



## Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan

# Statement of Community Involvement July 2021

Produced by:



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## **Statement of Community Involvement**

### **How the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 will be prepared with Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

**July 2021**

#### **Introduction**

1. This is the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. It replaces the previous SCI adopted in February 2019.
2. This version provides updated information on the progress of the Oxfordshire Plan, including how community and stakeholder engagement will operate during the COVID-19 outbreak.
3. The six Oxfordshire Councils and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OXLEP) have agreed the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal with Government. Under the terms of the Deal the local authorities have committed to producing a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (Oxfordshire Plan 2050) for submission to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination by September 2022 and adoption by May/June 2023, subject to examination process.
4. The Oxfordshire Plan will provide an Oxfordshire-wide, integrated strategic planning framework and supporting evidence base to support sustainable growth across the county to 2050, including the planned delivery of the new homes and economic development, and the anticipated supporting infrastructure needed.
5. Once adopted, the Oxfordshire Plan will be a formal Development Plan Document (DPD), prepared under Section 28 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) which enables two or more local planning authorities to agree to prepare a joint Plan. Oxfordshire County Council will support the plan preparation process. More details on the plan can be found in the Scoping Document<sup>1</sup>.
6. A JSSP Project Board was established in July 2018 to guide the preparation of the JSSP. The Oxfordshire Growth Board which includes the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) monitor progress on the Oxfordshire Plan, and approve its budget, reviewing the achievement of milestones as part of an annual review.
7. The Oxfordshire Plan is being prepared with community and stakeholder involvement at each stage of its development.
8. This SCI sets out how the Oxfordshire authorities inform, involve and consult interested parties on the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan and when they will be engaged in the process. This SCI is specific to the production of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. The Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) also have their own individual SCIs related to the production of their Local Plans.
9. This SCI will ensure that the Oxfordshire Plan is shaped by early, proportionate and meaningful engagement between plan makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and statutory consultees.
10. The outcomes of the consultation processes set out in this SCI will be an important element of the considerations of the LPAs in developing the Oxfordshire Plan

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<sup>1</sup> <https://oxfordshireplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/JSSP-Scoping-document-October-2018.pdf>

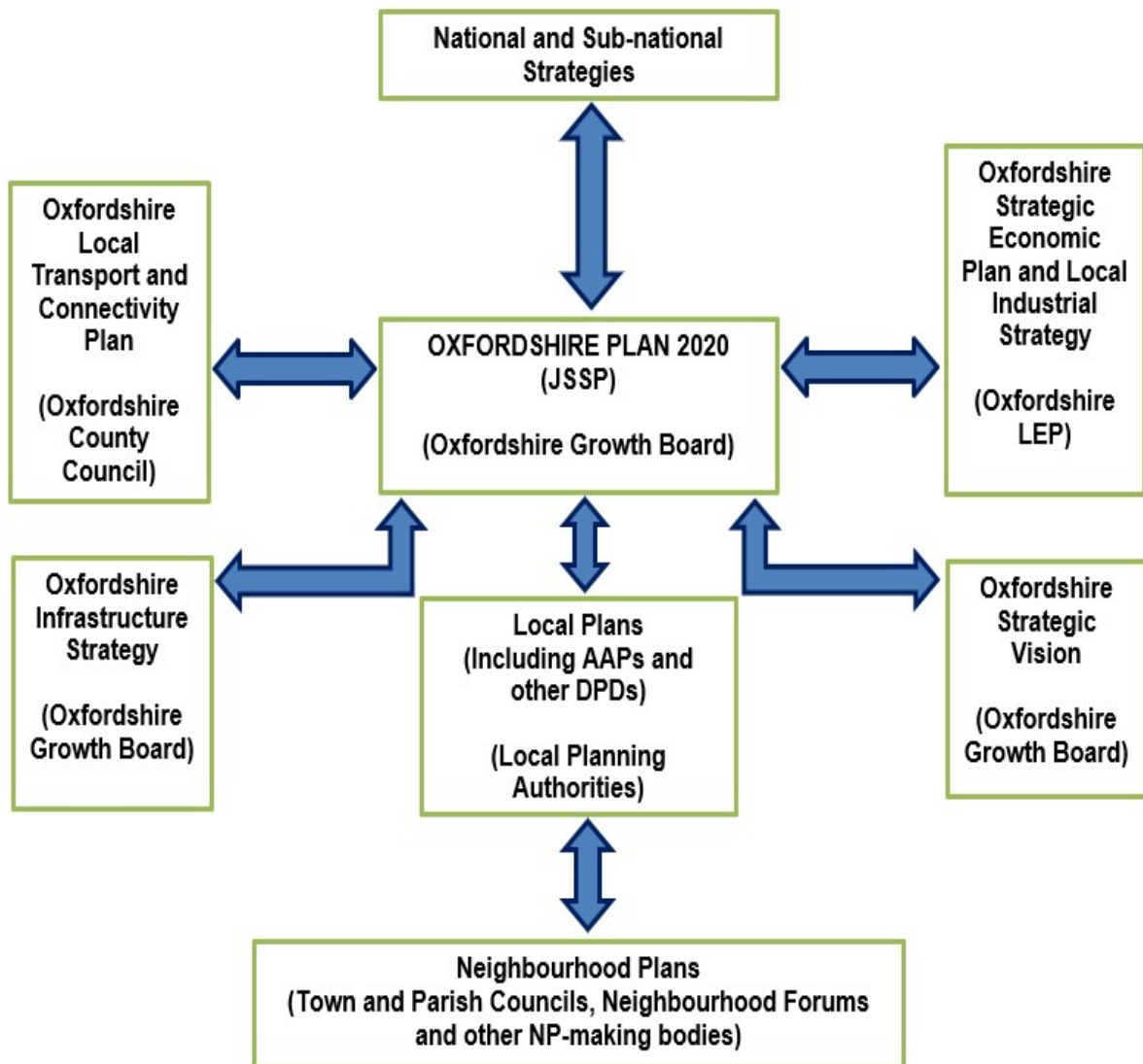
alongside other material matters such as the evidence base and the Sustainability Appraisal etc.

11. The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 will build on the current suite of adopted Local Plans that are in place for the period from 2011 to 2031/5/6, depending on the District covered; as well as the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and will link to the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) and a new 2050 Transport Vision and Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy. The Plan will also integrate with the higher-level spatial framework being developed for the Oxford-Cambridge (OxCam) Arc.
12. The Oxfordshire Plan will identify the overall quantum of housing and economic growth within Oxfordshire to be planned for the period after the end of the current suite of adopted Local Plans through to 2050 and its distribution across the county. The Oxfordshire Plan will also identify strategic priorities, and the strategic infrastructure (through OXIS) necessary to deliver the spatial strategy. Its preparation will include the calculation of new housing need figures based upon the methodology in the National Planning Policy Framework and taking into account the implications of the OxCam Arc.
13. The Oxfordshire Growth Board has also prepared a Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire<sup>2</sup>. The Vision will be used to help create an agreed set of long-term, strategic economic, infrastructure and environmental priorities designed to deliver the outcomes that local people want. The development of the Oxfordshire Plan will ensure its policies are aligned to this Strategic Vision.
14. The Oxfordshire Plan will be formally adopted by the individual LPAs and will provide a high-level framework for the review and roll-forward of the Local Plans and related Neighbourhood Plans. Fig.1 shows the relationship between the Oxfordshire Plan and other relevant plans.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.oxfordshireopenthought.org/strategic-vision>

## Relationship between the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and Other Plans



### Duty to Cooperate

15. LPAs, County Councils and other public organisations have a Duty to Co-operate with one another, particularly in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.
16. The way the Oxfordshire local authorities are working together under the Duty to Co-operate to complete the Oxfordshire Plan is set out in an Oxfordshire-wide Statement of Common Ground.

### How we will involve Stakeholders during the COVID-19 Outbreak

17. As a result of current public health guidelines related to COVID-19, some changes are needed to our current consultation methods to reflect the government restrictions in place and importantly protect the health of our communities, residents and staff.
18. In July 2020 the Government introduced a range of temporary measures to make it easier to undertake planning consultations within the current public health guidelines. *The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning, Development Management Procedure, Listed Buildings etc.) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020* amended the existing *Regulation 35 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012*. The amendments to the previous regulations

removed the requirement that hard copies of documents have to be made available for public inspection in a place considered appropriate. Instead, it is possible to comply with Regulation 35 by making plan documents available on the web.

#### *Availability of documents*

19. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, hard copy documents cannot be held at the deposit locations<sup>3</sup> set out in the previous Statement of Community Involvement (2019). Therefore, all relevant consultation documents will be made available online via our website. Paper copies will be available on request to those who are unable to access the website. We will also raise awareness of the publication of documents and/or consultations via our website, social media, an email to those on our mailing list and through a press release sent to local media.

#### *Public events, meetings, workshops, exhibitions and focus groups*

20. Additionally, public events, meetings, workshops, exhibitions and focus groups will currently not be able to take place in person. Instead, we will undertake all public engagement virtually, using online meeting systems, web pages and social media.

#### *How to Comment on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050*

21. As previously, stakeholders can respond to consultations online or by post. A comments form will be produced at each stage of involvement. The form will be able to be used through the portal, or alternatively the form or letters can be emailed or posted to us. Receiving comments through both electronic and handwritten formats will ensure those without internet access will not be disadvantaged in terms of engagement.
22. We will encourage electronic engagement as the primary portal for consultation and will encourage people to make use of the Oxfordshire Open Thought engagement platform. Both Oxfordshire Open Thought and the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 website will set out the information we are seeking at each consultation stage, together with clear instructions on how to register comments. This will offer an easy method for response and in turn will help speed up our analysis of the comments received. We will provide a report on the results of the consultation at each stage of the project.
23. The Councils will comply with the obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations, and the principles of the Data Protection Act, in how they manage any personal data collected through consultation processes.
24. The above temporary measures have been put in place to minimise the impacts of the restrictions on people engaging with the development of the Oxfordshire Plan and Oxfordshire Plan consultations. These measures will remain in place until December 2021 and are subject to change according to COVID-19 and prevailing health advice.

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<sup>3</sup> The previous deposit locations included all council head offices and libraries throughout Oxfordshire.

## **Who will we be engaging with during the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan?**

25. There are a wide range of groups we will engage with during the Plan preparation process. These include:
- statutory consultees as set out in the relevant regulations, including neighbouring councils (see Appendix 1);
  - local service providers and other key general consultation bodies who may have an interest in the Oxfordshire Plan (see Appendix 1);
  - other interested groups, businesses, developers, landowners, agents, Town Councils and Parishes, voluntary groups; and
  - residents (residents will be encouraged to register on our consultation database).
26. A public-sector Equality Duty came into force on 5 April 2011. It means that public bodies must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It also requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination
  - advance equality of opportunity
  - foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.
27. The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 identify specific and general consultation bodies that must be consulted when preparing Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents (list provided at Appendix 1). Specific consultation bodies must be consulted where the proposed subject matter will be of interest to them. There is also a requirement to invite representations from such residents and persons carrying on business as considered appropriate. There will be many additional parties and individuals interested in the development of the plan and their involvement will be encouraged and facilitated.
28. The Oxfordshire Councils intend that all people should have the opportunity to have their say in how the county is spatially planned irrespective of their differences; including by way of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. Research may be commissioned to understand public attitudes on relevant topics. Documents will be written in plain English. To achieve value for money and to ensure that consultation is proportionate to the issues being considered, the translation of documents into other languages will be balanced against the cost, time constraints and the available resources.
29. An Oxfordshire Plan consultation database containing specific and general consultees and others that have expressed an interest to be consulted is currently maintained in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation. Where consultation is required, all those on the consultation database will be consulted. When an individual or organisation makes a representation on the Oxfordshire Plan or its supporting documentation, they will be added to the consultation database.

## **When will we involve Stakeholders?**

30. Relevant regulations set out the formal stages in the preparation process of the Oxfordshire Plan, i.e. when we must formally publish the documents for comment and for how long. This SCI reflects how these requirements will be met. Additional days will be added where statutory Public Holidays (England) fall within the formal consultation period.
31. Plan preparation will involve engagement with specific stakeholders, prescribed bodies, partners and consultees to inform the identification of issues and options. Notwithstanding the above, engagement with specific stakeholders will be undertaken

on a continuous basis to ensure options are thoroughly tested and policy preparation is robust. At each stage of the project, consultation plans will be designed selecting from a wide range of engagement tools and methods including for example use of social media, the press, local and parish newsletters, advertising, questionnaires and events. We may use panels or reference groups as part of this engagement as well as undertake additional research such as an opinion poll. Events will be carefully planned to maximise accessibility. They are also likely to be undertaken virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic in the interest of public health.

32. There will be opportunities to comment on the draft Oxfordshire Plan 2050 when it is formally published and to be involved during its examination by an independent Inspector.
33. A Sustainability Appraisal is an integral part of the plan preparation process and is required for DPDs. It looks at the environmental, social and economic effects of a plan to make sure that the plan promotes sustainable development and takes the most appropriate approach given reasonable alternatives. At each stage of the Plan's preparation there will be a corresponding stage of the Sustainability Appraisal which will be made available for comment during public consultation.
34. Different levels and methods of community involvement will be appropriate as the Oxfordshire Plan progresses through the plan-making process. Table 1 sets out the key consultation stages and milestone dates in the preparation of the Plan, together with the different groups we have involved in the plan-making process so far, and how we proposed to involve them in future. As Table 1 demonstrates, extensive consultation has already taken place at this early stage in the plan-making process. We have provided feedback on consultation responses received so far (in the form of a consultation summary report, published on our website) and will continue to do so at each future stage of consultation.

#### **Review of the SCI**

35. The SCI will be updated if a review is required due to changes to:
  - Legislation/national policy
  - Local decisions
  - Changes to consultation methods and technology
  - Revised COVID-19 public health guidance

**Table 1: Consultation stages in the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 preparation process**

Who was/will be involved?	What were we/are we consulting on?	How did we consult, or how are we consulting? (methods are likely to include)
<b>Stakeholder Launch Consultation - (December 2018)</b>		
Informal dialogue with targeted stakeholders and other interested bodies as appropriate - focusing on the challenges/opportunities for developing strategy options	An event for key stakeholders (including duty to co-operate bodies) to introduce the Oxfordshire Plan project and to ask for their initial views on what the Oxfordshire Plan's vision, aspirations and objectives should be.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxfordshire Plan 2050 website</li> <li>• Contact consultees/ organisations by email</li> <li>• Stakeholder meeting/workshop</li> <li>• Press release</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report – (7<sup>th</sup> January – 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019)</b>		
Consulted people/organisations listed in the Regulations and others as appropriate	The formal consultation sought to elicit views on whether the scope of the document was appropriate as set out considering the role of the Oxfordshire Plan to help meet and manage Oxfordshire's growth needs and development ambition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email contact</li> <li>• Oxfordshire Plan 2050 website</li> <li>• LPA Websites</li> </ul>
<b>Call for Strategic Development Options (to be considered through the plan)</b>		
Landowners, developers, agents, general public	To identify options for the availability, suitability and deliverability of land for strategic growth that should be considered through the plan process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted e-mail contact</li> <li>• Oxfordshire Plan 2050 website</li> <li>• LPA websites</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation on Vision, Aspirations and Objectives (Reg.18 Part 1) – (11<sup>th</sup> Feb 2019 – 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019)</b>		
Consulted people/organisations listed in the Regulations, general public and other interested bodies as appropriate.	Publish document - six weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxfordshire Plan 2050 website</li> <li>• Contacted consultees/ organisations by email</li> <li>• Social media posts</li> <li>• Events/ exhibitions</li> <li>• Press release</li> <li>• Documents available to view in council buildings</li> </ul>
<b>Call for Ideas Consultation - (21<sup>st</sup> February – 12<sup>th</sup> April 2019)</b>		



Consulted people/organisations listed in the Regulations, general public and other interested bodies as appropriate	This consultation aimed to give the public an opportunity to present ideas as to where the most suitable places for residential development and economic growth might be. – six weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxfordshire Plan 2050 website</li> <li>• Contacted consultees/ organisations by email</li> <li>• Events/ exhibitions</li> <li>• Press releases</li> <li>• Documents available to view in council buildings</li> </ul>
<b>Oxfordshire Plan Stakeholder Event - (May 2019)</b>		
Targeted stakeholders	A further event for key stakeholders (including duty to co-operate bodies) to help refine the Oxfordshire Plan's vision, aspirations and objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxfordshire Plan 2050 website</li> <li>• Contact consultees/ organisations by email</li> <li>• Stakeholder meeting/ workshop</li> <li>• Press release</li> </ul>
<b>Oxfordshire Open Thought - (1<sup>st</sup> June – 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020)</b>		
Consulted people/organisations listed in the Regulations, general public and other interested bodies as appropriate.	<p>This followed a recognition that the shift in timeline presented an opportunity for further engagement while also seeking to address feedback from the Reg 18 part 1 that suggested the Plan need to be bolder and more innovative.</p> <p>Open Thought sought to consider three main challenges facing the county in the future – climate change, connectivity, and living and working. While the themes were wider than the scope of the Plan, the engagement sought to gain potential policy ideas for the Plan by tapping into the knowledge and expertise within the county.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxfordshire Open Thought website</li> <li>• Contact consultees/ organisations by email</li> <li>• Social media posts</li> <li>• Press releases</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation on Preferred Strategy (Reg.18 Part 2) - (July/August/September 2021)</b>		

Consult people/organisations listed in the Regulations, general public and other interested bodies as appropriate.	Consulting upon Policy and Spatial Growth Options (including scale and Broad Locations of Growth) – ten weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxfordshire Plan 2050 website</li> <li>• Contact consultees/organisations by email</li> <li>• Virtual events including webinars and workshops</li> <li>• Social media posts</li> <li>• Press Release</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation on Submission (Draft) Plan (Reg. 19) – (May/June 2022)</b>		
Consult people/organisations listed in the Regulations, general public and other interested bodies as appropriate.	Consulting on the Draft Submission Plan document - six weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxfordshire Plan 2050 website</li> <li>• Contact consultees/organisations by email</li> <li>• Virtual events including webinars and workshops</li> <li>• Social media posts</li> <li>• Press release</li> </ul>
<b>Examination - (November/December 2022)</b>		
Notify people/organisations listed in the Regulations and others as appropriate via Programme Officer	Publish dates and programmes associated with Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxfordshire Plan 2050 website</li> <li>• Contact consultees/organisations by email</li> <li>• Press release</li> <li>• Social media posts</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation on Inspectors main modifications to the draft plan (if any)</b>		
Notify people/organisations listed in the Regulations and others as appropriate via Programme Officer	Potential main modifications to JSSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxfordshire Plan 2050 website</li> <li>• Contact consultees/organisations by email</li> <li>• Press release</li> <li>• Social media posts</li> </ul>
<b>Receipt and Publication of Inspector's Report - (February/March 2023)</b>		
Notify people/organisations listed in the Regulations and others as appropriate via Programme Officer	Only distributed for information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxfordshire Plan 2050 website</li> <li>• Contact consultees/organisations by email</li> <li>• Press release</li> <li>• Social media posts</li> </ul>
<b>Adoption (subject to examination)</b>		
May/June 2023 - No further consultation		

## Appendix 1: Consultation Bodies

### Specific Consultation Bodies<sup>2</sup>

- (a) the Coal Authority
- (b) the Environment Agency
- (c) the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as Historic England)
- (d) the Marine Management Organisation
- (e) Natural England
- (f) Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (company number 2904587),
- (g) Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency)
- (h) a relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the local planning authority's area<sup>3</sup>
- (i) any person—
  - (i) to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under section 106(3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003 and
  - (ii) who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the local planning authority's area
- (j) if it exercises functions in any part of the local planning authority's area—
  - (i) The NHS Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (formerly the Primary Care Trust established under section 18 of the National Health Service Act 2006(g) or continued in existence by virtue of that section)
  - (ii) a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 6(1)(b) or (c) of the Electricity Act 1989
  - (iii) a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986(
  - (iv) a sewerage undertaker; and
  - (v) a water undertaker
- (k) the Homes and Communities Agency

### Other Consultees

#### General Consultation Bodies<sup>4</sup>

- (a) voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the local planning authority's area
- (b) bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the local planning authority's area
- (c) bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the local planning authority's area
- (d) bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the local planning authority's area
- (e) bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area

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<sup>2</sup> As set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

<sup>3</sup> Neighbouring authorities: Buckinghamshire Council; Cotswold District Council; Gloucestershire County Council; West Northamptonshire Council; Reading Borough Council; Stratford-on-Avon District Council; Swindon Borough Council; Warwickshire County Council; West Berkshire Council; Wiltshire Council; Wokingham Borough Council; Wycombe District Council

<sup>4</sup> As set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012