



Charlbury

4. Overall strategy

4.1 Having set out our vision and objectives for the future, we need to consider how these are going to be achieved. For example how are we going to deliver more affordable housing, how will we tackle flooding and what will we do to boost the local economy?

4.2 This section of the plan sets out the overall strategy for the District which has five key strands and 'cross-cutting' policies that apply to all development regardless of scale or type:

- **Presumption in favour of sustainable development** – allowing development which is sustainable to go ahead. This must however be seen in the context of West Oxfordshire as there is no 'one-size fits all' approach.
- **Locating development in the right places** - influencing where development takes place can help to ensure housing and jobs are provided where they are most needed, ensure good access to facilities, help reduce car use, protect important areas such as Green Belt and AONB, conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment and avoid other sensitive areas such as those that are prone to flooding.
- **Prudent use of natural resources** – natural resources are those that occur naturally within the environment including water, air, wind, sunlight and minerals. Some of these such as wind and sunlight are 'renewable' because they are naturally replenished, whilst others such as gas and oil are 'non-renewable' because they are limited and finite. We must give careful consideration to the use of natural resources particularly those that are 'non-renewable'.
- **High quality design** - the Government's objective for the planning system is to promote good design that ensures attractive, usable and durable places. This is a key element in achieving sustainable development and a key consideration for West Oxfordshire which enjoys a high quality, distinctive natural, historic and built environment and strong 'sense of place'.

- **Supporting infrastructure** – appropriate and timely provision must be made for the facilities and services that are needed to support future growth including schools, public transport, roads, GP surgeries, libraries and open space. Without appropriate investment, existing services will come under pressure and may be unable to cope.

### Presumption in favour of sustainable development

4.3 National policy emphasises that Local Plans and planning decision making should be underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development, in other words development that is sustainable should go ahead, without delay.

4.4 So what is sustainable development? The generally accepted definition is development that meets the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Essentially this means that any decision taken now should not have a harmful impact on future generations.

4.5 There are three main dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. Good planning is essentially about balancing these often competing elements. For example whilst there may be a need to deliver new housing or jobs, this should not be at the expense of the environment. Indeed, the three dimensions of sustainable development should be pursued jointly and simultaneously.

4.6 The NPPF provides an overview of what sustainable development means in practice for the planning system. It covers issues such as economic growth, town centre vitality, supporting the rural economy, promoting sustainable transport, mixed-use development, improving communications infrastructure, delivering a wide choice of high quality housing, achieving high standards of design, improving the health of local communities, the protection of designated areas including Green Belt and AONB, tackling climate change

and flood risk, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and ensuring the sustainable use of minerals.

4.7 These are all laudable objectives but to give the Local Plan more purpose, we need to consider what sustainable development means in the context of West Oxfordshire. Drawing on the District profile, vision and objectives outlined previously, it is reasonable to suggest that achieving sustainable development for West Oxfordshire is likely to mean the following (in no particular order):

- Reducing the current reliance that is placed on the private car for journeys into, within and beyond the District by promoting opportunities for active travel through walking and cycling as well as encouraging the use of public transport;
- Reducing current levels of out-commuting and increasing 'self-containment';
- Reducing the current risk of flooding where possible and ensuring that new development does not increase that risk;
- Achieving mixed-use developments that create vibrant, active places and reduce the need to travel;
- Maximising the use of previously developed land provided it is not of high environmental value;
- Strengthening and increasing the value and resilience of the local economy, capitalising on current and forecast growth sectors and enhancing links with major growth areas nearby including the Oxfordshire 'Knowledge Spine';
- Identifying and meeting current and future housing needs for a variety of different groups including those in need of affordable housing;
- Tackling traffic congestion in key locations like Witney and on key routes including the A40 and A44;
- Improving air quality in known problem areas including Witney and Chipping Norton;
- Reducing the impact of development on climate change and ensuring that new

development is able to respond to future change through appropriate design and adaptation;

- Improving connectivity between the District's settlements;
- Conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- Protecting the Green Belt;
- Effectively managing and mitigating the impact of mineral working within the District and capitalising on after-use opportunities;
- Making sure that the leisure and recreational needs of residents and visitors are met both in terms of the quality and quantity of facilities available;
- Ensuring that new development is supported by appropriate investment in new and/or enhanced infrastructure including education, water supply and disposal, transport, affordable housing and open space;
- Achieving high quality design in all new development;
- Improving the health of local communities including tackling obesity;
- Improved telecommunications including superfast broadband throughout the District, with a particular focus on harder to reach rural areas;
- Protection and enhancement of the District's rich historic and natural environment; and
- Maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of local communities, particularly small-settlements in rural areas that may be under pressure from the loss of shops, public houses and other services and facilities.

- 4.8 In line with national policy, this Local Plan is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In other words, development that is shown to be sustainable in the West Oxfordshire context will be permitted. Taking account of the various issues outlined above, the remainder of this Local Plan sets out in more detail what will and won't be considered sustainable in West Oxfordshire. Regard should also be had to the NPPF and any 'made' (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans that are in place.
- 4.9 As a general principle, when considering development proposals and Neighbourhood Plans, the Council will take a positive approach and will work with applicants and other stakeholders to ensure that where appropriate, proposals are approved and that development which would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the District is secured. This approach is reflected in Policy OSI below.

**POLICY OSI:  
Presumption in favour of sustainable development**

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

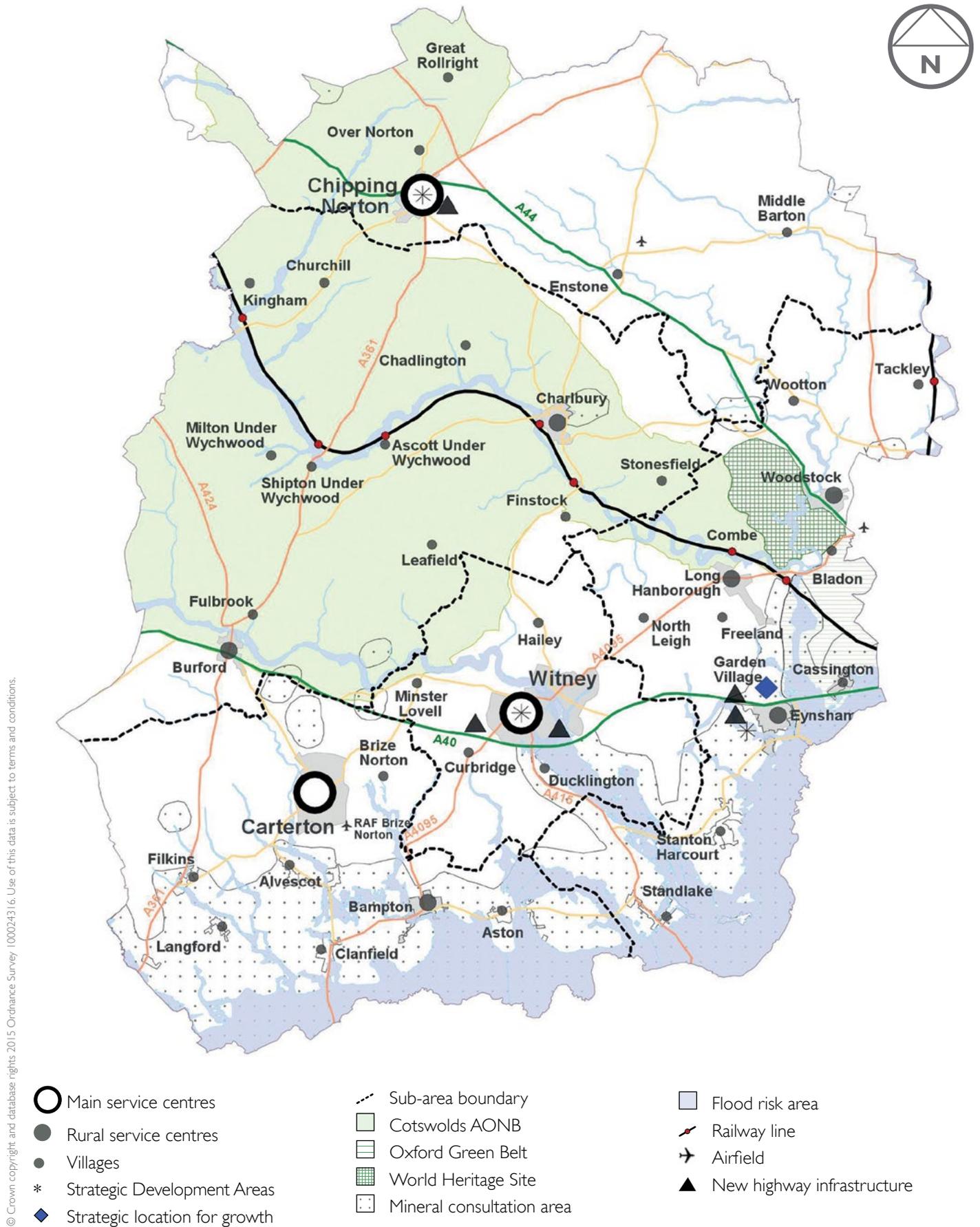
Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise- taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

**Locating development in the right places**

- 4.10 The location of development can influence how people choose to travel, where children go to school, how an area changes physically and socially and where people live and work. Putting development in the right places can also help to reduce development pressures on sensitive locations including the AONB and Green Belt.
- 4.11 Throughout the preparation of the Local Plan we have sought views on the overall strategy for accommodating future growth including the most suitable locations for development. Various options have been proposed and tested through consultation and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and our proposed approach is set out below.
- 4.12 For the purposes of this Local Plan the District has been divided into five sub-areas based on landscape characteristics and local catchment areas for key services and facilities. The sub-areas are:
- Witney sub-area
  - Carterton sub-area
  - Chipping Norton sub-area
  - Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area
  - Burford – Charlbury sub-area
- 4.13 The extent of each sub-area is illustrated on Figure 4a.

Figure 4a: West Oxfordshire sub-areas and key diagram



4.14 Each sub-area includes a range of different settlements of varying size and character. For the purposes of the Local Plan the following ‘settlement hierarchy’ has been identified.

**Table 4b: Settlement hierarchy**

<b>Main service centres</b>	
Witney Carterton Chipping Norton	
<b>Rural service centres</b>	
Bampton Burford Charlbury Eynsham Long Hanborough Woodstock Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village	
<b>Villages</b>	
Alvescot Ascott under Wychwood Aston Bladon Brize Norton Cassington Chadlington Churchill Clanfield Combe Curbridge Ducklington Enstone Filkins & Broughton Poggs Finstock Freeland Fulbrook Great Rollright	Hailey Kingham Langford Leafield Middle Barton Milton-u- Wychwood Minster Lovell (South of Burford Road) North Leigh Over Norton Shipton-under- Wychwood Standlake Stanton Harcourt Stonesfield Tackley Wootton
<b>Small villages, hamlets and open countryside</b>	
All other villages and settlements not listed above plus open countryside.	

4.15 Taking account of previous consultation responses and the results of several SA reports, the overall strategy of this Local Plan is to steer a significant proportion of future development into the Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton Sub-Areas, with a particular focus on the three main service centres of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton.

4.16 These towns currently offer the widest range of services and facilities, have suitable and deliverable development sites available, are accessible by a choice of transport modes (other than rail) and offer a good range of job opportunities. A number of Strategic Development Areas (SDA) and smaller ‘non-strategic’ allocations are therefore proposed at Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton (see Section 9 – Strategy at the Local Level).

4.17 Not all growth can or indeed should go to Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton however and there is a need for development elsewhere to help meet the unmet housing needs of Oxford City, to spread the potential benefits of growth and to help sustain the more rural parts of the District.

4.18 Eynsham has a particularly important role to play with a strategic urban extension proposed to the west of the village which will help to meet both West Oxfordshire’s own identified housing needs and those of neighbouring Oxford City. It is anticipated that this development will be served by a new road link from the A40 to the south of Eynsham.

4.19 To the north of Eynsham on the other side of the A40, a ‘strategic location for growth (SLG)’ has been identified at which a new rural service centre will be created in the form of a new village based on ‘garden village’ principles. Government funding has been secured to take this exciting concept forward and accelerate the delivery of housing to meet identified needs. The detailed planning of the scheme will be taken forward through a separate Area Action Plan (AAP).

- 4.20 The historic town of Woodstock has a relatively good range of services and facilities and good accessibility to Oxford. It can accommodate a reasonable scale of development, whilst protecting its important historic character and the setting of Blenheim Palace, in order to deliver affordable housing, enhance local services and reinforce its role as a service centre. Three medium scale allocations are proposed on different sides of the town in order to complement the structure and form of the town.
- 4.21 Of the remaining service centres, Burford and Charlbury are located in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and, thus whilst containing a good range of services and facilities are relatively constrained in terms of their capacity to accommodate further development. Whilst not within the AONB, Bampton and Long Hanborough have a more restricted range of services and facilities. As such, more modest levels of development are anticipated in these four rural service centres to help reinforce their existing roles. This includes two site allocations which are proposed at Long Hanborough.
- 4.22 Beyond the rural service centres, some development will be supported in the villages but this will be limited to that which respects the village character and local distinctiveness and would help maintain the vitality of the local community. A number of site allocations are proposed to ensure the delivery of new housing on suitable, available sites.
- 4.23 In the small villages, hamlets and open countryside, new development will be limited to that which requires and is appropriate for a rural location and which respects the intrinsic character of the area.
- 4.24 The proposed strategy is reflected in Policy OS2 overleaf.

## **POLICY OS2: Locating development in the right places**

### **Main service centres, rural service centres and villages**

A significant proportion of new homes, jobs and supporting services will be focused within and on the edge of the main service centres of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. A number of site allocations are proposed to ensure identified needs are met. The distribution of development is set out in Policy H1.

Due to the size of the settlement and its proximity and connections to Oxford City, Eynsham will also make a significant contribution towards meeting the identified housing needs of the District and Oxford City with a strategic urban extension to be provided to the west of the village.

A new rural service centre - Oxfordshire Cotwolds Garden Village - will be created to the north of Eynsham to contribute towards Oxford City's needs. This will comprise a self-contained settlement based on 'garden village' principles and will play a complementary role to Eynsham.

Woodstock is suitable for a reasonable scale of development, whilst protecting its important historic character and the setting of Blenheim Palace, in order to deliver affordable housing, enhance local services and reinforce its role as a service centre.

Burford and Charlbury are relatively constrained by their AONB location and Bampton and Long Hanborough have a more restricted range of services and facilities. Consequently, these rural service centres are suitable for a modest level of development to help reinforce their existing roles. Two site allocations are proposed at Long Hanborough.

The villages are suitable for limited development which respects the village character and local distinctiveness and would help to maintain the vitality of these communities. A number of site allocations are proposed to ensure identified needs are met. Further allocations may be made through Neighbourhood Plans.

Proposals for residential development will be considered in accordance with Policy H2 of this Local Plan.

### **Small villages, hamlets and open countryside**

Development in the small villages, hamlets and open countryside will be limited to that which requires and is appropriate for a rural location and which respects the intrinsic character of the area. Proposals for residential development will be considered under policy H2.

Proposals for non-residential development that is regarded as appropriate will include:

- Re-use of appropriate existing buildings which would lead to an enhancement of their immediate setting, with preference given to employment, tourism and community uses;
- Proposals to support the effectiveness of existing businesses and sustainable tourism;
- Development which will make a positive contribution to farm and country estate diversification; and
- Telecommunications development sited and designed to minimise impact upon the environment.

## General principles

All development should:

- Be of a proportionate and appropriate scale to its context having regard to the potential cumulative impact of development in the locality;
- Form a logical complement to the existing scale and pattern of development and/or the character of the area;
- Avoid the coalescence and loss of identity of separate settlements;
- Be compatible with adjoining uses and not have a harmful impact on the amenity of existing occupants;
- As far as is reasonably possible protect or enhance the local landscape and the setting of the settlement/s;
- Not involve the loss of an area of open space or any other feature that makes an important contribution to the character or appearance of the area;
- Be provided with safe vehicular access and safe and convenient pedestrian access to supporting services and facilities;
- Not be at risk of flooding or likely to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;
- Conserve and enhance the natural, historic and built environment;
- Safeguard mineral resources;
- In the AONB, give great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty and comply with national policy concerning major development;
- In the Green Belt, comply with national policies for the Green Belt; and
- Be supported by all necessary infrastructure including that which is needed to enable access to superfast broadband.

## Prudent use of natural resources

- 4.25 As a planet we are living beyond our means, consuming natural resources at a faster rate than they can be replenished. The use of fossil fuels such as coal, gas and oil has increased exponentially in the last few decades and the resultant increases in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are generally acknowledged to have contributed towards an increased rate of climatic change. It is essential that we reduce our consumption of natural resources and planning has a key role to play in this regard.
- 4.26 We have already explained how the location of development can help to reduce the need to travel and thereby reduce the consumption of oil and emission of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). As well as influencing the location of development, the Local Plan can ensure that new development uses less energy through greater efficiency in the use and management of resources. This Local Plan is therefore based on the following three-step hierarchy:
- Lean** – using less energy, by the use of sustainable design and construction measures
- Clean** – supplying energy efficiently, giving priority to decentralised energy supply
- Green** – using renewable energy, especially woodfuel biomass
- 4.27 The starting point is to minimise energy use (for example, through energy efficiency improvements to buildings such as loft and cavity wall insulation), before consideration is given as to how to supply energy more efficiently and then to the generation of renewable energy. In this section we address the first step of the energy hierarchy - sustainable design and construction. The use of decentralised and renewable energy is addressed in Section 8.

- 4.28 With emissions from buildings accounting for approximately 50% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the UK (and West Oxfordshire having higher levels of domestic energy consumption per person than the South East average) there is increasing recognition that constructing buildings using sustainable techniques is essential in addressing climate change, through influencing resource use, especially energy and water, as well as carbon emissions.
- 4.29 A wide range of standards have evolved to address Central Government's commitment to EU climate change targets, the country's low carbon future and the prudent use of natural resources – for example, the Code for Sustainable Homes, Building for Life and BREEAM requirements (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method). These standards have driven up the overall level of sustainable construction.
- 4.30 As part of the Government's aim to cut bureaucracy and costs, technical housing standards have been rationalised. Mandatory Building Regulations (which are separate to Planning) are now used to set sustainable construction standards, with optional building regulations for access and water efficiency and new nationally described space standards, the imposition of which will be sought through Local Plans where necessary and viable.
- 4.31 West Oxfordshire falls within an area of demonstrable 'water stress' and planned growth and other pressures are forecast to lead to a supply demand deficit in the next ten years. The West Oxfordshire Water Cycle Study: Phase I Scoping (2016), in assessing the impact of the Local Plan upon the water environment and water infrastructure provision, concludes there is strong justification for West Oxfordshire to have a water efficiency policy in line with the Building Regulations optional requirement of 110 l/h/d. This will support Thames Water's resource management planning and help to achieve more sustainable water usage.
- 4.32 In terms of energy efficiency, in July 2015 the Government decided not to proceed with the planned strengthening of energy performance requirements through building regulations. There is still a commitment to a transition to a low carbon economy and energy efficiency standards are to be kept under review.
- 4.33 In the interim, as a general principle and a fundamental element of the overall presumption in favour of sustainable development that underpins this Local Plan, the Council will expect all development proposals to show consideration of the prudent and efficient use and management of natural resources. This is reflected in Policy OS3.

### **POLICY OS3:**

#### **Prudent use of natural resources**

All development proposals (including new buildings, conversions and the refurbishment of existing building stock) will be required to show consideration of the efficient and prudent use and management of natural resources, including:

- making the most efficient use of land and buildings, whilst having regard to the character of the locality
- delivering development that seeks to minimise the need to travel
- minimising use of non-renewable resources, including land and energy, and maximising opportunities for travel by sustainable means
- minimising their impact on the soil resource\*
- minimising energy demands and energy loss through design, layout, orientation, landscaping, materials and the use of technology;
- minimising summer solar gain, maximising passive winter solar heating, lighting, natural ventilation, energy and water efficiency and reuse of materials;
- maximising resource efficiency, including water. All new residential development will be expected to achieve the optional building regulations requirement for water efficiency of 110 litres/person/day.
- minimising risk of flooding;
- making use of appropriate sustainable drainage systems;
- using recycled and energy efficient materials;
- minimising waste and making adequate provision for the re-use and recycling of waste; and causing no deterioration and, where possible, achieving improvements in water or air quality.

\* Guidance includes the 2011 DEFRA publication: Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites

### **High quality design**

- 4.34 West Oxfordshire's towns, villages and countryside have a distinctive character that is worthy of special protection. River valleys and wet meadows, historic parkland, ancient forest remnants, and undulating wolds landscape are important features as are the District's many historic buildings, archaeological remains and Conservation Areas (together with historic parkland). One third of the District has national protection through its inclusion within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 4.35 The Government's objective for the planning system is to promote good design that ensures attractive, usable and durable places. This is a key element in achieving sustainable development and is of particular relevance to West Oxfordshire which is characterised by a high-quality and distinctive environment much valued by all those who visit, work and live in the District.
- 4.36 In 2016 the District Council adopted a revised version of the West Oxfordshire Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) within the Local Development Framework. The purpose of the West Oxfordshire Design Guide is to describe the qualities and characteristics that make West Oxfordshire special, and to describe ways in which good design can protect and enrich the character of the District. In particular the guide seeks to:
- provide an analysis of the historic variations that exist in the landscapes, settlements and buildings of the District, in order to provide a sound foundation for design guidance that respects these variations;
  - describes strategies for how different scales of new development can best respond to these contexts; and
  - provide detailed guidance on a range of design issues relevant to existing and future development.

4.37 We expect all development to have regard to the guide. Reference should also be made to more specific design advice contained in other supplementary planning guidance covering the District including Landscape Assessments, historic landscape appraisals, Conservation Area Appraisals and Cotswolds AONB guidance documents which are key tools for interpreting local distinctiveness and informing high design quality.

#### **POLICY OS4: High quality design**

High design quality is central to the strategy for West Oxfordshire. New development should respect the historic, architectural and landscape character of the locality, contribute to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhance the character and quality of the surroundings and should:

- demonstrate high quality, inclusive and sustainable design with the provision of a safe, pleasant, convenient and interesting environment where the quality of the public realm is enhanced and the likelihood of crime and fear of crime is reduced; and
- not harm the use or enjoyment of land and buildings nearby including living conditions in residential properties; and
- demonstrate resilience to future climate change, particularly increasing temperatures and flood risk, and the use of water conservation and management measures; and
- conserve or enhance areas, buildings and features of historic, architectural and environmental significance, including both designated and non-designated heritage assets and habitats of biodiversity value; and
- enhance local green infrastructure and its biodiversity, including the provision of attractive, safe and convenient amenity open space commensurate with the scale and type of development, with play space where appropriate.

Designers of new development will be expected to provide supporting evidence for their design approach. They should have regard to specific design advice contained in supplementary planning guidance covering the District. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide, Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Appraisal, Landscape Assessments, Conservation Area Appraisals and Cotswolds AONB guidance documents are key tools for interpreting local distinctiveness and informing high design quality.

## Supporting infrastructure

- 4.38 All new development, even a single new home puts existing services and facilities under pressure and we need to make sure that where new development is proposed, it is supported by the right level of infrastructure investment. We know from previous consultation responses that local people have concerns about the capacity of existing schools and GP surgeries and congestion on the A40. These are key issues for the Local Plan to address.
- 4.39 There are three broad categories of infrastructure; physical, social and green infrastructure. Physical infrastructure includes items such as roads, cycle routes, water, gas and electricity supply, telecommunications and waste management. Social infrastructure includes healthcare, education, emergency services and community facilities such as libraries, community centres and sports halls, whilst green infrastructure includes open space, allotments, woodland and other types and networks of green space.
- 4.40 One of the main ways in which new and improved infrastructure can be provided is through new development. For some time developers have provided or funded infrastructure through legal agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) or similar.
- 4.41 The use of Section 106 agreements remains in place (particularly for larger developments) although it is gradually being scaled-back to focus on affordable housing and site-specific infrastructure needed to allow development to proceed (e.g. a new road junction, utility improvements and access to superfast broadband).
- 4.42 More general infrastructure provision such as contributions towards local libraries and school places will now fall within the remit of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which is essentially a tariff or charge that local authorities can choose to impose on certain types of new development.
- 4.43 CIL is intended to be a more equitable system because it can, subject to viability considerations, apply to all sizes of development (with the exception of self-build which is exempt) whereas Section 106 legal agreements often only relate to larger development schemes (eg. 10 or more dwellings).
- 4.44 Thus with CIL the burden of having to pay for new or enhanced infrastructure is more evenly spread. Importantly unlike Section 106 obligations, local authorities are required to pass a proportion of CIL receipts to local Town and Parish Councils. This is a minimum of 15% but increases to 25% if the Town or Parish Council has a Neighbourhood Plan in place.
- 4.45 The first step to introducing CIL is to identify the infrastructure that is needed to support future growth and how much it is likely to cost. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared in partnership with a range of organisations including Oxfordshire County Council and will be refined and updated on an ongoing basis. The Council is aiming to adopt its CIL charging schedule in 2019.
- 4.46 Ensuring that new development is coupled with appropriate and timely investment in supporting infrastructure is a key element of sustainable development and has been raised as a key issue consistently throughout consultation on this Local Plan. The Council will therefore ensure that all new development delivers or contributes towards the delivery of essential supporting infrastructure. On larger development sites, phasing of development will generally be required and later phases may be contingent on essential infrastructure being in place. Infrastructure will be secured directly as part of the development, through Section 106 and/or CIL or other mechanisms such as the LTP. This is reflected in Policy OS5.

- 4.47 Future infrastructure requirements will be identified and kept up to date through the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and CIL 'Regulation 123' list<sup>10</sup>.

**POLICY OS5:  
Supporting Infrastructure**

New development will be required to deliver, or contribute towards the timely provision of essential supporting infrastructure either directly as part of the development, or through an appropriate financial contribution.

On larger development sites, phasing of development will be required and later phases may be contingent on essential infrastructure being in place.

This will include, where applicable the strategic infrastructure items identified within the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and CIL Regulation 123 list as well as non-strategic infrastructure requirements including those associated with individual development proposals.

Such provision will be secured through appropriate mechanisms including the use of planning conditions, planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

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<sup>10</sup> Sets out which infrastructure items/projects the Council intends to fund through CIL.