



3. West Oxfordshire in 2031 - our vision

Eynsham

- 3.1 Having identified the key issues and challenges facing the District, we need to look to the future and set out what we want West Oxfordshire to be like by the end of the plan period - 2031. Set out right is the Local Plan vision which is underpinned by a series of core objectives that inform the remainder of the plan.
- 3.2 These have evolved through extensive consultation with local communities and partner organisations and have regard to the West Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 'Shaping Futures' and other components of the Local Plan evidence base.

## Our vision...

Our vision for the future is to meet the needs of West Oxfordshire's communities, and play a role in helping to meet wider needs, without significant change to the intrinsic character of the District. We want this area to continue to be one of the best places in which to live, work, play and visit.

There will be a network of safe, inclusive, vibrant, well-connected and prosperous market towns and villages within a healthy, attractive, historically and biodiversity rich environment where new development achieves a high standard of design and respects and complements the distinctive character of the area whilst managing the impacts of climate change.

Improved opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport will have helped to reduce reliance on the private car and traffic congestion on key routes including the A40 will have been addressed as far as reasonable, thereby helping to improve journey times and air quality.

The District's economy will have grown and diversified, adding value and capitalising on the proximity to the Oxfordshire 'knowledge spine' and the presence of RAF Brize Norton. An improved balance of housing and jobs and increased levels of home working, facilitated by improved broadband provision, will have helped to reduce out-commuting and increase the self-containment of our communities.

The housing needs of current and future residents will have been met through the provision of a range of high quality housing developments in accessible, sustainable locations including affordable housing. The provision of a broad range of house types will have met the needs of a range of different age groups including families and those wishing to self-build. A better balance of house types will have helped to rebalance the current predominance of larger properties and improve affordability.

Rates of educational attainment will have improved and rates of physical activity will have increased through improved leisure and recreation provision, leading to a reduction in rates of obesity.

All new development will have been supported by appropriate investment in new and enhanced infrastructure, delivered in a timely fashion.

Witney will provide an enhanced range of services and facilities with improved transport infrastructure, whilst maintaining its character and vibrancy as a market town and protecting its landscape setting. The town will offer a choice of well-designed housing which meets lifetime needs and benefits from a network of green spaces linking with the surrounding countryside. There will be a diverse range of local employment opportunities to foster sustainable economic growth, innovation and enterprise and reduce the necessity for commuting to nearby towns and cities. The town centre will be vibrant, attractive, convenient and safe for all users with a wide range of retail and leisure activities on offer and will be well served by parking facilities, frequent bus services and opportunities for walking and cycling.

Carterton will strengthen its role as a service centre meeting the daily needs of its residents and work force, including personnel at the country's premier military transport airbase, RAF Brize Norton. A choice of well-designed housing which meets lifetime needs will be provided and benefit from a network of green spaces linking with the surrounding countryside and continuing to provide a green buffer between Carterton and nearby villages. Much of the older MOD housing will be replaced with new urban development which will complement Carterton's enhanced role. The range of services and facilities in the town centre will expand and improve, alongside further improvements in the quality of the built environment and connectivity with the rest of the town. The provision of additional local employment opportunities and improved access by road to the A40 will promote greater levels of inward investment and enterprise.

Chipping Norton will strengthen its role as a centre of enterprise in the northern part of the District. It will continue to be an economically and socially strong market town serving the needs of a large rural area. Its distinctive historic character and fine setting will be conserved and enhanced at the same time as accommodating new development to meet identified needs.

A new 'Garden Village' will be created to the north of the A40 near Eynsham comprising an exemplar development of the highest environmental and design standards based around a mix of compatible uses

including housing, employment, transport, new schools and other community and leisure uses. The new village will be self-contained seeking to complement and enhance the current role of nearby Eynsham.

Elsewhere, the distinctive qualities of the District's other towns and villages will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. The larger towns and villages will accommodate growth of an appropriate scale and type to help ensure their future prosperity and that of the rural areas around them without compromising their intrinsic character, appearance and setting. New affordable housing for local families and development specifically to meet the needs of older people will be delivered to help maintain the vibrancy of rural communities.

## Our core objectives

- 3.3 To guide the vision we have identified a number of core objectives. These are set out below under five key headings:
- Strong market towns and villages
  - Meeting the specific housing needs of our communities
  - Sustainable economic growth
  - Sustainable communities with access to services and facilities; and
  - Protecting and enhancing our environment and reducing the impact from climate change

Strong market towns and villages

- 3.4 West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district with its population dispersed to a number of market towns, villages and hamlets varying in size. It is vital that the District's distinctive rural characteristics are maintained while meeting the needs of local communities. To achieve this it is important to recognise the need for, and benefits of, new development but to ensure that what comes forward is of an appropriate scale and type, commensurate with the capacity, role and function of the settlement where it is proposed.

- 3.5 Although West Oxfordshire is a relatively affluent area there are pockets of deprivation particularly in rural areas where access to services is often limited. For rural communities to be sustainable they must have access to affordable housing, good employment opportunities and services and facilities.

- 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.

Meeting the specific housing needs of our communities

- 3.6 A key role of the Local Plan is to ensure that future housing needs are met. There also needs to be a greater choice within the local housing market to help achieve a better balance of property types and meet the needs of those who cannot afford to buy or rent suitable market housing.
- 3.7 Two key challenges will be to address identified future housing needs and to better meet the needs of certain groups including older people, younger people, families, travelling communities as well as those wishing to self-build.

- 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.

Sustainable economic growth

- 3.8 The West Oxfordshire local economy is reasonably strong and diverse and has proven resilient to recession. However, the District is facing increasing competition from elsewhere including major planned growth associated with the Oxfordshire 'knowledge spine' running from the Science Vale Enterprise Zone through Oxford City up to Bicester.
- 3.9 There is a need to capitalise on the District's economic strengths and ensure that it is well-placed to benefit from future economic growth within the County and adjoining areas by playing a 'complimentary', rather than necessarily a 'competing' role. We must seek to add value to the West Oxfordshire economy as far as possible.
- 3.10 There is also a need to ensure that the needs of existing businesses and those looking to invest in West Oxfordshire are adequately provided so as to reduce the possibility of such firms locating elsewhere.

- 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.

Sustainable communities with access to services and facilities

**3.11** In a rural area it is important to achieve a sensible balance between delivering services directly to local residents and expecting people to travel. In many rural parts of the District there is little choice other than to travel by private transport. However new development should not lead to more people being isolated from services and facilities which they need on a regular basis. New development must therefore be located in the right places and provide the necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of its residents and/or users.

**3.12** The objectives outlined below seek to deliver a high quality of life whilst improving opportunities wherever possible or appropriate for travel by means other than the car.

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.

Protecting and enhancing our environment and reducing the impact from climate change

**3.13** West Oxfordshire is fortunate to benefit from a rich natural and historic environment. It is essential that this is protected and enhanced wherever possible. The objectives outlined below seek to protect and enhance the high environmental quality of the District and meet the challenges of climate change by improving the sustainability of new development.

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.

CO18 Improve the sustainable design and construction of new development, including improving energy, water efficiency and water management.