorporated in the AAP to address any adverse effects identified by the SA. In this way, environmental and sustainability considerations were integrated into the AAP as it was developed. **Chapter 3** expands on how the findings of the SA process have been taken into account through the plan-making process.

**2.10** The way in which the environmental and sustainability effects of the AAP were consistently described, analysed and compared was through the use of a set of SA objectives referred to as an 'SA framework'. The SA framework used to appraise the Salt Cross AAP was developed during the Scoping stage of the SA process in 2018 and was consulted upon as part of the SA Scoping Letter between November 2018 and January 2019. The SA objectives were identified by taking into account the information collated in the review of plans and programmes, baseline analysis, and identification of sustainability issues. A small number of amendments were made to the SA framework following the Scoping consultation in response to comments received but no substantive changes have been made to the objectives since then.

**2.11** The SA framework is presented in **Table 2.1** at the end of this section and was used to test options considered for the AAP. The 'SEA topics' (listed in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations as the topics to be covered in SEAs) were all covered by at least one of the SA objectives, as shown in the final column of **Table 2.1**.

## Habitats Regulations Assessment

**2.12** The Salt Cross AAP was also required to be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The purpose of HRA is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of a European designated site for nature conservation and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site. The HRA process for the AAP was undertaken and reported on separately from the SA although the HRA conclusions were reflected in the SA where relevant.

**2.13** The most recent HRA Report that was submitted alongside the AAP for Examination [EV2] was prepared by LUC on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council in August 2020 in relation to the Pre-Submission AAP. This determined that likely significant effects on European designated sites could not be ruled out, and therefore Appropriate Assessment needed to be undertaken in relation to air pollution at Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Appropriate Assessment concluded that the AAP as proposed to be modified would not result in adverse effects on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC as a result of air pollution, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects.

**2.14** An updated HRA report was then prepared by LUC in July 2022 to consider the implications of the Proposed Main Modifications for the HRA findings reported previously. It concluded that the Main Modifications did not change the conclusions of the August 2020 HRA Report.

**2.15** When the legal challenge regarding Policy 2 led to the focussed re-opening of the Examination of the AAP, the Inspector held that due to the limited scope of Policy 2, with no implications for European sites, a further update to the HRA was not required.

**Table 2.1: SA Framework for the Salt Cross AAP**

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
<p>1. Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed affordable home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide a balanced mix of dwelling types and tenures to meet identified needs including unmet housing need arising from Oxford City, specialist accommodation, self-build and the travelling community.</li> <li>■ Increase affordable housing provision, especially for young people, first-time homeowners and essential local workers.</li> <li>■ Accelerate housing delivery, including affordable housing, in a timely manner (e.g. modular construction, phasing of infrastructure).</li> <li>■ Provide high quality, sustainably constructed, accessible and adaptable new homes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Population &amp; Human Health</li> <li>■ Material Assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensuring a broad mix of housing types and tenures that are genuinely affordable including starter homes and opportunities for self-build</li> <li>■ Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods</li> <li>■ Sustainable scale</li> <li>■ Well-designed places</li> <li>■ Great homes</li> <li>■ Strong local vision and engagement</li> <li>■ Legacy and stewardship arrangements</li> </ul>

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Promote high quality design that protects and enriches the character of the District.</li> </ul>		
<p>2. Improve health and well-being and reduce inequalities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Safeguard key public rights of way and deliver new and enhanced provision as appropriate including multi-use transport networks that are accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and mobility scooter users to increase opportunities for physical activity.</li> <li>■ Ensure the early delivery of health-promoting infrastructure including a network of high-quality green infrastructure to benefit new and existing residents and workers.</li> <li>■ Ensure the availability and accessibility of adequate capacity for primary healthcare.</li> <li>■ Support strong, vibrant and healthy communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Population &amp; Human Health</li> <li>■ Material Assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food</li> <li>■ Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhood</li> <li>■ Strong local vision and engagement</li> <li>■ Healthy places</li> <li>■ Green space</li> <li>■ Legacy and stewardship arrangements</li> </ul>

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure proximity and good access to the provision/production of healthy food environments supported by community activities including space for people to grow their own food.</li> <li>■ Meet the needs of a range of different age groups including children and young people and older people.</li> </ul>		
<p>3. Promote thriving and inclusive communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure that new development is supported by appropriate and timely investment in infrastructure.</li> <li>■ Ensure that new development does not have a harmful impact on the vitality and vibrancy of Eynsham and instead, integrates in an effective, complementary and mutually-beneficial manner.</li> <li>■ Promote effective and meaningful interactions between different age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Population &amp; Human Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food</li> <li>■ Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhood</li> <li>■ Clear identity</li> <li>■ Sustainable scale</li> <li>■ Well-designed places</li> </ul>

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
	<p>groups to promote social cohesion and well-being (e.g. inter-generational spaces and mix of uses).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide new cultural, leisure and recreational opportunities including improved access to the countryside to help increase rates of physical activity.</li> <li>■ Support strong, vibrant and healthy communities.</li> <li>■ Provide for the needs of an ageing community.</li> <li>■ Meet the needs of a range of different age groups including children and young people and older people.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Great homes</li> <li>■ Strong local vision and engagement</li> <li>■ Transport</li> <li>■ Healthy places</li> </ul>
<p>4. Improve education and training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure the availability of and accessibility to adequate capacity of primary and secondary education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Population &amp; Human Health</li> <li>■ Material Assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provision of a wide range of jobs within easy commuting distance of homes</li> <li>■ Strong local vision and engagement</li> <li>■ Future proofed</li> </ul>

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide new and enhanced opportunities to increase educational attainment, skills and training.</li> <li>■ Provide new high-quality business land in an attractive setting thereby helping to attract inward investment, generate new jobs and skills, and reduce the propensity to travel to work elsewhere.</li> <li>■ Promote high levels of home-working.</li> <li>■ Support innovation-led growth, underpinned by the strength of Oxfordshire’s research, business collaboration and supply chain potential.</li> </ul>		
<p>5. Maintain a low level of crime and fear of crime</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To minimise both the fear of crime and opportunities for/incidences of crime through appropriate design, layout and mix of uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Population &amp; Human Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods</li> </ul>

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Promote high quality design that protects and enriches the character of the District.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strong vision, leadership and community engagement</li> <li>■ Well-designed places</li> <li>■ Strong local vision and engagement</li> <li>■ Healthy places</li> <li>■ Legacy and stewardship arrangements</li> </ul>
<p>6. Improve accessibility to all services and facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Maximise the opportunities to improve and better connect to existing public transport in the area including links to Oxford and Hanborough Station.</li> <li>■ Effectively integrate with proposed improvements to the A40 including park and ride and bus priority.</li> <li>■ Maximise opportunities for non-car travel including improved pedestrian, cycling and riding connections across the A40 and between the Garden Village, West Eynsham SDA, Eynsham</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Population &amp; Human Health</li> <li>■ Material Assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods</li> <li>■ Providing integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport</li> <li>■ Sustainable scale</li> <li>■ Well-designed places</li> <li>■ Strong local vision and engagement</li> <li>■ Transport</li> <li>■ Healthy places</li> <li>■ Legacy and stewardship arrangements</li> </ul>

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
	<p>village, Hanborough Station and Oxford City.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop a high quality, innovative and resilient integrated transport system.</li> <li>■ Reflect the ‘compact’ and ‘walkable’ nature of Eynsham in new development.</li> <li>■ Meet the needs of a range of different age groups including children and young people and older people.</li> <li>■ Encourage the protection and enhancement of village centre.</li> <li>■ Promote the provision of new and the protection of existing services and facilities at sustainable locations including as part of mixed-use development.</li> </ul>		
<p>7. Improve the efficiency of land use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure land use meets identified community needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Material Assets</li> <li>■ Water &amp; Soil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strong vision, leadership and community engagement</li> </ul>

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure development is of a suitable density or range of densities to minimise the extent of any ‘developable’ land-take and maximise opportunities for greenspace provision.</li> <li>■ Explore opportunities for sustainable waste management to ensure a sufficient supply of aggregate materials is available to meet identified development needs with priority given to secondary and recycled aggregate materials (where practicable).</li> <li>■ Safeguard mineral resources.</li> <li>■ Minimise impact on the soil resource and seek to ensure the conservation of best and most versatile agricultural land.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets</li> <li>■ Sustainable scale</li> <li>■ Future proofed</li> </ul>
<p>8. Reduce waste generation and disposal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To reduce the amount of waste generated both initially during</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Water &amp; Soil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure</li> </ul>

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
	<p>construction and in the longer-term, post-occupation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Maximise opportunities to re-use, recycle and recover waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Population &amp; Human Health</li> <li>■ Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</li> <li>■ Material Assets</li> </ul>	<p>network and net biodiversity gains, and seeks to minimise carbon use and achieve energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Future proofed</li> </ul>
<p>9. Reduce air pollution and improve air quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure new development does not have a harmful effect on air quality, especially with regards to the Oxford Meadows Special Conservation Area (SAC).</li> <li>■ Improve multi-use transport networks that are accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and mobility scooter users to decrease dependency on the private car.</li> <li>■ Avoid, minimise and mitigate the effects of poor air quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Air</li> <li>■ Climatic Factors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Providing integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport</li> <li>■ Transport</li> <li>■ Healthy places</li> <li>■ Green space</li> </ul>
<p>10. Address the causes of climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Maximise opportunities for the use of renewable, low-carbon and local energy sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Air</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Providing integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling</li> </ul>

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
<p>by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and be prepared for its impacts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Minimise the use-of non-renewable energy sources.</li> <li>■ Develop a high quality, innovative and resilient integrated transport system.</li> <li>■ Minimise the need to travel and promote travel by sustainable means.</li> <li>■ Promote the use of designs and materials which will promote energy efficiency at new development.</li> <li>■ Promote increased levels of home working, facilitated by improved broadband provision, to reduce out-commuting and increase the self-containment of communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Climatic Factors</li> </ul>	<p>and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sustainable scale</li> <li>■ Transport</li> <li>■ Green space</li> <li>■ Future proofed</li> </ul>
<p>11. Protect and improve water resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Maximise resource efficiency including water.</li> <li>■ Ensure no deterioration in water quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Water &amp; Soil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and seeks to minimise carbon use and</li> </ul>

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
			achieve energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Green space</li> <li>■ Future proofed</li> </ul>
12.Reduce the risk from all sources of flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Minimise the risk of flooding from all sources both directly (on-site) and indirectly (off-site) taking account of the potential impacts of climate change.</li> <li>■ Increase the provision of sustainable drainage at new developments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Climatic Factors</li> <li>■ Material Assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and seeks to minimise carbon use and achieve energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience.</li> <li>■ Green space</li> <li>■ Future proofed</li> </ul>
13.Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Take all available opportunities to protect and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of the site or locality including biodiversity and geodiversity designations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Biodiversity, Flora &amp; Fauna</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and seeks to minimise carbon use and achieve energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience.</li> <li>■ Sustainable scale</li> </ul>

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contribute to wider biodiversity and green infrastructure networks where appropriate.</li> <li>■ Demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity where possible.</li> <li>■ Provide and manage opportunities for people to come into contact with resilient wildlife places whilst encouraging respect for and raising awareness of the sensitivity of such locations.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Green space</li> <li>■ Future proofed</li> </ul>
<p>14. Conserve and enhance landscape character</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To ensure that development will conserve, integrate with and where possible enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive natural and man-made features of the local landscape, including hedgerows, streams and ponds.</li> <li>■ To identify, safeguard and enhance key views.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Cultural Heritage &amp; Landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and seeks to minimise carbon use and achieve energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience</li> <li>■ Sustainable scale</li> <li>■ Well-designed places</li> <li>■ Strong local vision and engagement</li> </ul>

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Green space</li> </ul>
<p>15. Conserve and enhance the historic environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conserve and/or enhance the historic environment including identified heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.</li> <li>■ Mitigate any potential impacts on any heritage assets ‘at risk’.</li> <li>■ Ensure no harmful impact on the existing historic core of Eynsham as a result of new development.</li> <li>■ To maximise opportunities to better reveal heritage assets and improve education and understanding of their significance.</li> <li>■ Promote sustainable and appropriately managed access to as well as enjoyment and understanding of the local historic environment for Eynsham’s residents and visitors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Cultural Heritage &amp; Landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets</li> <li>■ Legacy and stewardship arrangements</li> <li>■ Strong local vision and engagement</li> </ul>

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure archaeological features are preserved and recorded.</li> </ul>		
16. Maintain high and stable levels of employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide new high-quality business land in an attractive setting thereby helping to attract inward investment, generate new jobs and skills, and reduce the propensity to travel to work elsewhere.</li> <li>■ Provide for accessible employment opportunities.</li> <li>■ To address the current demographic imbalance and help increase rates of economic activity.</li> <li>■ Promote high levels of home-working.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Population &amp; Human Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provision of a wide range of jobs within easy commuting distance of homes</li> <li>■ Well-designed places</li> </ul>
17. Promote sustainable economic growth and competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide new high-quality business land in an attractive setting thereby helping to attract inward investment, generate new jobs and skills, and reduce the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Population &amp; Human Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provision of a wide range of jobs within easy commuting distance of homes</li> <li>■ Clear identity</li> <li>■ Transport</li> </ul>

Sustainability Objectives	Sub-objectives	SEA topic(s)	Relevant Garden Village Principles/Qualities
	<p>propensity to travel to work elsewhere.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Address the current demographic imbalance and help increase rates of economic activity.</li> <li>■ Promote increased levels of home working, facilitated by improved broadband provision, to reduce out-commuting and increase the self-containment of communities.</li> <li>■ Maintain and improve transport connections to support economic growth and vitality.</li> <li>■ Ensure a strong link between jobs and housing growth.</li> <li>■ Promote innovation-led growth, underpinned by the strength of Oxfordshire’s research, business collaboration and supply chain potential.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Future proofed</li> </ul>

## Chapter 3

# How the Environmental Report has been taken into account

**3.1** As explained above, the SA process for the Salt Cross AAP was undertaken iteratively, with the SA Reports at each stage informing the Plan. As part of the SA process, an assessment of the likely sustainability and environmental effects of the plan was made at each stage of the AAP's development.

**3.2** The SA assessed all policies in each iteration of the AAP and their reasonable alternatives, including the Main Modifications proposed to the AAP following Examination hearings. This helped West Oxfordshire District Council to formulate its approach with regards to which options to take forward, alongside other material planning considerations.

**3.3** **Table 3.1** below shows how preparation of the SA reports (which included the Environmental Report requirements set out in the SEA Regulations) corresponded with each stage of the AAP's preparation, and how the SA was taken into account.

**Table 3.1: Iterations of the Salt Cross AAP and accompanying SA outputs**

AAP consultation stage and documents	SA documents	How the SA was taken into account
Issues Paper (June 2018)	N/A	The initial consultation on the Issues Paper for the AAP sought to identify early views on how to best tackle a number of important issues for the Garden Village Strategic Growth Location including transport, housing, jobs and the environment. No SA work was undertaken at this stage.
Early evidence gathering (November 2018)	SA Scoping letter (October 2018) <i>Prepared by West Oxfordshire District Council with 'critical</i>	The SA Scoping letter set out baseline information for the Salt Cross site and identified key sustainability issues that it faced, as well as reviewing relevant plans, policies and programmes. This resulted in the development of the SA framework which was proposed to be used during the later stages of the SA. No appraisal work was

AAP consultation stage and documents	SA documents	How the SA was taken into account
	<i>friend' advice from LUC</i>	undertaken or included in the SA Scoping Letter.
Preferred Options (August 2019)	Preferred Options SA Report (July 2019) <i>Prepared by LUC on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council</i>	The August 2019 Preferred Options AAP included a Vision, Themes and Objectives as well as identifying preferred policy approaches in respect of matters relating to each of the seven themes.  The vision and themes as well as the preferred policy approaches under each theme were subject to SA. In addition, three 'spatial framework' options for how development could be distributed across the garden village site were appraised. The findings were published in the July 2019 Preferred Options SA Report. The SA Report was published alongside the Preferred Options AAP during the consultation period.
Pre-Submission AAP (August 2020)	SA Report (August 2020) <i>Prepared by LUC on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council</i>	The August 2020 SA Report for the Pre-Submission AAP built on the previous SA report, now appraising the vision, core objectives, policies and chosen spatial framework in the Pre-Submission AAP. It also appraised the reasonable alternatives considered for these elements of the AAP.
<b>Submission</b> Submission to the Secretary of State (February 2021). Salt Cross Garden Village AAP: Pre-Submission Draft (August 2020)	<i>August 2020 SA Report submitted with the AAP in February 2021</i>	No new SA work was carried out at this stage.
<b>Examination</b> February 2021 – March 2023	SA Addendum Report (July 2022)	Following Examination hearings between late-June and early-July 2021, West Oxfordshire District Council prepared a schedule of Main Modifications to the submitted AAP. The Main Modifications

AAP consultation stage and documents	SA documents	How the SA was taken into account
Salt Cross Garden Village AAP Proposed Modifications (September 2022)	<i>Prepared by LUC on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council</i>	<p>were subject to SA by LUC and the findings were presented in an SA Addendum Report (July 2022). The SA concluded that the AAP as proposed to be modified was likely to have a range of positive effects and, whilst these were considered to not be as positive as previously, the differences were generally considered to be limited.</p> <p>In light of these overall findings and the existing recommendations made through the course of the SA and the wider plan-making process, no further SA recommendations were considered necessary.</p>
<p><b>Re-opened Examination</b> April 2024 – February 2026.</p> <p>Salt Cross Garden Village AAP - Policy 2</p>	<p>SA Addendum Note (March 2025)</p> <p><i>Prepared by LUC on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council</i></p>	<p>An SA Addendum Note was prepared in March 2025 which compared the SA findings for Policy 2 as submitted with the proposed updated version. This found that the likely effects of Policy 2 (as amended) on the SA objectives remained as reported in the August 2020 SA Report for the submitted AAP. While the policy wording had been revised and amended, this did not result in changes to the headline effects identified against each SA objective.</p>
<p><b>Re-opened Examination</b> April 2024 – January 2026.</p> <p>Salt Cross Garden Village AAP - Policy 2: Proposed Modifications (September 2025)</p>	<p>Updated SA Addendum Note (September 2025)</p> <p><i>Prepared by LUC on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council</i></p>	<p>Following an Examination hearing on 30 June 2025, West Oxfordshire District Council prepared a schedule of Main Modifications to Policy 2 of the submitted AAP. The Main Modifications were subject to SA by LUC and the findings were presented in an updated SA Addendum Note (September 2025). The updated Note concluded that there was no change to the effects identified against each SA objective.</p> <p>In light of these findings, no further SA recommendations were considered necessary.</p>

## Chapter 4

### How opinions of consultation bodies and the public have been taken into account

**4.1** At each stage of the Salt Cross AAP's development, an SA Report was published alongside the AAP document for consultation with the public and the consultation bodies specifically referred to in the SEA Regulations (Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England). The SEA Regulations require that the SEA Adoption Statement provides an account of how any opinions expressed by the public and the consultation bodies have been taken into account.

**4.2** The AAP consultation stages and responses received relating to the SA documents are summarised below.

#### SA Scoping letter (November 2018)

**4.3** The SA Scoping letter was subject to consultation between November 2018 and January 2019 with the statutory bodies (Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England) and other stakeholders. This provided an opportunity for consultees to comment on the proposed scope of the SA, including whether the objectives in the SA framework provided a reasonable framework for assessing the likely significant effects of the AAP and whether the review of relevant plans, policies and programmes (the 'PPP' review) and baseline information were appropriate and complete.

**4.4** Comments received on the content of the SA Scoping were taken into consideration by LUC when preparing the first iteration of the SA Report for the Preferred Options AAP. The comments received and the response/action taken were listed in a schedule which was appended to the Preferred Options SA Report in July 2019. The changes included a number of amendments to the SA framework as well as updates to the review of plans, policies and programmes, the key sustainability issues and the baseline information.

**4.5** Although the SA Scoping work was undertaken early on in the AAP preparation process and therefore some time before the later stages of the SA for the AAP were carried out, the Scoping work including the baseline information, review of relevant plans, policies and programmes and key sustainability issues was regularly updated and consulted on as part of the later SA documents.

## Preferred Options SA Report (August 2019)

**4.6** Consultation on the Preferred Options SA Report was undertaken between August and October 2019. The comments received from stakeholders were listed and responded to in a schedule which was later appended to the Pre-Submission SA Report in August 2020. The response from Oxfordshire County Council resulted in some minor changes being made to the baseline information and the relevant plans, policies and programmes. No comments were received from any of the statutory bodies at this stage of plan-making.

## Pre-Submission SA Report (August 2020)

**4.7** The Regulation 19 (Pre-Submission) version of the AAP was published for consultation between August and October 2020 and the Pre-Submission SA Report was published alongside it. Of the responses received from consultees in relation to the Pre-Submission AAP, only the response from Oxfordshire County Council included reference to the Pre-Submission SA Report. However, the comments made in fact referred to the AAP itself, rather than the SA.

## SA Addendum Report (July 2022)

**4.8** The AAP was submitted for Examination in February 2021. As part of the examination process, a number of hearing sessions were held over a two-week period from 28 June to 8 July 2021.

**4.9** On 26 May 2022, the Inspectors wrote to the Council to confirm that the AAP was able to progress to the Main Modifications stage of the Examination. In July 2022, LUC published an SA Addendum Report which presented an appraisal of the proposed Main Modifications to the submitted AAP document. This was published alongside the Main Modifications during the consultation which took place between September and November 2022. None of the representations subsequently received related to the SA.

**4.10** The Inspector's Report was issued in March 2023. This made final recommended modifications and stated that, subject to these, the AAP could be adopted.

## **SA Addendum Note (September 2025)**

**4.11** Following the legal challenge, the AAP examination was re-opened in April 2024 in respect of Policy 2. Proposed amendments to Policy 2 were put forward by West Oxfordshire District Council in March 2025 and a hearing session was held on 30 June 2025. These amendments were the subject of SA, with an SA Addendum Note prepared by LUC in March 2025 and submitted for examination with the updated version of Policy 2. An updated version of this note was prepared and published alongside the Main Modifications during the consultation which took place between October and November 2025. None of the representations subsequently received related to the SA.

**4.12** The Inspector's Report was issued on 7 January 2026. This made final recommended modifications and stated that, subject to these, the revised Policy 2 of the AAP (and therefore the updated AAP) could be adopted.

## Chapter 5

# Why the adopted Area Action Plan was chosen in light of the other reasonable alternatives considered

**5.1** West Oxfordshire District Council considered a range of reasonable alternative options during the preparation of the Salt Cross AAP, particularly in relation to alternative 'spatial framework' options and thematic policy options.

**5.2** Information considered by West Oxfordshire District Council before final decisions were made included:

- The SA findings, particularly the significant effects generated by each option.
- The AAP Vision and Objectives.
- The results of consultation and engagement with the general public and key stakeholders.
- The evidence base for the AAP.

**5.3** The options considered for the different aspects of the AAP are described below, alongside a summary of West Oxfordshire District Council's reasons why the preferred options were selected over the reasonable alternatives. More detailed information about why individual options were selected or rejected can be found in Appendix F of the August 2020 SA Report.

## Spatial framework

**5.4** Three options were considered in relation to the illustrative spatial framework for the delivery of development at the Garden Village site. The options considered were to provide:

- a single centre; or
- three distinct centres; or
- greater focus on the A40.

**5.5** All of the options were assessed as being able to deliver a high number of new homes, as well as employment and economic growth generally, therefore would have a significant positive effect. Conversely, all three options would result in the loss of greenfield land, including Grade 2 agricultural land, therefore having a significant

negative effect. Against the remaining SA objectives, the option of a single centre was likely to have minor positive or significant positive effects. This option was therefore considered to represent the most sustainable option and was carried forward into the AAP.

## Other key policy objectives and issues

**5.6** The various stages of developing the SA have provided an iterative and rational method for refining the options considered throughout the AAP process.

**5.7** Based on the overarching objectives of the AAP policies and informed through the supporting evidence and the SA, the policies seek to ensure the delivery of appropriate housing (both scale and type), enabling sustainable economic growth, enhancing and protecting the environment, supporting strong and healthy communities and delivering infrastructure. The various SA reports published during the preparation of the AAP have shown that reasonable and alternative options have been considered and evaluated.

## Chapter 6

# How significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Area Action Plan will be monitored

**6.1** The SEA Regulations require that, "*The responsible authority shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action*" (Regulation 17), and that the Environmental Report should provide information on "*a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring*" (Schedule 2).

**6.2** Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on SA states that it is not necessary to monitor everything and monitoring should be focused on the significant sustainability effects, including significant effects where there is uncertainty and where monitoring would enable preventative or mitigation measures to be taken. However, in order to address the requirement in SEA Regulation 17 noted above to "identify unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and be able to undertake appropriate remedial action", and taking a precautionary approach, measures have been proposed to monitor sustainability effects for all the objectives in the SA framework.

**6.3** The indicators recommended to be used by West Oxfordshire District Council to monitor the potential sustainability effects of implementing the AAP are set out in **Table 6.1** overleaf by SA objective. These may be subject to change as a result of the ongoing monitoring of the AAP over time.

**Table 6.1: Proposed monitoring indicators for the Salt Cross AAP**

SA objectives	Proposed monitoring indicators
1. Ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed affordable home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Total number of residential completions in the period to 2031 and on a per annum basis.</li> <li>■ Total number of affordable homes completed in the period to 2031 and on a per annum basis.</li> <li>■ Proportion of residential completions by type and tenure.</li> <li>■ Proportion of residential completions by size.</li> </ul>

SA objectives	Proposed monitoring indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Proportion of homes built to accessible and adaptable housing standards.</li> <li>■ Proportion of new homes built as wheelchair adaptable dwellings.</li> <li>■ Proportion of serviced plots provided / taken up for the purposes of self/custom build.</li> <li>■ Number of empty homes.</li> <li>■ Build out rate of each phase and across the overall site</li> </ul>
4. Improve education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Number of training, skills and job opportunities facilitated as a result of a Community Employment Plan (CEP).</li> <li>■ Number of school places in the local area.</li> <li>■ Provision of learning opportunities and engagement of residents in management of biodiversity assets.</li> <li>■ Rates of educational attainment in the local area.</li> </ul>
7. Improve the efficiency of land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Average density of development.</li> <li>■ Amount of 'undeveloped' and 'developed' land as a proportion of the overall site area.</li> </ul>
9. Reduce air pollution and improve air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Percentage car use.</li> <li>■ Air quality - including impacts on nearby AQMAs and Oxford Meadows SAC.</li> <li>■ Percentage of travel by walking or cycling.</li> <li>■ CIL / S106 funding allocated for sustainable transport projects.</li> <li>■ Number of travel plans produced.</li> <li>■ Proportion of parking spaces provided with electric vehicle charging infrastructure available.</li> <li>■ Trip generation - internal and external trips (different modes).</li> <li>■ Mode split - internal and external trips.</li> <li>■ Public transport patronage figures.</li> </ul>

SA objectives	Proposed monitoring indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Proportion of home working taking place within Salt Cross.</li> <li>■ Levels/rates of out-commuting.</li> </ul>
10. Address the causes of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and be prepared for its impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Proportion of residential and non-residential development built to 'zero carbon' standards.</li> <li>■ Percentage car use.</li> <li>■ Percentage of travel by walking or cycling.</li> <li>■ CIL / S106 funding allocated for sustainable transport projects.</li> <li>■ Number of travel plans produced.</li> <li>■ Total capacity of renewable energy generation secured.</li> <li>■ Proportion of parking spaces provided with electric vehicle charging infrastructure available.</li> <li>■ Trip generation - internal and external trips (different modes).</li> <li>■ Mode split - internal and external trips.</li> <li>■ Public transport patronage figures.</li> <li>■ Improvements (or beneficial changes) to ecosystem services - using the emerging Defra/Natural England Eco-metric to measure changes in ecosystem services.</li> <li>■ Successful energy strategies submitted in support of planning applications that align with key performance indicators (KPIs for a target of net-zero carbon development).</li> <li>■ Proportion of home working taking place within Salt Cross.</li> <li>■ Levels/rates of out-commuting.</li> </ul>
13. Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Achieved net gain in biodiversity - measured using the TVERC Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator.</li> </ul>

SA objectives	Proposed monitoring indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Changes in biodiversity/ geodiversity assets including condition of Oxford Meadows SAC, area of protected sites, records of priority species and habitats.</li> <li>■ Building with Nature - accreditation achieved.</li> <li>■ Improvements (or beneficial changes) to ecosystem services - using the emerging Defra/Natural England Eco-metric to measure changes in ecosystem services.</li> <li>■ Quantity of GI provided on-site.</li> <li>■ Obtaining Green Flag Award for the Biodiverse Country Park.</li> <li>■ Amount of different green spaces provided and the related multi-functional benefits.</li> <li>■ Number of "mini" nature reserves or wildlife sanctuaries created within GI network.</li> <li>■ Amount of additional habitat created/land managed for biodiversity as part of the Nature Recovery Network.</li> <li>■ Number of off-site farmland birds.</li> <li>■ Great crested newt population.</li> <li>■ Condition survey of Local Nature Reserves (and Local Wildlife Sites).</li> </ul>
<p>14. Conserve and enhance landscape character</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Percentage of new development in the areas identified as having moderate-high sensitivity according to the landscape and visual assessment for the Garden Village site.</li> </ul>
<p>15. Conserve and enhance the historic environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Financial contributions secured through development to secure heritage assets.</li> <li>■ Conservation Management Plan prepared, approved and successfully implemented.</li> <li>■ Mitigation strategy prepared, approved and successfully implemented.</li> <li>■ Level of community engagement in historic environment.</li> </ul>

SA objectives	Proposed monitoring indicators
16. Maintain high and stable levels of employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Amount of employment land (B-class) completed in the period to 2031 and on a per annum basis.</li> <li>■ Amount of other 'commercial' land completed in the period to 2031 and on a per annum basis.</li> <li>■ Number of new job opportunities created in the period to 2031.</li> <li>■ Levels of home working.</li> <li>■ Number of training, skills and job opportunities facilitated as a result of a Community Employment Plan (CEP).</li> <li>■ Amount/proportion of small-scale commercial and flexible business space provided as part of the overall mix of development.</li> <li>■ Amount/proportion of flexible co-working space provided and occupied.</li> </ul>
17. Promote sustainable economic growth and competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Amount of employment land (B-class) completed in the period to 2031 and on a per annum basis.</li> <li>■ Amount of other 'commercial' land completed in the period to 2031 and on a per annum basis.</li> <li>■ Number of new job opportunities created in the period to 2031.</li> <li>■ Levels of home working.</li> <li>■ Number of training, skills and job opportunities facilitated as a result of a Community Employment Plan (CEP).</li> <li>■ Amount/proportion of small-scale commercial and flexible business space provided as part of the overall mix of development.</li> <li>■ Amount/proportion of flexible co-working space provided and occupied.</li> </ul>

## References

- 1 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633) as amended by The Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232) and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/1531)

Report produced by LUC

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