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# **Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review**

## **Proposed Submission Sustainability Appraisal Report**

Prepared by LUC  
June 2017



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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Cherwell District Council commissioned LUC in October 2015 to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Cherwell District Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review, as well as the Local Plan Part 2.
- 1.2 An initial SA Report relating to the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Options Paper was prepared and consulted upon with the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Options Paper in November 2016.
- 1.3 This SA Report should be read in conjunction with the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Proposed Submission document (June 2017). This SA report replaces the initial SA Report.

## The Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review

- 1.4 Cherwell District Council formally adopted the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015. The Local Plan Part 1 sets out the strategic planning policy framework and strategic site allocations for the District to 2031. It forms part of the statutory development plan and provides the basis for decisions on land use planning affecting Cherwell District.
- 1.5 In the Local Plan the Council committed to work that seeks to address the unmet objectively assessed housing need from elsewhere in the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area (HMA), particularly from Oxford City. All of Oxfordshire's rural district Councils, together with the County Council, have accepted that Oxford cannot fully meet its own housing needs principally because the city is a compact, urban area surrounded by designated 'Green Belt'. The Oxfordshire Councils collectively committed to consider the extent of Oxford's unmet need and how that need might be sustainably distributed to the neighbouring districts, so that this can be tested through their respective Local Plans. In order to achieve this joint working, the Oxfordshire Growth Board (comprising representatives of the County and District Councils of Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, the Universities of Oxford and business leaders) was established and a strategic work programme developed. The programme comprises a number of inter-related projects and milestones relating to the preparation and appraisal of long-term strategic development options for the county and the identification of associated infrastructure requirements. This joint strategic work programme called the Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme, will inform local plan reviews (including Cherwell's) including by identifying and appraising strategic spatial options for accommodating Oxford City's unmet housing need.
- 1.6 The Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review is a Development Plan Document that will effectively be an addendum to the Local Plan Part 1 – it will sit alongside it and form part of the statutory Development Plan for the District. The Partial Review has a specific focus and it is not a wholesale review of Local Plan Part 1. The vision, aims and objectives, spatial strategy and the policies of the Local Plan Part 1 will guide development to meet Cherwell's needs to 2031. The Partial Review focuses specifically on how to accommodate additional housing and associated supporting infrastructure within Cherwell in order to help meet Oxford's housing need.

### Approach to the SA

- 1.7 The work undertaken by the Growth Board has involved examining broad locational options within Oxfordshire, through an appraisal process, to inform how much of Oxford's unmet housing need could be delivered by each Oxfordshire authority. The SA for the Partial Review is informed by the Growth Board work but an SA is needed at the District level, meeting the requirements of the SEA Directive, to inform the Partial Review in order to accommodate some of Oxford's unmet housing needs in Cherwell.
- 1.8 The SA for the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review focuses on the quantum and locational options for accommodating Cherwell's portion of Oxford's unmet housing need within Cherwell District only. The SA also assesses the Plan vision, objectives, and planning policies.

- 1.9 The SA considers how options for delivering additional housing development within Cherwell District's boundaries perform in sustainability terms, particularly in respect to their relationship with Oxford City, considering the requirement to meet Oxford's unmet housing needs.
- 1.10 They have been appraised against how sustainably they help meet Oxford's unmet housing need, considering factors such as:
- Need for affordable housing.
  - Commuting patterns and travel to work areas.
  - Transport infrastructure, traffic congestion (and related air quality and carbon emissions issues), and options to travel through use of sustainable transport options, such as rail.
  - Accessibility not only to the City of Oxford itself, but also to the main employment areas, science and business parks that are located on the fringes of the City, considering economic and social relationships and linkages.
- 1.11 Individual locations within Cherwell have also been assessed in relation to environmental assets and constraints, such as biodiversity, landscape character and sensitivity, flood risk, soils quality and the historic environment, including the setting of Oxford.
- 1.12 The SA also considers how well the locational options for delivering housing relate to the existing and planned communities, jobs, services and facilities within Cherwell itself. It is likely that some everyday needs, such as recreation and sport, shopping, and schools will be accessed locally.
- 1.13 Given that the SA of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review focusses on the potential effects of options and policies relating to development within Cherwell District (albeit to meet a portion of Oxford's unmet housing need), this SA Report sets out the baseline information relating to Cherwell District. Relevant information that relates to planning and key issues in Oxfordshire and Oxford City is also important. This will assist in determining the most appropriate location and form of development (and therefore policies) required in the Local Plan 1 Partial Review document.
- 1.14 The adopted Cherwell District Council Local Plan Part 1 was subject to SA/SEA throughout its preparation, and that SA work has been drawn on as appropriate throughout the SA/SEA of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review. The Local Plan Part 1 strategy and policies have also been taken into account for this SA.
- 1.15 The Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Proposed Submission document, which this SA Report accompanies, has been produced under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. A final version of the SA Report will be published and submitted alongside the submission of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review.
- 1.16 The SA only informs the Council's decision-making process. The Council has also undertaken work including an assessment of options considering matters such as representations received, deliverability, and viability in order to help determine the most sustainable and suitable options for development. A summary is presented in **Chapter 9**.
- 1.17 Following consultation on the Initial SA report all elements of the SA have been reviewed and where required revised.

## The Plan area

- 1.18 Cherwell is situated in north Oxfordshire and lies between London and Birmingham, immediately north of Oxford and south of Warwick / Leamington Spa. Cherwell District has an area covering approximately 228 square miles. The M40 runs through the District and there are good rail connections to Birmingham, London and beyond.
- 1.19 The District's settlement hierarchy is dominated by the towns of Banbury and Bicester in the north and south respectively. Banbury is the administrative centre for the District and fulfils a role as a regional centre. The third largest settlement is Kidlington. Kidlington is both an urban centre and a village and is surrounded by the Oxfordshire Green Belt but is excluded from it. The District has over 90 smaller villages and hamlets.

- 1.20 Cherwell is largely rural in character with much of the northern part of the District consisting largely of soft rolling hills. The southern half of the District particularly around Bicester has constraints but is much flatter. The northwest of the District lies at the northern edge of the Cotswolds. The river Cherwell passes through the District.
- 1.21 The District shares boundaries with Oxford City, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire, Aylesbury Vale, South Northamptonshire and Stratford upon Avon Districts, but it is the relationship with Oxford City to the south that is of particular importance for this SA, as the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review is focussing on meeting a proportion of Oxford City's unmet housing needs.

## Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.22 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, SA is mandatory for Development Plan Documents. For these documents it is also necessary to conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC). Therefore, it is a legal requirement for the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review to be subject to SA and SEA throughout its preparation.
- 1.23 The requirements to carry out SA and SEA are distinct, although it is possible to satisfy both using a single appraisal process (as advocated in the National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>1</sup>), whereby users can comply with the requirements of the SEA Directive through a single integrated SA process – this is the process that is being undertaken in Cherwell. From here on, the term 'SA' should therefore be taken to mean 'SA incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive'.
- 1.24 The SA process comprises a number of stages, as shown in **Figure 1.1** below. How these stages have been met during the preparation of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review to date is also described below.

**Figure 1.1: Main stages of Sustainability Appraisal**

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects
Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report
Stage D: Consulting on the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and the SA report
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan Part 1 Review

### SA Stage A: Scoping

- 1.25 The Scoping stage of the SA involves understanding the social, economic and environmental baseline for the plan area as well as the policy context and key sustainability issues. The SA Scoping Report was prepared in December 2015 and presented the outputs of the following tasks:
- Policies, plans and programmes of relevance to Cherwell's Local Plan Partial Review were identified and the relationships between them were considered, enabling any potential synergies to be exploited and any potential inconsistencies and incompatibilities to be identified and addressed.
  - Baseline information was collected on environmental, social and economic issues in Cherwell and Oxfordshire. This baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring the likely effects of policies and site allocations (including reasonable alternative options) and helps to identify ways of mitigating any adverse effects identified.
  - Key sustainability issues were identified.

<sup>1</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal-and-how-does-it-relate-to-strategic-environmental-assessment/>



- A 'Sustainability Appraisal framework' was developed, comprising a list of SA objectives which provides a clear way in which the sustainability impacts of implementing a plan can be described, analysed and compared. It sets out a series of sustainability objectives and associated sub-questions that can be used to 'interrogate' options and draft policies during the plan-making process. These SA objectives reflect the long-term aspirations and needs of the District and area with regard to social, economic and environmental considerations. Throughout the SA process, the performance of Local Plan options (and later policies and site allocations) are assessed against these SA objectives and sub-questions.

- 1.26 Public and stakeholder participation is an important part of the SA and wider plan-making processes. It helps to ensure that the SA report is robust and has due regard to all appropriate information that will support the Local Plan in making a contribution to sustainable development. An SA Scoping Report for the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review was published in January 2016 alongside an Issues Paper for a six-week consultation period with the statutory consultees Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England. Following the consultation, the comments received were addressed as appropriate. **Appendix 4** lists the comments that were received during the consultation on the Scoping Report and explains how these have been dealt with in the SA and this proposed submission SA Report.
- 1.27 The majority of the SA Scoping Report, including the review of plans, policies and programmes and the baseline information, were updated as part of the preparation of this SA Report. This was in order to ensure that they reflect the current situation in Cherwell District and take account of the most recent evidence.

### SA Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects

- 1.28 Developing options for a plan is an iterative process, usually involving a number of consultations with the public and stakeholders. Consultation responses and the SA can help to identify where there may be other 'reasonable alternatives' to the options being considered for a plan.
- 1.29 Regulation 12 (2) of the SEA Regulations requires that:
- "The (environmental or SA) report must identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of—*
- (a) implementing the plan or programme; and*
- (b) reasonable alternatives, taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme."*
- 1.30 Any alternatives considered for the plan need to be 'reasonable'. This implies that alternatives that are not reasonable do not need to be subject to appraisal. Examples of unreasonable alternatives could include options that do not meet the objectives of the plan or national policy (e.g. the National Planning Policy Framework) or site options that are unavailable or undeliverable.
- 1.31 The SA findings are not the only factors taken into account when determining a preferred option to take forward in a plan. Indeed, there will often be an equal number of positive or negative effects identified for different options, such that it is not possible to 'rank' them based on sustainability performance in order to select a preferred option. Factors such as public opinion, deliverability, conformity with national policy and other evidence will also be taken into account by plan-makers when selecting preferred options for a plan.

### *Identification and appraisal of options for the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review*

- 1.32 Four types of options have been identified and appraised as part of the development of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review:
- Broad areas of search within which new housing development to meet Oxford's unmet need could be located.
  - Quantum options representing different quantities of additional growth to meet Oxford's need.
  - Potential site options that could be developed to meet the additional housing required. (In addition to residential site options, site options for open space provision were also identified and appraised.)

- Policy options for the proposed site allocations, as well as other policies to supplement policies in the Council's adopted Local Plan Part 1.
- 1.33 The identification of these options is summarised below and described further in the individual chapters setting out the SA findings for each set of options (see **Chapters 7-10**).
- 1.34 In addition, the Council has devised an updated Vision and Strategic Objectives for the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and these have been appraised in **Chapter 6**. Both the vision and the strategic objectives have evolved from those initially tested and consulted upon in November 2016 in response to further evidence and the consultation on the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Options Paper.
- 1.35 Nine areas of search have been identified by the Council. The areas have been identified having regard to the location of urban areas, the potential opportunities to develop on previously developed land, received site submissions and 'focal points' or nodes that might be developable. These areas of search have been appraised to identify the most sustainable locations (for both Cherwell and Oxford) within which to accommodate some of Oxford's unmet housing need. The areas of search have been reviewed considering the representations received and new evidence. No new options have been identified.
- 1.36 Three quantities of additional housing growth were defined by Cherwell District Council based on an apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing need proposed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board of 4,400 dwellings<sup>2</sup>. The three options were:
- 4,400 homes.
  - Significantly more than 4,400 homes.
  - Significantly less than 4,400 homes.
- 1.37 The Council has decided to accommodate 4,400 new homes to meet some of Oxford's unmet housing needs in its Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Proposed Submission document.
- 1.38 The quantum options and the appraisal have been reviewed considering the representations received and new evidence. No new options have been identified.
- 1.39 Potential development sites have been submitted to the Council as part of the on-going consultation process. Following the appraisal of the areas of search and the identification of the best performing areas, reasonable alternative site options for residential and open space sites were identified within selected areas of search A and B. These options have been appraised and are set out in **Appendix 6**.
- 1.40 Promoted sites over 2 hectares were appraised as potential strategic residential site options within areas of search A and B and potential open space options within areas A and B on the assumption that open spaces are likely to be incorporated within or located near to larger strategic residential site allocations as part of achieving sustainable communities.
- 1.41 Following consultation on the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Options Paper and the Initial SA Report in November 2016, the site options appraisal was reviewed and additional site options were identified and appraised. The appraisal findings on these additional site options are presented alongside those appraised in the initial SA Report in **Chapter 9**.
- 1.42 The reasons for selecting and rejecting options are provided in **Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10**.

### SA Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal report

- 1.43 This SA report buildings on the work carried out in the preparation of the SA Scoping Report (2015) and Initial SA Report (2016) and describes the process that has been undertaken to date in carrying out the SA of Cherwell's Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review. It sets out the findings of the appraisal of the Plan Vision and Strategic Objectives, the areas of search for growth, quantities of additional growth, specific site options and a set of preferred policy options. The report highlights any likely significant effects (both positive and negative, and taking into account the likely secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term and permanent and temporary

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<sup>2</sup> The process for identification of this apportionment is summarised in Chapter 2.

effects), helping to identify the locations for development and where to mitigate negative effects and maximise the benefits of the plan as it is drafted.

### SA Stage D: Consultation on Local Plan and this SA report

- 1.44 The Cherwell District Council invited comments on a Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Options Paper and initial SA report in November 2016. All documents are available on the Council's website. Consultation on this SA report will take place alongside the Council's proposed submission document in June 2017.
- 1.45 **Appendix 3** presents the consultation comments that have been received to date in relation to the SA Scoping Report and the initial SA report and explains how they have been addressed in this updated SA Report.

### SA Stage E: Monitoring implementation of the Local Plan

- 1.46 Recommendations for monitoring the residual social, environmental and economic effects of implementing Cherwell's Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review have been outlined in this updated SA Report (see **Chapter 11**).

### Meeting the requirements of the SEA Directive

- 1.47 **Table 1.1** below signposts the relevant sections of the SA Report that are considered to meet the SEA Directive requirements.

**Table 1.1: Meeting the Requirements of the SEA Directive**

SEA Directive Requirements	Coverage in the SA Report
<b>Preparation of an environmental report</b> in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated. The information to be given is (Art. 5 and Annex I):	This SA Report for the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review constitutes the 'environmental report' for the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review.
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Chapters 1 and 2 and Appendix 1.
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	Chapters 3 and 4.
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	Chapter 3.
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.;	Chapters 3 and 4.
e) The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	Chapter 2 and Appendix 1.
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);	Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	Chapter 10.
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Chapters 1, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 for alternatives Chapter 1 for difficulties encountered.
i) a description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Chapter 11.

SEA Directive Requirements	Coverage in the SA Report
j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	Separate document.
The report shall include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Art. 5.2)	This SA Report has adhered to this requirement.
<b>Consultation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>authorities with environmental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report (Art. 5.4)</li> </ul>	Consultation with the relevant statutory environmental bodies was undertaken in relation to the Scoping Report for 6 weeks in January and February 2016 covering the statutory five-week requirement. The SA Report was consulted on for nine weeks from November 2016.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2)</li> </ul>	Public consultation took place on an 'Options' version of the Part 1 Partial Review alongside the Initial SA Report from November 2016 and is taking place again on the Proposed Plan and SA Report from June/July 2017.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country (Art. 7).</li> </ul>	Not relevant as there will be no effects beyond the UK from the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Review.
<b>Taking the environmental report and the results of the consultations into account in decision-making (Art. 8)</b>	
<b>Provision of information on the decision:</b> When the plan or programme is adopted, the public and any countries consulted under Art.7 must be informed and the following made available to those so informed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the plan or programme as adopted</li> <li>a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report of Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of consultations entered into pursuant to Art. 7 have been taken into account in accordance with Art. 8, and the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and</li> <li>the measures decided concerning monitoring (Art. 9)</li> </ul>	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
<b>Monitoring</b> of the significant environmental effects of the plan's or programme's implementation (Art. 10)	Chapter 11

### Data limitations and difficulties encountered

- 1.48 The SEA Regulations require that the environmental report should include information on "*any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know how) encountered in compiling the required information*" (Schedule 2(8)). The difficulties encountered in carrying out the SA are described below.
- 1.49 The first 'Issues Consultation Paper' published in January 2016 sought to gather early opinions on issues facing the District as a consequence of accommodating a portion of Oxford's unmet housing need and on possible ways in which the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review might address these. This paper contained no proposals which could be subject to SA.
- 1.50 The Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Options Paper published alongside an initial SA Report contained options for meeting a portion of Oxford's unmet housing need but no draft policies. Therefore, only the principle of development within specific locations was subject to SA.
- 1.51 Policies have been prepared for the proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review, including mitigation and enhancement measures where appropriate. It has therefore been possible to draw conclusions about the likely effects of developing within specific locations through the appraisal of the draft policies. There has been a need to ensure that a large number of site options could be appraised consistently. This has been achieved by the use of assumptions

relating to each SA objective for determining the difference between positive and negative, minor and significant effects, as described in **Chapter 5**.

- 1.52 When applying the assumptions (see **Appendix 2**) to inform the SA of areas of search and site options, distances were measured from the nearest point of a site to the nearest point of the feature(s) in question, which may not always accurately reflect the distance to features for the whole of a site, particularly large sites. This is to ensure a consistent approach for the SA. The Council has examined site options and the evidence to supplement the SA process in selecting preferred development locations and policies.
- 1.53 The sheer number of strategies, plans, programmes, policy documents, advice and guidance produced by a range of statutory and non-statutory bodies means that it has not been possible within the resources available to consider every potentially relevant document in detail (see **Chapter 2** and **Appendix 1**). However, we have drawn out the key generic messages relevant to the preparation of the Local Plan and the SA.
- 1.54 Similarly, with regard to the evidence base set out in **Chapter 3** upon which effects have been identified, every effort has been made to ensure that the SA Report reflects the latest baseline information.

### Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.55 Under Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) land-use plans, including Development Plan Documents, are also subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The purpose of HRA is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of a European site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site.
- 1.56 The HRA for the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review has been undertaken separately to the SA. The HRA considers the potential for adverse effects on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC alone and in combination with development proposed in the Local Plan Part 1 Review, the adopted Local Plan Part 1 and neighbouring authorities' Plans. The conclusions of the HRA have been taken into account in the SA where relevant.

## Structure of the SA Report

- 1.57 This chapter has described the background to the production of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and the requirement to undertake SA and other assessment processes. The remainder of this report is structured into the following sections:
- **Chapter 2** describes the review of plans, policies and programmes of relevance to the SA of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review (this is supported by more detailed information in **Appendix 1**).
  - **Chapter 3** presents the baseline information which has informed the assessment of the policies and sites in the Local Plan Part 1 Review.
  - **Chapter 4** identifies the key environmental, social and economic issues and problems in Cherwell and Oxford of relevance to the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and considers the likely evolution of those issues without its implementation.
  - **Chapter 5** presents the SA framework that has been used for the appraisal of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and the method for carrying out the SA.
  - **Chapter 6** reports the findings of the SA of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review Vision and Strategic Objectives.
  - **Chapter 7** reports the findings of the SA of the District's nine areas of search.
  - **Chapter 8** reports the findings of the SA of the three quantum options for meeting some of Oxford's unmet need.
  - **Chapter 9** reports the findings of the SA of the site options with areas of search A and B.

- **Chapter 10** reports the findings of the SA of the policy options for the Proposed Submission Version Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review, including the cumulative effects and mitigation.
- **Chapter 11** summarises the conclusions of the SA to date, the proposed monitoring framework and the next steps to be undertaken in the SA of the Local Plan Part 1 Review.

## 2 Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies

2.1 Annex 1 of the SEA Directive requires:

*(a) "an outline of the...relationship with other relevant plans or programmes"; and*

*(e) "the environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation"*

2.2 In order to establish a clear scope for the SA it is necessary to review and develop an understanding of the environmental, social and economic objectives contained within international and national policies, plans and strategies that are of relevance to the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review. Given the SEA Directive requirements above, it is also necessary to consider the relationship between the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and other relevant plans, policies and programmes, including Local Plan Part 1. The Council also considers this further as part of the plan-making process.

### Relationship between the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and other plans and programmes

#### Cherwell Local Plan

- 2.3 The Local Plan Part 1 identifies where strategic development will take place in the District. The Adopted Part 1 of the Cherwell Local Plan provides for 22,840 additional dwellings through Policy BSC1: District Wide Housing Distribution, which meets the objectively assessed need for Cherwell District only. The Local Plan identifies sites to deliver 200 hectares (gross) of employment land which will result in approximately 20,500 jobs generated on B Use class land.
- 2.4 The Local Plan identifies that Banbury will accommodate 7,319 dwellings in the Plan period. To date all allocated sites are under construction, except Banbury Canalside (Policy Banbury 1), land at Bankside phase 2 (Policy Banbury 4), land at Drayton Lodge Farm (Banbury 18), land at Bolton Road (Policy Banbury 8), land at Higham Way (Policy Banbury 19) and west of the Warwick Road. At 31 March 2016 893 dwellings were complete at Banbury. Bicester will accommodate 10,129 dwellings to 2031. Sites are under construction at North West Bicester (Policy Bicester 1) and Graven Hill (Policy Bicester 2), South West Bicester and Talisman Road. At 31 March 2016 956 dwellings were complete at Bicester and in the rural areas 1,628 dwellings, including at the former RAF Upper Heyford (Policy Villages 5), were complete.
- 2.5 Kidlington has no strategic housing allocations in the Local Plan and has received limited residential development. However, the council has prepared the Kidlington Framework Masterplan, a Supplementary Planning Document that builds on the contents of the Local Plan Part 1 to explore issues and opportunities for the development and improvement of Kidlington. The masterplan includes an action plan which includes a list of priority projects including improvements to the village centre, Exeter Close, sport and recreation facilities, the Oxford Canal corridor, the environment of Oxford Road and the relationship between Kidlington and neighbouring employment centres.
- 2.6 Part 2 of the Local Plan will provide detailed planning policies that assist the implementation of strategic policies and the development management process, covering topics such as employment, town centres, tourism, transport, housing, open space, sport and recreation and community facilities, sustainable construction and renewable energy, natural environment, Green Belt, built environment, green infrastructure, Bicester Garden Town designation, rural areas and infrastructure. It will also identify smaller, non-strategic development sites for housing, employment, open space and recreation, travelling communities and other land uses, in accordance with the overall development strategy set out in Local Plan Part 1.

- 2.7 Following adoption of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015, Cherwell District Council committed to producing a Partial Review of Local Plan Part 1 which is expected to be completed within two years from adoption. Para. B.95 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) explains that Cherwell District Council will continue to work with all other Oxfordshire Local Authorities on an on-going basis to address the objectively assessed need for housing across the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area and to assess all reasonable spatial options for meeting Oxford's unmet need, including the release of brownfield land, the potential for a new settlement and a full strategic review of the boundaries of the Oxford Green Belt.
- 2.8 The Partial Review will need to provide for additional development to that proposed in Local Plan Part 1 to meet some of Oxford's unmet housing needs. Some of the options proposed for accommodating this growth are located in areas where growth is proposed in the Local Plan. An issue for the Local Plan Part 1 Review is the continued delivery of sites in the Local Plan by 2031 and the compatibility of the Partial Review with Local Plan Part 1 policies.
- 2.9 At the sub-regional and local levels there are some key plans and programmes that are specific to Cherwell and in particular Oxford and Oxfordshire, which provide context for the Partial Review of the Local Plan. These include plans and programmes relating to issues such as housing, health and well-being, transport, renewable energy and green infrastructure and the economy. The policies and site allocations in the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review take account of those plans and programmes. As well as those plans and programmes that relate to Cherwell, those of particular relevance will be key documents that relate to planning in Oxfordshire and Oxford City. These are described below. These are relevant as they assist in determining the most appropriate location and form of development (and therefore policies) required in the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review document. For example the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Oxford City's Housing Strategy help identify the need for affordable accommodation which the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review policies should seek to address.

## Oxfordshire wide work

- 2.10 Providing sufficient homes to meet Oxford's needs, and the constraints to development presented by Oxford's natural and historic assets as well as the Green Belt, is a significant challenge for the five local planning authorities in Oxfordshire. To address the challenge of meeting Oxford's unmet housing need, and taking account of the Duty to Co-operate, the Oxfordshire Growth Board (comprising representatives of the County and District Councils of Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, the Universities of Oxford and business leaders) has agreed to work collaboratively to provide a countywide spatial picture and strategy.

### Oxfordshire Statement of Co-operation

- 2.11 The Localism Act requires all the planning authorities, county councils and a number of other public bodies in England to abide by the 'Duty to Co-operate' which aims to ensure that there is co-operation on issues of common concern in order to develop sound local plans. The Oxfordshire Statement of Co-operation<sup>3</sup> is particularly relevant to Cherwell as it sets out how the parties involved will manage the outcomes of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, should any of the Local Planning Authorities in Oxfordshire not be able to meet their full objectively assessed housing need. The current statement will remain in perpetuity, but will be reviewed annually.

### Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014

- 2.12 The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment<sup>4</sup> (SHMA), published in April 2014, identified a need for the provision of around 5,000 homes per annum over the period 2011 to 2031 across the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area. The need within the administrative area of Oxford City Council is identified as between 24,000 and 32,000 homes up to 2031. As the adopted Oxford

<sup>3</sup> Oxfordshire Statement of Co-operation (November 2016) Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership Board <http://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/documents/s31300/Oxfordshire%20Statement%20of%20Cooperation.pdf?txtonly=1>

<sup>4</sup> Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (April 2014) GL Hearn Ltd <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/communityandliving/ourworkwithcommunities/oxfordshirepartnership/spatialplanninginfrastructure/SHMA%20Key%20Findings%20Summary.pdf>



Core Strategy does not meet this forecast provision, and as noted above through the countywide on-going work, there is general agreement between the Oxfordshire local authorities that the capacity of the City is limited and therefore there will be a significant shortfall which will need to be met within neighbouring districts.

#### **Oxford Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (2014)**

- 2.13 Oxford published a city-wide SHLAA and an unmet need assessment<sup>5</sup> in December 2014. The study concluded that the City had potential to accommodate 6,422 dwellings on sites deemed to be suitable, available and achievable, alongside an estimated 180 windfall dwellings per year, resulting in a total capacity between 2011 and 2031 of 10,212 dwellings. However, the Study concluded that the City had an objectively assessed housing need for between 24 and 32 thousand dwellings over the same period, resulting in a shortfall of between 13,788 and 21,788.

#### **Unlocking Oxford's Development Potential (Cundall, 2014)**

- 2.14 This document was commissioned by Cherwell, Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils to provide an alternative assessment of housing capacity for Oxford set out in the Oxford SHLAA (2014).

#### **Oxford Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment and Employment Land Assessment (2016)**

- 2.15 Oxford's new Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment published in October 2016 identified potential capacity to accommodate around 7,511 additional homes between 2016 and 2036. In addition, the Study highlighted capacity for 300,000sqm of B1 (offices), 92,000sqm of B2/B8 (industrial) and 200,000sqm of leisure and community employment uses.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme**

- 2.16 A strategic work programme has been developed by the Growth Board, which comprises a number of inter-related projects and milestones relating to the preparation and appraisal of long-term strategic development options for the county and the identification of associated infrastructure requirements. This joint strategic work programme called the Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme, will inform local plan reviews (including Cherwell's) by identifying and appraising strategic spatial options for accommodating Oxford City's unmet housing need.
- 2.17 The Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme does not allocate sites. The Programme demonstrates the ability of each District to deliver a range of sites that can be shown to closely relate to Oxford and thus to enable the unmet housing need of Oxford to be apportioned in a manner which would deliver development which is sustainable over a realistic time period. The final allocation of any development will be up to individual Local Plans to take forward, taking into account wider detailed planning considerations, and the fit with proposed local strategies and potentially a wider set of options. Within this context, the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review seeks to accommodate a proportion of Oxford's unmet housing needs.
- 2.18 The working group commissioned work streams to inform the apportionment. These considered:
- The Urban Capacity of Oxford.
  - The Study of the Oxford Green Belt.
  - Spatial Options Assessment Project.
  - Transport Infrastructure Assessment.
  - Education Impact Assessment.
  - High-Level Habitats Regulation Assessment.

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<sup>5</sup> Oxford's Housing Land availability and Unmet Need Assessment, URS, , December 2014

<sup>6</sup> Oxford City Council Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, AECOM, October 2016

### *Urban Capacity of Oxford*

- 2.19 Fortismere Associates (FA) were appointed "to review the Oxford City Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), to satisfy partners that the assessment of the ability to meet the stated level of unmet housing need is correct in two respects: a) In the context of existing policies; and b) In the context of a consideration of reasonable adjustments to existing policy that Oxford City could consider, whilst maintaining consistency with the NPPF".
- 2.20 FA reviewed a range of existing documentation on this issue and recommended a way forward. These documents included the Oxford SHLAA and the Cundall report (a critique of the City Council's SHLAA) commissioned by South, Vale and Cherwell, plus the Oxford City response to this report. The aim was to secure agreement to a single figure or narrower range as a working assumption for the unmet housing need of Oxford City, in order to inform the assessment of the proposed spatial options.
- 2.21 The report concluded that Oxford City Council's approach to assessing its housing supply is compliant with government policy and guidance (NPPF, PPG). It also identified a number of matters that Oxford City Council was recommended to consider in order to increase its housing capacity and so that it has '*left no stone unturned*' in seeking to meet as much of its housing needs within the City as possible.
- 2.22 Following consideration of the Fortismere report, at its meeting held in November 2015, the Oxfordshire Growth Board approved '*that the working assumption of 15,000 is a working figure to be used by the Programme as a benchmark for assessing the spatial options for growth and is not an agreed figure for the true amount of unmet need*'.
- 2.23 Subsequent to this decision, Oxford City Council commenced its review of its Local Plan in spring 2016. The recommendations from the Fortismere report will be considered through that process.

### *The Study of the Oxford Green Belt*

- 2.24 Land Use Consultants (LUC) was commissioned to undertake an assessment of the Green Belt within Oxfordshire.
- 2.25 The overall aim of the Study was to assess the extent to which the land within the Oxford Green Belt performs against the purposes of Green Belts, as set out in paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 2.26 The study assessed the contribution that separate identified land parcels within the Green Belt make to the purposes of the Green Belt according to the five NPPF purposes of Green Belt. The study does not propose areas for release from Green Belt but does allow individual councils, alongside challenge from partners, to consider whether Green Belt land could be included as part of the areas of search that formed the basis of the allocation of Oxford's unmet housing need. In this way the study, in combination with the Spatial Options Assessment (see below), helps to identify the potential, or not, for development, and the case for additional areas to be added to the Green Belt.

### *Spatial Options Assessment*

- 2.27 Land Use Consultants (LUC) and BBP Regeneration were commissioned to carry out a Spatial Options Assessment for meeting the Oxford's unmet housing need up to 2031. The overall aim of the Spatial Options Assessment was to provide a criteria-based analysis of 36 predetermined spatial options for meeting Oxford's unmet housing need, to establish their 'relative' sustainability at a strategic level.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> A full Sustainability Assessment was not judged to be necessary, as the process was not allocating specific sites.

- 2.28 These criteria included a number of issues grouped into four categories:
- Sustainability (comprising spatial relevance to Oxford, social and economic criteria, and environmental criteria).
  - Landscape.
  - Green Belt.
  - Deliverability and viability.
- 2.29 The Study found that there is more than enough capacity within these spatial options to meet Oxford's unmet housing need and a number of the spatial options within each of the local authorities have been identified as relating well to Oxford with good existing and future access to the cultural offer, universities and key employment locations in the City. However, some of these options are in the Green Belt, or may have deliverability and viability issues, therefore the Study highlighted the need for choices to be made regarding which, if any, options to take forward for consideration through each authority's Local Plan process.

#### *Transport Infrastructure Assessment*

- 2.30 Integrated Transport Planning (ITP) Ltd was commissioned to prepare a high-level assessment of the transport implications of development at the 36 spatial options in Oxfordshire that could potentially accommodate the working assumption of Oxford City's unmet housing need to 2031 of circa 15,000 homes.
- 2.31 The Study included a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) analysis against a set of eight transport-related metrics which fed into an initial Check and Challenge workshop on 15th April 2016 led by LUC as part of their wider work to consider the general viability of the 36 different spatial options for accommodating Oxford's future unmet housing need.
- 2.32 The Growth Board recognised that the response to the impact assessment will be a matter for the subsequent Local Plan processes to address; as the individual sites brought forward to meet the unmet housing need of Oxford may change as this local work is undertaken.

#### *Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy- Stage 1*

- 2.33 AECOM have prepared the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy on behalf of the Oxfordshire Growth Board to provide a view of emerging development and infrastructure requirements to support growth from 2016 to 2031 and beyond. The strategy highlights that the Oxfordshire authorities are forecast to deliver a total of 123,500 dwellings from 2016 to 2040, accommodating a population increase of 267,700 new residents. It is projected that there will be a 25% increase (101,000) in the number of available jobs in the County. Delivering the necessary infrastructure to support this growth from now to 2040 is estimated to cost at least £8.96 billion in 2016 terms. The strategy highlights a number of areas along the strategic and local road network that are and will continue to be increasingly vulnerable to congestion and identifies projects to help alleviate this. Notable roads within Cherwell include:
- the A35, particularly the Oxford junctions;
  - east of Junction11 on the M40 at Banbury;
  - the A4260- Bridge Street/Cherwell Street eastern corridor improvements at Banbury; and
  - upgrades to the A4421 at Bicester.

#### *Education Impact Assessment*

- 2.34 High levels of additional housing growth generate the need for new education provision, which has complex catchment issues to address and in the case of secondary provision can be expensive to provide and potentially require contributions from more than one strategic development.
- 2.35 To ensure these issues were considered at an early stage, Oxfordshire County Council conducted a high-level assessment of the implications for the provision of primary and secondary school places from the potential development of the 36 identified spatial options for accommodating Oxford's unmet housing needs.
- 2.36 The work has been used to help filter out spatial options which could lead to infrastructure carrying a higher risk of being financially unviable, being undeliverable due to reliance on other

sites coming forward and/or of rendering development unviable due to cost per dwelling. The assessment recognises that the potential spatial options would change as the individual Local Plans consider a wider range of options.

#### *High level (Non-Statutory) Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)*

- 2.37 Atkins was commissioned to conduct a high level, cumulative HRA screening. Although this work will not directly influence the apportionment, it will be progressed on a Duty to Cooperate basis and the completed work will feed into on-going Local Plan processes which are responsible for determining how the apportioned unmet need is met / distributed within each district.

#### **The Final Apportionment**

- 2.38 The strategic Spatial Options Assessment together with the other studies outlined above has informed the Growth Board's proposed apportionment of Oxford's unmet housing need between the District Council areas.
- 2.39 The final apportionment is a recommendation, i.e. the list of areas of search that underpins it is an input to each authority's Local Plan process rather than an output. This is because, although the final apportionment is based on Officers' collective existing knowledge of areas of search that would be most suitable to meet Oxford's unmet need, subsequent Local Plan work may bring other sites forward.
- 2.40 Furthermore, in identifying the final apportionment the Growth Board is not seeking to allocate or release sites. Rather the Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme has at a high level and using a common basis, identified each District's ability to absorb additional growth to meet a share of Oxford's unmet need. It will be for each of the districts through their normal Local Plan processes to explore how to accommodate their proposed share of Oxford's unmet need under the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate.
- 2.41 It is also important to note that the yield figures for each area of search (spatial option) represent estimated housing numbers to be delivered by 2031 – total capacities at a number of these sites may change through local assessment as part of the more detailed Local Plan process, taking a wider range of planning factors into account, including the potential to deliver further housing beyond 2031.
- 2.42 Cherwell District Council has been apportioned 4,400 dwellings by the Growth Board, which equates to just under 30% of Oxford's unmet housing need up to 2031.

#### **The Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)**

- 2.43 The updated SEP<sup>8</sup> was prepared by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and was published in 2016. It sets out the county's economic vision up to 2030 which sees "*Oxfordshire as a vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, world leading economy, driven by innovation, enterprise and research excellence*". As well as generating economic growth, the SEP facilitates the infrastructure required to support this growth through furthering the City Deal which was agreed with the government.
- 2.44 The document is of relevance to the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review as it prioritises housing and employment development in key locations, specifically to the "Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine" which extends from Science Vale Oxford to Bicester in Cherwell District. The SEP highlights that good progress is being made on flagship gateway developments and projects that stimulate growth, including at North West Bicester. The Plan sets out the provision of Local Growth Fund funding of 5.2 million pounds to support a package of improvements to the transport network to the north of Oxford at the 'Northern Gateway', which will provide business and research space and new homes delivered by Oxford City Council at a total investment of 452.5 million pounds.

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<sup>8</sup> The Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (2016) Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership  
<http://www.oxfordshirelep.com/content/strategic-economic-plan>

## Strategic Environmental and Economic Investment Plan for Oxfordshire

- 2.45 In line with the SEP, the Strategic Environmental and Economic Investment Plan<sup>9</sup> recognises the county's globally important economic assets as well as the growth required to maintain the Oxfordshire's economic prosperity, however the document also highlights the need to conserve the county's natural capital whilst enhancing the economy.

## Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2015-2031 (LTP4)

- 2.46 The LTP4<sup>10</sup> recognises that with the current forecasts for over 85,000 new jobs and 100,000 new homes in the county by 2031, a series of radical solutions are required to support the growing economy, number of residents and visitors.
- 2.47 The Plan notes the very high use of bus services between Kidlington and Cherwell. A high-level visionary Science Transit Strategy seeks to provide better-integrated, high quality mobility systems that both serve the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine and connect it with the rest of the county. The potential network would link Cherwell's three main towns to Oxford.
- 2.48 A number of road improvements are also identified in the LTP4 which are outlined in their respective Area Strategies. In Bicester there are plans for a new road linking the eastern perimeter route with the A41 and a new highway bridge to allow the Eastern Perimeter Road to cross the new East West Rail line, replacing the current Charbridge Lane level crossing. Additionally a new link road between Banbury and a large employment site could be developed east of M40 junction 11. A spine road to be built as part of development at Salt Way south of the town will link the A4260 Oxford Road and A361 Chipping Norton Road.
- 2.49 The strategy includes the recently opened rail link between Oxford Station Parkway and London Marylebone.
- 2.50 The LTP4 also recognises that the London Oxford Airport has existing capacity for more short-haul flights to cities and hub airports in north-western Europe and the county council will work with the airport to avoid increasing pressure on the road network and to improve public transport access, including links to Oxford Parkway station and key linkage to the emerging Rapid Transit Routes 1 and 3.

## Oxford Transport Strategy

- 2.51 The County's Local Transport Plan includes a 'Oxford transport Strategy' which identifies the current and future challenges for transport in the city and sets out a strategy based on a combination of infrastructure projects and supporting measures to enable economic and housing growth. The strategy includes a focus on north Oxford, including Cutteslowe and Wolvercote, and major corridors into Oxford from the area north of the outer ring road. The Strategy contains aspirations to develop a new Rapid Transit (RT) network providing '...fast, high capacity, zero emission transport on the city's busiest transport corridors, offering a tram-equivalent (or in future potentially tram) level of service and passenger experience...'
- 2.52 Three RT lines have been identified for the city, linking a potential network of new outer Park & Ride sites including on the A44 corridor near London-Oxford Airport at Kidlington. The County Council's strategy is to move Park and Ride facilities further away from Oxford to improve operation of the A34 and other road intersects. The OTS states that future housing and employment growth within Oxfordshire is set to further exacerbate congestion on the A34, the outer ring road and other corridors that feed into the city, unless traffic can be captured before it reaches them.
- 2.53 Facilities at the Park & Ride sites are expected by the County Council to fulfil the criteria required at high quality interchange hubs with significant provision for those wishing to cycle for part of the journey.

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<sup>9</sup> Strategic Environmental and Economic Investment Plan for Oxfordshire (no date) Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership: <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/sites/default/files/345438%20SEIIP%20Final%20LowRes.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031 (LTP4) (2015) Oxfordshire County Council [https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/CO\\_LTP4/consultationHome](https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/CO_LTP4/consultationHome)

## Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, Part 1 – Core Strategy

- 2.54 The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, Part 1 – Core Strategy<sup>11</sup> sets out the planning strategies and policies for the development that will be needed for the supply of minerals and management of waste in Oxfordshire over the period to the end of 2031. With significant growth in population, new housing, economic development and infrastructure improvements, there are implications for the demand for and supply of minerals and also for the production of waste and how it is dealt with. This will need to be achieved whilst protecting and enhancing the urban and rural environments as well as considering social and economic needs.
- 2.55 There are currently a number of planned mineral developments in Cherwell including an additional rail depot at Shipton on Cherwell which has received planning permission. Through policy M3, the Minerals and Waste Plan has identified principal locations for working aggregate material and a couple of these strategic resource areas fall in the Cherwell District including Duns Tew (soft sand) and the area north-west of Bicester (crushed rock). The Core Strategy also identifies 21 existing and permitted waste management sites safeguarded under Policy W11.
- 2.56 Finmere Quarry is the only site in Cherwell that has void remaining for non-hazardous landfill and is permitted to end in 2035.

## Neighbouring Local Plans

- 2.57 Throughout the preparation of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review and the SA process, consideration will be given to the local plans being prepared by the authorities around Cherwell.
- 2.58 As shown in **Figure 2.1**, there are seven authorities which border Cherwell District: South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire, Oxford, Stratford-on-Avon, South Northamptonshire and Aylesbury Vale (Cherwell District and the first four neighbouring authorities are within Oxfordshire).
- 2.59 The Local Plans and any significant development proposals in neighbouring districts in Oxfordshire are of particular relevance. Of most relevance to the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review is the relationship between Cherwell District's Local Plan and Oxford City's, due to the acknowledged need for Oxford City's neighbouring districts to help deliver the identified housing need for Oxford within their boundaries. The Local Plans of the other three neighbouring districts in Oxfordshire are also therefore very relevant.

## Oxford Core Strategy 2026

- 2.60 Oxford is located to the south of Cherwell. The Oxford Core Strategy 2026<sup>12</sup> was adopted in March 2011. The Core Strategy is the overarching strategy for development in Oxford for the period ending 2026. Many of the policies contained in the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 were replaced by new policies in the Core Strategy document. The net provision of additional dwellings in Oxford by March 2026 is to be 8,000 as in the Core Strategy document. Between the period of 2006 and 2026 the job growth forecast is for the creation of between 11,280 and 13,900 new jobs in Oxford. The Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment was used to define the annual demand for affordable housing in the City, which for the first five years was defined at between 1,420 and 2,396 dwellings. As well as achieving growth and development in housing, employment and infrastructure, the Core Strategy also seeks to conserve and enhance the historic and natural assets that form the city's character and visitor appeal.
- 2.61 Following the Core Strategy, the Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026 was adopted in February 2013. This includes policies that set out what type of housing development is expected and also allocates large sites considered suitable for development for housing and other important uses that will help deliver the aims, including the delivery of 8,000 homes, as set out in the Core Strategy.

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<sup>11</sup> Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, Part 1 – Core Strategy: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/minerals-and-waste-core-strategy> (currently under examination with a view to adoption in early 2017).

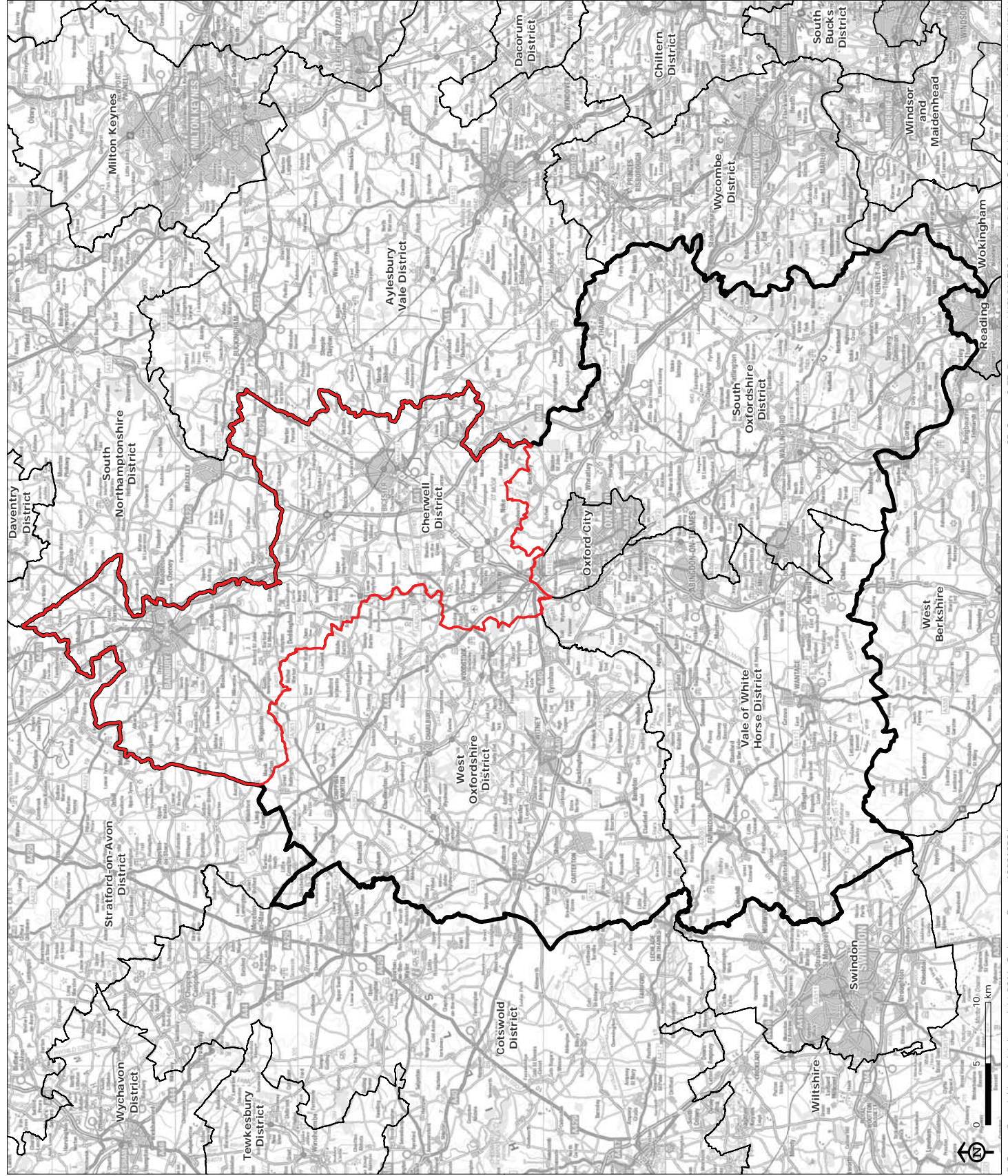
<sup>12</sup> Oxford Core Strategy 2026 (2011) Oxford City Council  
<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Library/Documents/Core%20Strategy/Oxford%20Core%20Strategy%202026.pdf%20>

Figure 2.1

Location of Cherwell District within Oxfordshire

- Cherwell District boundary
- Other district boundaries
- Oxfordshire County boundary

Map Scale @ A3: 1:300,000



- 2.62 Oxford City Council has started preparation of a new Local Plan 2016-2036, with a First Steps Consultation taking place between June-August 2016. The consultation aims to help develop a vision for the city in 2036, to gather ideas on a range of scenarios for future development and to check that the right issues have been identified.

### **Oxford Housing Strategy 2015-2018**

- 2.63 The Oxford Housing Strategy<sup>13</sup> identifies the key issues for housing in Oxford over the next three years and how the Council and its partners are planning to overcome them and help deliver the 'The Housing Offer' to the people of Oxford. The plan identifies that there is a large shortfall in housing within Oxford and due to a shortage in land capacity, the Council needs to look to its strategic partners in order to meet the housing demand.

### **Northern Gateway Area Action Plan (AAP)**

- 2.64 The AAP<sup>14</sup> was adopted by Oxford City Council in July 2015 and provides a policy framework guiding future employment and other development in the 'Northern Gateway' of Oxford with an envisaged completion date of 2026 - in line with Oxford City Council's Core Strategy. The Northern Gateway is located to the north west of Oxford where the northern and western boundaries of this 44ha site lie on the boundary of Cherwell District and Oxford. This strategic development location is therefore of relevance to the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Review.
- 2.65 The site will provide the largest single area of employment land within Oxford to accommodate city's economic growth in its key sectors (education, health, research and development, and knowledge-based businesses linked to the two universities and hospitals) as well as accommodating new homes, a hotel and shops.
- 2.66 The site is adjacent to three strategic roads (A34, A40 and A44) and the area already experiences congestion. Development will therefore include a number of measures to alleviate the existing congestion issues as well as mitigate any future impacts the site may bring. These measures include the provision of sustainable modes of transport and improvements to the road network, with specific reference to improvements that could be achieved in the wider area through the provision of a strategic link road to the west of the A34, creating a link between an enlarged Loop Farm roundabout and a new roundabout on the A40. Such a scheme could further ease congestion on the A40 approach and the Wolvercote Roundabout. However, this proposal is beyond the scope of the AAP as it lies within Cherwell District, and the AAP notes that it is not required to deliver the development at Northern Gateway.

### **Oxford Strategic Partnership**

- 2.67 The Oxford Strategic Partnership<sup>15</sup> was created in 2003 to promote joined-up approaches for improving quality of life in the city. The aims of the Partnership are set out in the 'Oxford: A World Class City for Everyone Vision Statement, Aims, Challenges and Priorities' (2013 – 2018):
- To provide a clear and ambitious vision for the future of Oxford, developing its environmental, economic and social life in a positive and sustainable way.
  - To improve the quality of life of all sections of the community, to reduce inequalities, and support the needs and aspirations of citizens in their local areas.
  - To foster and promote closer working between local agencies to deliver responsive and high quality services across the city.

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<sup>13</sup> Oxford Housing Strategy 2015-2018 (no date) Oxford City Council  
<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Library/Documents/Community%20Housing/Housing%20Strategy%202015%20-%202018.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Northern Gateway Area Action Plan (2015) Oxford City Council  
<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Library/Documents/Northern%20Gateway/Northern%20Gateway%20Area%20Action%20Plan%20-%20July%202015.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Oxford: A World Class City for Everyone Vision Statement, Aims, Challenges and Priorities 2013 - 2018 (2013) Oxford Strategic Partnership [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1757/osp\\_vision\\_aims\\_challenges\\_and\\_priorities\\_2013.pdf](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1757/osp_vision_aims_challenges_and_priorities_2013.pdf)



### South Oxfordshire Local Plan

- 2.68 South Oxfordshire is located to the south of Cherwell. The District Council is currently in the process of producing a Local Plan 2033. The most recent version of the Local Plan 2033 is the Second Preferred Options document; therefore the latest development strategy for the Borough remains as set out in the adopted Core Strategy 2012. The Core Strategy sets out the overarching development strategy for the District up to 2027. The Core Strategy provides for the development of 5,214 new homes for the period 2012- 2027 and around 20ha of employment land, with around 13.5ha in various centres across the District and a further 6.5ha at Didcot in the Vale of White Horse District. The spatial strategy for the District is to provide the majority of housing growth in Didcot.

### Vale of White Horse Local Plan

- 2.69 Vale of White Horse is located to the south west of Cherwell. The Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies was adopted in December 2016.
- 2.70 The Local Plan aims to deliver at least 20,560 new homes during the plan period (2011/12 to 2030/31), which will meet the District's own objectively assessed need. These new homes are to be provided at strategic development sites at the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area (1,790 homes), the Western Vale Sub-Area (1,650 homes) and the South East Vale Sub-Area (9,055 homes) while up 1,000 new homes will be identified for allocation through the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 and a further 900 house delivered through windfall sites. Within the District there was a known commitment to 4,468 new homes at the time of Plan submission. The Plan identifies 218ha of land for future employment development divided between the Western Vale and South Eastern Vale. A further 24.2ha of employment land is identified from the saved Vale Local Plan 2011 employment allocations. Like Cherwell, the Vale of White Horse District has committed through its Examination process to working jointly on the countywide Post SHMA Strategic Work Programme, in order to address meeting some of Oxford's unmet needs<sup>16</sup>.

### West Oxfordshire Local Plan

- 2.71 West Oxfordshire is located to the west of Cherwell. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 was submitted to Planning Inspectorate for independent examination on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015, and the 'Main Modifications' to the Local Plan, addressing the unmet housing need arising from Oxford City, was submitted on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The plan aims to meet the District's own objectively assessed housing need by delivering at least 15,950 new homes between 2011 and 2031, 13,200 homes (660 per year), as well as an additional 2,750 homes between 2021 and 2031 (totalling 935 homes per year between 2012 and 2031) to assist meeting Oxford's unmet housing needs. The majority of the housing is to be delivered in the Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. To meet employment needs in the District, 20ha of employment land is identified to the west of Witney, 5ha by Carterton, at least 9ha to the east of Chipping Norton, around 40ha at the West Oxfordshire Garden Village in the form of a 'science park', and at least 5ha within existing commitments in rural areas and other villages; and 2ha at Lakeside Standlake.

## Cherwell Neighbourhood Plans

- 2.72 There are nine defined Neighbourhood Plan Areas in Cherwell District:
- Adderbury.
  - Bloxham.
  - Bodicote.
  - Deddington.
  - Hook Norton.
  - Merton.

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<sup>16</sup> Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1. December 2016. <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2031-part-1-strategic-sites>

- Mid-Cherwell.
- Stratton Audley.
- Weston on the Green .

2.73 Hook Norton and Bloxham Neighbourhood Plans have been formally adopted ('made'). The others are at an early stage of preparation.

## Environmental, social and economic objectives relevant to the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review

2.74 There are a wide range of plans, policies and programmes at the international and national levels with environmental, social and economic objectives that are relevant to the SA of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review. The full review of relevant plans, policies and programmes can be seen in **Appendix 1** and the key components are summarised below.

### *Key international plans, policies and programmes*

2.75 At the international level, Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive') and Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the 'Habitats Directive') are particularly significant as they require SEA and HRA to be undertaken in relation to the emerging Local Plan. These processes should be undertaken iteratively and integrated into the production of the Local Plan in order to ensure that any potential negative environmental effects (including on European-level nature conservation designations) are identified and can be mitigated.

2.76 There are a wide range of other EU Directives relating to issues such as water quality, waste and air quality, most of which have been transposed into UK law through national-level policy; however the international directives have been included in **Appendix 1** for completeness.

### *Key national plans, policies and programmes*

2.77 The most significant document in terms of the policy context for the Partial Review is the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>17</sup> (NPPF) and the online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)<sup>18</sup>. The Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review must be consistent with the requirements of the NPPF, which sets out information about the purposes of local plan making. It states that:

*"Local Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. To this end, they should be consistent with the principles and policies set out in this Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development."*

2.78 The NPPF also requires Local Plans to be 'aspirational but realistic'. This means that opportunities for appropriate development should be identified in order to achieve net gains in terms of sustainable social, environmental and economic development; however significant adverse impacts in any of those areas should not be allowed to occur.

2.79 One of the core planning principles set out in the NPPF is that planning should take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Other core planning principles are linked to health – such as design and transportation. Section 8 of the NPPF recognises that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.

2.80 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should include strategic policies to deliver:

- the homes and jobs needed in the area;
- the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>18</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

- the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
- climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.

2.81 Of particular relevance to the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review, the NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to:

- have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area;
- to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment or 'SHMA' to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries;
- to work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly co-ordinated and clearly reflected in individual Local Plans;
- to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas, for instance because of a lack of physical capacity or because to do so would cause significant harm to national principles and policies;
- to produce Local Plans in accordance with a statutory Duty to Cooperate;
- to protect the Green Belt from harm, specifically its ability to fulfil its five purposes.
- to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt; and
- to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development.

2.82 In addition, Local Plans should:

- plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of this Framework;
- be drawn up over an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15-year time horizon, take account of longer term requirements, and be kept up to date;
- be based on co-operation with neighbouring authorities, public, voluntary and private sector organisations;
- indicate broad locations for strategic development on a key diagram and land-use designations on a proposals map;
- allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary, and provide detail on form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate;
- identify areas where it may be necessary to limit freedom to change the uses of buildings, and support such restrictions with a clear explanation;
- identify land where development would be inappropriate, for instance because of its environmental or historic significance; and
- contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, and supporting Nature Improvement Areas where they have been identified.